

## **CRITICAL INCIDENT POLICY**

This is based upon the guidance issued in the 'Critical Incidents in Schools' document produced in partnership with South Eastern Health and Social Care Trust, South Eastern Education and Library Board, Investing for Health and Wellnet.

A **Critical Incident** is 'a sudden or unexpected incident or sequence of events which causes trauma within a school community and which overwhelms its normal coping mechanism.'

**Trauma** is defined as being, 'an exposure to a terrifying and life threatening event resulting in helplessness in the face of danger, anxiety, fear and instinctual arousal.'

### **What constitutes a Critical Incident?**

- Death of a pupil,
- Death of a number of pupils;
- Death of a serving member of staff;
- Suicide of a pupil;
- Suicide of a member of staff;
- Severe flooding within the school (see Appendix3);
- Major fire within the school (see Appendix 4);
- Revelation of pupils taking or selling drugs in the school;
- Inappropriate behaviour of a member of staff towards pupils;
- Intruder in the school with intent on harming pupils and/or staff, or who has injured or killed a pupil, pupils or staff;
- Suspicious package found within the school grounds or building;
- Revelation of pupil with dangerous weapon intent on causing harm to other pupils and/or staff, or who has injured or killed a pupil, pupils or staff.

### **Who is on the Intervention Team and what are their roles if a Critical Incident occurs?**

#### **Key Member – Headmaster (HM)**

- The Headmaster is the first point of contact and is responsible for liaising with all parties concerned and affected.

#### **Deputy – Pastoral Vice Principal (PVP)**

- The PVP would temporarily deputise of the HM in the running of their routine day to day tasks.

#### **Media Spokesperson**

- HM or PVP who may (if the need arises) liaise with the media and decide what information should be released. They may also need to liaise with the police.

#### **Member of Board of Governors**

- Chairman of Board of Governors in a crisis will be required to come into school to liaise with HM and PVP.

#### **Others**

- Senior Teacher with responsibility for Pastoral Care, Academic Vice Principal, who will liaise with members of staff, HM, PVP and School Counsellor.
- School Nurse who will administer first aid if required.

#### **School Counsellor**

- To offer support, consultation and guidance to the team and the bereaved should it be required. Make contact with Bereavement Support Team if required and liaise with Senior Educational Psychologist, Emer Smith in the SEELB.

#### **School Secretary**

- Secretary should be briefed by HM on information to be released. Records should be kept of all phone calls made and the information given.
- Ensure a separate phone line, one that is **not** accessible to incoming calls.

*The above team meet annually to become acquainted with changing conditions, personnel and each others roles.*

### Phone Numbers to be used when a Critical Incident occurs

	<b>Name</b>	<b>Phone Number</b>
<b>SEELB – CEO</b>	Mr Stanton Sloan	90566200
<b>Chair of Governors</b>	Mr John Adrain	Mobile: 07710117226
<b>Critical Incident Response Team</b>	Mr S Connolly (HM)	Ext: 203 Home: 91852665 Mobile: 07814526501
	Mrs E Huddleson (PVP)	Ext: 207 Home: 92639145 Mobile: 07876362566
	Mr D Cairnduff (AVP)	Ext: 209 Home : 91419549 Mobile: 07701029347
	School Nurse	Ext: 222 Mobile: 07966915031
	School Counsellor (Edith Bell)	FWs: 91821721 Mobile: 07843236615
	24hr counsellors	Lifeline: 0808 808 8000
	School Secretary	Ext: 200, 201
<b>Local Clergy</b>	Hamilton Road Baptist Bangor Abbey (C of I) Wesley Centenary Methodist Ballyholme Presbyterian	91454546 91451087 91465324 91452796
<b>Local Police/Fire Brigade/Hospital</b>	Bangor Hospital Ards Hospital Ulster Hospital Local Fire Brigade	91475120 91812661 90484511 91271906
<b>School Psychologist/Crisis and Bereavement (SEELB)</b>	Emer Smyth	90566921
<b>Designated Teacher for Child Protection</b>	Myles Christy	Ext: 244 Mobile: 07891236506
<b>Key Holders: Buildings Supervisors</b>	Matt McClements	Ext: 234 Home:91826252
	Peter Sharpe	Home: 91460823
<b>List updated</b>	PVP	April 2010

#### If a Critical Incident occurs (within school):

- Gather information quickly

1. Responsibility of PVP, Senior Teacher (Pastoral), Head of Year, Form Teachers (may be necessary to assemble a whole year group(s) in the assembly hall). Where information is coming from different sources, the central information point will be in HM Secretary's Office and passed onto S Cordner. *PVP to issue instruction.*
2. If necessary, General Office staff (and HM secretary and/or Bursar's Office staff) to assist and redirect pupils to Assembly Hall. *PVP to issue instruction.*
3. If whole school affected, General Office staff to sound Fire Alarm. Fire Drill procedures to be followed, with pupils assembling in the Outer Quad. *PVP to issue instruction.*
4. Once step 1 is complete, PVP and ST to collate information and brief HM.
5. HM to action Essential Tasks Checklist for Day 1. (Appendix 1)

**If a Critical Incident occurs (stemming from an action outside of school)  
Action pages 5 - 8**

- **Information to be recorded by individual contacted and passed onto HM.**
  1. HM to action Essential Tasks Checklist for Day 1.

**If a Critical Incident occurs (stemming from an action outside of school during  
holiday time) Action page 9**

## **Day 1 – Essential Tasks**

**If a Critical Incident occurs the following tasks will need to be completed and actioned in the order listed below:**

- Inform HM and PVP immediately.
- HM and/or PVP to ask General Office staff to contact individuals from the Intervention Team (contact details on page 2).
  - If counselling services to be involved with immediate effect, General Office to discuss and agree procedure. If possible, PVP should be consulted.
- HM or PVP to brief staff.
  - If at the start of day – during staff briefing;
  - If during the school day, staff and pupils will be instructed to assemble in specified year groups in the Assembly Hall. If Critical Incident is a fire, the fire bell will be sounded and all staff and pupils will assemble as per procedure.
- HM or PVP to inform all pupils.
- General Office (and Bursar's Department) to make contact with parents as appropriate.
- HM or PVP to make contact with media (if appropriate).
- HM or PVP to debrief staff at the end of Day 1.
- Senior Teacher with responsibility for cover to plan for cover/flexible timetable/rooms to be used for Day 2. May need to take into account that counselling services will also be available during days 2 and 3 and appropriate accommodation will be needed.

## **Day 2 – Essential Tasks** (Appendix 2 – Day 2 Checklist)

**The following tasks need to be completed and actioned in the order listed below:**

- Any further information/details/contacts that have come to light since Day 1 should have been recorded and passed onto HM and PVP.
- HM or PVP to brief staff on morning of Day 2.
- HM or PVP to hold two assemblies (Yrs 8 – 10, Yrs 11 – 14) and provide further information, inform pupils of routine for that day, including counselling provision that should now be in place within school. Communication should be factual, non emotive, unambiguous, calming and structured.
- General Office to provide additional information to parents, if appropriate.
- Identify pupils who may be 'high risk'.
- HM or PVP to brief staff at the end of Day 2.

## Short Term Actions

Could include:

- Hospital visits
- Get well cards/sympathy cards
- Funeral
  - Preparing pupils for funeral, what they are likely to see and hear.
  - Making arrangement for pupils to attend funeral.
- Police enquiry
  - If pupils are to be involved, prepare pupils for what might happen during the enquiry.
  - Make arrangements re where police can interview pupils.
- Facilitation of pupil/s returning to school
  - There will be a need to implement supportive strategies.
  - Head of Year, ST (Pastoral) and PVP to have discussed strategies.
- Ongoing contact with parents/guardians
- Memorials in school, short term (and longer term)
- Staff support
- Awareness that emotions in staff/pupils may not resurface until much later.

## Medium Term Actions

This would include:

- Monitoring of pupils.
- Re-establishing of school structure.
- Being mindful of pupil's and staff's needs.
- Reflection of incident, its management and ongoing needs (6 weeks after).

## Longer Term Actions

This would include:

- Reviewing actions taken:
  - what was effective,
  - what was not effective,
  - what have we learnt?
- Revise policy in light of experience.
- Discuss how to introduce themes of loss, change, death into the curriculum.
- Help pupils to deal with any kind of loss in the future.
- Support pupils and staff to acknowledge and adjust to the losses and changes.
- What skills do we required or need to have refreshed?
- Address the need for a longer term memorial.
- Acknowledge, where appropriate key dates (first anniversaries).
  
- **Ongoing monitoring of children who may be having difficulties – providing support and referring on as necessary.**

## Details of referrals made as a direct result of this incident

Name of pupil	Referred to	Referred by	Date of referral	Outcome

- **Ongoing support of staff re stress/bereavement coping, through meetings/talks/referral to staff support agencies.**

**Details of action taken**

**PERSON RESPONSIBLE**

\_\_\_\_\_

**Date:** \_\_\_\_\_

## **Essential Tasks**

**If a Critical Incident occurs during a holiday period, the following tasks will need to be completed and actioned:**

- Headmaster to be informed.
- Headmaster to contact the Chairman of the Board of Governors.
- Headmaster or PVP to inform Head of Year (if not already done).
- All staff to be contacted (via telephone) by either HM, PVP or AVP. HM to cover surname range A – F, PVP G – M and AVP N – Z. All Governors to be contacted in writing.
- Headmaster to issue media statement, if necessary, in consultation with PR company.
- PVP to organise support/counselling for Year Group directly affected. Ideally this support should run over two days, one either side of the funeral. External counsellors to be involved as well as Head of Year, Head of Section and PVP.
- Letter to be written by the Headmaster for the Year Group directly affected. Support information for pupils and parents to be enclosed. Letter to detail support/counselling arrangements as organised by PVP.
- Letter to be written by the Headmaster for the remaining school community and sent within a few days of critical incident.
- Extended assembly to be held on the first day back to school for the Year Group directly affected. This assembly should be led by HM or PVP.
- Assembly for all remaining year groups to be held on the first day back. This assembly should be led by HM or PVP.

**Reflection [to be completed 6 weeks after the event]**

**Details of key lessons learned through management of this event**

- Reviewing actions taken:
  - what was effective,
  - what was not effective,
  - was there enough support provided for staff?
  - was there enough staff visible in the corridors by way of supporting the pupils?
  - what have we learnt?

**COMPLETED BY:** \_\_\_\_\_

**ROLE:** \_\_\_\_\_

**Date:** \_\_\_\_\_

## Appendix 1

### Essential Tasks – Checklist – Day 1

1. Allocate roles to staff members

<b>Role</b>	<b>Person responsible</b>	<b>Contact Number</b>
Phone calls	General Office, Bursar's Dept	Barbara – Ext 200 Olive - Ext 201 Eleanor – Ext 204 Barbara – Ext 206
Staff briefing and debriefing	HM/PVP	
Pupils	HM/PVP	
Parents	General Office, Bursar's Dept (by phone), HM (by letter)	
Media	HM/PVP	

Done:  Time: \_\_\_\_\_ Date: \_\_\_\_\_

2. Establish a central information point:

Done:  Time: \_\_\_\_\_ Date: \_\_\_\_\_

Person responsible: HM's Secretary

3. Inform key people and seek support as appropriate:

<b>List of key contacts</b>	<b>Phone Number</b>	<b>Done?</b>
<b>SEELB</b>	Stanton Sloan - 90566200	
<b>John Adrain (Chairman B of G)</b>	07710117226	
<b>Critical Incident Response Team</b>	See page 153	
<b>Local Clergy</b>	See page 153	
<b>Police/Fire/Hospital</b>	See page 153	
<b>School Nurse</b>	Doreen Beggs Ext 222	
<b>School Psychologist</b>	Emer Smyth - 90566921	
<b>Familyworks</b>	Edith Bell	

<b>Key Holders</b>	Matt McClements (91826252)  Stephen Connolly (Home: 91852665) (Mob: 07814526501)	
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#### 4. Brief all staff

Provide:

- Clear information
- Advice regarding how to inform and support pupils
- Team working and practical arrangements
- Support for staff

Done:  By: \_\_\_\_\_ Time: \_\_\_\_\_ Date: \_\_\_\_\_

#### 5. Inform all pupils

Provide:

- Clear language (no euphemisms)
- Dispell rumour
- Offer support
- Age appropriate information

Done:  By: \_\_\_\_\_ Time: \_\_\_\_\_ Date: \_\_\_\_\_

#### 6. Make contact with parents as appropriate

By phone, letter or visit to home?

Done:  By: \_\_\_\_\_ Time: \_\_\_\_\_ Date: \_\_\_\_\_

#### 7. Contact with Media (if appropriate)

Provide:

- Prepared statement
- Measured tone

Done:  By: \_\_\_\_\_ Time: \_\_\_\_\_ Date: \_\_\_\_\_

#### 8. Debrief staff at end of Day 1

- Thank staff
- Advise about self care
- Outline procedure for Day 2

Done: By: \_\_\_\_\_ Time: \_\_\_\_\_ Date: \_\_\_\_\_

## Appendix 2

### Essential Tasks – Checklist – Day 2

1. Record any further information/detail/contacts that have come to light since yesterday.

Done:  By: \_\_\_\_\_ Time: \_\_\_\_\_ Date: \_\_\_\_\_

2. Maintain central information point

Person responsible: HM's Secretary

3. Plan for cover/flexible timetable/appropriate rooms etc as necessary

4. Brief staff on morning of Day 2

Provide:

- Practical arrangements
- Support for pupils
- Self-care

Done:  By: \_\_\_\_\_ Time: \_\_\_\_\_ Date: \_\_\_\_\_

5. Pupils

Provide:

- Further information (as appropriate)
- Care and support
- Comforting routine and predictability

- Pupils the opportunity to be involved/an outlet

**Details of action taken:**

<b>Pupil/Group of pupils</b>	<b>Action Taken</b>	<b>By Whom</b>	<b>Time</b>	<b>Date</b>

Person responsible \_\_\_\_\_ Date: \_\_\_\_\_

**6. Parents**

Provide further information (as appropriate)

**Details of action taken:**

Person responsible: \_\_\_\_\_ Date: \_\_\_\_\_

**7. Debriefing staff at end of Day 2**

Provide:

- Ongoing practical arrangements
- Longer term monitoring of pupils who may be at risk
- More detailed self-care advice

Done:  By: \_\_\_\_\_ Time: \_\_\_\_\_ Date: \_\_\_\_\_

### **Appendix 3**

#### **Procedure to follow if severe flooding occurs within the school building:**

##### **Flooding/Water Leakage:**

- Cut off water supply at main and other appropriate valves
- Check if electrical circuits or equipment have been affected by water
- Collect any further leaking water in containers/bins if possible
- Move equipment/materials in danger of water damage to a safer location
- Contact the appropriate Maintenance Officer(s) if the emergency occurs during working hours
- If the emergency occurs outside working hours and it is not possible to stop the flooding/leakage temporarily, contact appropriate contractors from the Board's Standing or Emergency Contractors Lists which were issued to all premises managers, to arrange for emergency repairs
- Contact the appropriate Senior Maintenance Officer if the emergency occurs outside working hours and it has not been possible for you to stop the flooding/leakage or to arrange for emergency repairs
- Advise the Board unless you have already contacted a Senior Maintenance Officer or Maintenance Officer so that arrangements can be made for permanent repair.

## **Appendix 4**

### **Procedure to follow if a fire occurs within the school building:**

#### **Fire:**

- Operate alarm(s) if appropriate.
- Evacuate the building if appropriate.
- Dial 999; ask for Fire Brigade, report the name and address of the building.
- Wait for Fire Brigade and take the Senior Fire Officer's advice.
- When the Fire Service allows access ensure that services (gas, electricity, water) are safe.
- Contact the appropriate Maintenance Officer(s) if the emergency occurs during working hours.
- If the emergency occurs outside working hours secure the premises temporarily (if possible) and contact the appropriate Senior Maintenance Officer on the Boards Emergency Telephone Number – (028) 90 566888.
- If the emergency occurs outside working hours and it is not possible for you to secure the premises temporarily, contact appropriate contractors from the Board's Standing or Emergency Contractors Lists which were issued to all premises managers, to arrange for the premises to be secured temporarily.
- Contact the appropriate Senior Maintenance Officer if the emergency occurs outside working hours and it has not been possible for you to secure the premises or to contact appropriate contractors.
- Re-set the Fire Alarm system if appropriate.
- Advise the Board unless you have already contacted a Senior Maintenance Officer or Maintenance Officer so that arrangements can be made for permanent repair.