

BROWNLEE PRIMARY SCHOOL



Critical Incidents Policy 2020

This policy was adopted by the Board of Governors in October 2020

It will be reviewed by the Board of Governors in September 2022 or at such times as new guidance becomes available or relevant legislation is passed.

CRITICAL INCIDENTS POLICY

The aim of this policy is to lessen the effect of a critical incident on the staff, students and parents at Brownlee Primary School. It is anticipated that by adopting the procedures outlined in this policy it will be possible to provide a more secure environment for everyone associated with the School.

What is a critical incident?

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 mechanisms.

Critical incidents may occur in school or out of school, but both types will have a major impact on staff and students. An incident might be designated as critical where the result is likely to be serious disruption to the running of the school, or where there is likely to be significant public and/or media attention on the school.

There can, of course, be no rigid formula for responding to incidents, but broadly speaking, it has been assumed that where damage to premises is the focus, the Education Authority will take the leading role in managing the crisis in collaboration with the school and other agencies. Where the crisis is related to people, such as in the event of a death or serious injury, the assumption is that the school is likely to take the lead, with the support of the Education Authority, as necessary.

Examples of in-school critical incidents (non-exhaustive)

- A serious accident to a child or adult
- The death of a student or member of staff through natural causes, such as an illness
- A traffic accident involving a student or staff member
- Violence or assault within school
- A school fire or explosion
- Destruction of part of the school building
- Abduction of a student
- A student or students absconding
- An illness such as meningitis within the school or the local community
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Examples of out-of-school critical incidents

- An accident to a student or staff while out of school on a visit or swimming etc.
- Death or injuries on a school journey
- Tragedies involving children from many schools, e.g. the tragedy at Hillsborough Football Ground
- Civil disturbances

Support Agencies and Personnel

A list of significant contacts and telephone numbers is included as an appendix to this document.

Intervention Team

A central component of this policy is the identification of the composition, roles and responsibilities of the Intervention Team.

The role of the team is to review and direct the handling of the incident and the response and recovery process in order to:

- Ensure the safety and security of students, staff, other users of the premises and visitors;
- Minimise the loss to the school in physical, human and financial terms;
- Manage an incident to minimise disruption to regular operations;
- Liaise with appropriate agencies, including the Media.

The Intervention Team will comprise the following personnel:

- Principal – Mr Elliott. Key Member. He is the first point of contact and is responsible for liaising with all parties concerned and affected.
- Chair of Governors – Mr Gordon Lindsay
- The School's Designated Child Protection Teacher and Vice Principal – Mrs Wendy-Anne McFarland. She deputises in the absence of the Principal.
- Building Supervisor – Mr Edmond Hodgen.
- School Secretaries – Mrs Catherine McAteer and Mrs Clare Oliver. Principal will brief the secretaries on information to be released. They are to keep records of all phone calls made and information given.

The Intervention Team will, dependent upon the nature of the incident itself, be concerned with any of the following issues:

- Adequate assessment of hazards and situations which may require emergency action;
- Analysis of requirements to address these hazards; establishment of liaison with all relevant emergency services; development of an effective management plan;
- Dissemination of planned procedures;
- Organisation of practice drills to test the plan;
- Regular review of this plan;
- Assisting the Principal with all aspects of the implementation of the plan;
- Arranging staff development activities, where necessary.

N.B. The team is to meet annually to become acquainted with changing situations, personnel and each other's roles.

Practice within school

Individual class teachers have an important role to play in managing critical incidents and may well be the best people to deal with the pupils in their classes. The main role of specialist agencies is one of support, empowerment and to support students who cannot be helped by the teachers within the school alone. In times of crises, teachers must react as they feel is appropriate and there can be no easy formula for dealing with critical incidents but by ensuring good communication within school a crisis may be managed more effectively.

By outlining the appropriate actions to be taken in the event of a critical incident, the school aims to reduce the effect that the incident might have on the pupils and wider community.

Procedures during an incident

1. The Principal must be informed of any critical incident as soon as possible.
2. As soon as an incident is confirmed, the Intervention Team will meet to decide strategies in the Principal's Office (Central Information Point)
3. The rest of the staff will be informed as soon as possible, preferably at a specially convened staff meeting.
4. All staff should share the same information.
5. Students will be told information simply and sensitively, without fabrication, preferably in smaller group situations, e.g. siblings, close friends, class group etc.
6. The School will try, as far as possible, to keep to the normal routine.
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ACTION PLAN

Major incidents require the following procedures:

- Set up a communication network.
- Convene the Intervention Team in Central Information Point (Principal's Office).
- Inform immediately the Crisis and Bereavement Service at the Education Authority.
- Collect, record and convey as much accurate information as possible.

Identify two telephonists to staff:

- School phone, ClassDojo and email communication – School Secretaries
- Use the up to date list of students' next of kin (SIMS) and contact parents of affected children
- Record all actions
- Letter home to parents (If and when applicable) outlining incident information and funeral arrangements etc.
- Principal, alone, to act as 'press officer' (Template in Appendix 2)
- Refusal of access to press/television on school premises.

Action Plan Timeline

| Action | Timescale |
|---|--------------------------|
| Obtain factual information at the start | Within hours |
| Staff meeting with support personnel | Within hours |
| Advise Crisis/Bereavement Service | Within hours |
| Convene the Critical Incidents Team | Within hours |
| Contact families | Immediately |
| Inform senior students in small groups | Same day if possible |
| Arrange a debriefing meeting for staff involved | Same day if possible |
| Arrange debriefing for students directly involved | Same day if possible |
| Identify high risk students and staff | Following day |
| Promote discussion in classes | Following days and weeks |
| Identify the need for group or individual treatment | Over days and weeks |
| Organise counselling | As required |
| Mark anniversary (discreetly) | Annually |

It is expected that Education Authority will:

- Advise the Public Relations Unit so that appropriate assistance is given to the school.
- Ensure that the appropriate Officers, including Health & Safety, are advised of the crisis so that the best possible level of support can be made immediately available, as appropriate.
- Ensure that those agencies or services who are skilled in offering counselling are alerted to the crisis so that support is available as soon as seen to be appropriate. In determining the timing of the above response by the Education Authority, the Chief Executive needs to be guided by the Principal, making certain that the support offered is timed to acknowledge the School's own response to the tragedy.

COVID-19

Any incidents relating to COVID-19 will involve obtaining advice from the Public Health Agency and the Education Authority. This advice will be followed in line with the school's COVID-19 procedures and this will continue to be updated accordingly. The contact numbers for an outbreak of COVID-19 with Brownlee Primary School are;

PHA helpline 95 360484

EA helpline 90 418056

EA Cleaning Service 90 418057

Appendix

Other Appendices are contained in A Guide to Managing Critical Incidents in Schools. This is stored in the bookcase in the Principal's office and is also available in the C2K Public Folder. (public-teachers-critical incident)

List of Useful Contacts

| Contact / Role | Name | Phone | Email if Appropriate |
|--------------------------------------|-------------------------------------|--|--|
| Principal | Mr Colin Elliott | 07720 260161 028 38830955 | celliott551@c2kni.net celliott47@yahoo.co.uk |
| Vice Principal | Mrs Wendy-Anne McFarland | 0771 8375562 028 40629875 | wmcfarland295@c2kni.net wendyannemcfarland@yahoo.co.uk |
| Building Supervisor | Mr Edmond Hodgen | 0778 84437755 028 38849529 | ehodgen@sky.com |
| Chair of Governors | Mr Gordon Lindsay | 0781 5864904 028 92670130 | gordon@malin1plus.com |
| EA Critical Incident Response Team | | 02837512515 | |
| EA Maintenance Officer | Mr John Hamilton | 028 90566200 07810 520993 | John.hamilton@eani.org.uk |
| PSNI Lisburn | | 0845 600 8000 or 999 | |
| Lisburn Fire Station | | 028 9266 4221 Or 999 | |
| School Nurse | Ms Jill Megarry | 028 92 501359 0771 9712332 | |
| Lisburn Health Centre | | 028 9260 3088 | |
| Gateway Team | | 028 9050 7000 Out of Hours 028 9504 9999 | |
| Local Church | Rev. Michael Davidson | 07787 912072 028 92667010 | mdavidson@presbyterianireland.org |
| Staff Welfare | Mrs Lynette Bailie | 028 9056 6276 | lynette.bailie@eani.org.uk |
| Education Psychologist | Mrs Roz Richardson | 028 90566923 07900 688320 | Roz.richardson@eani.org.uk |
| Education Welfare | Alina Knox | 028 95985541 | alina.knox@eani.org.uk |
| Main Keyholder | Mrs Jackie Wilson | 028 92602497 07963 796957 | jackiewilson996@gmail.com |
| Legal and Insurance EA | Mr Bill Harper Mrs Anita Bahrani | 028 90566463 | bill.harper@eani.org.uk anita.bahrani@eani.org.uk |
| Counselling ISupportU | Mrs Michelle McGrath | 07729 924317 | shell999@hotmail.co.uk |
| Department of Education Press Office | | 028 9127 927 | |
| Special Needs Statmenting Officer | Mrs Julie Mercer | 028 90566200 | Julie.mercer@eani.org.uk |