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**Critical Incidents**

**Policy**

**September 2018**

**Updated: January 2019**

**Review Date: September 2020**

**Rationale – What is a Critical Incident?**

A critical incident can be defined as any sudden and unexpected incident or sequence of events which causes trauma within a school community and which overwhelms the normal coping mechanisms of that school.

As a critical incident is likely to have a severe impact upon the school, both in the short and long term, our aim is to ensure that school strategies and procedures are in place to protect the physical and emotional wellbeing of every member of the school community.

**Examples of Critical Incidents that can affect a school**

A critical incident is likely to involve death or serious injury to one or more members of the school community and, or, their families either at school, journeying to or from school, participating in a school related activity, at home or in some other context.

Incidents that have affected schools:

* Sudden death of pupil or member of staff;
* Disappearance of a pupil or member of staff;
* Death or injury of a pupil or staff member on a school outing;
* Severe injury to pupil or staff member as a result of road traffic accident;
* Serious assault on pupil or staff member in school;
* Violent/disturbed intruder on school premises during school day;
* Serious damage to school building or property through fire, flood or vandalism;
* Civil disturbance in local community;
* Pupil with contagious illness;
* Immediate evacuation of the school with no likelihood of return for a number of hours.

**Purpose of this policy**

* To manage the incident and meet the needs of the whole school community
* To ensure that swift and appropriate action is taken in the case of the school being made aware that a critical incident has occurred
* To ensure that the welfare of pupils and staff is paramount
* To create a positive, open, communicative climate where the needs of staff and pupils are met in critical incident situations
* To ensure that the school responds in a sensitive, consistent and effective manner which reduces confusion, panic and extreme emotion
* To create a safe school environment whereby the physical, social and psychological health of pupils and staff is prioritised
* To have in place a Critical Incident Management Team, the membership of which is known to all relevant parties (see Appendix 1)
* To have in place a Critical Incident Management Plan, the details of which are familiar to all relevant parties (see Appendix 2)
* To maintain normality, as far as possible, in parts of the school which are not affected and to restore normality as soon as possible to the parts which are affected
* To have immediate access to all relevant contact details (including outside agencies)
* To offer sensitive, non-intrusive support in the short and medium term to all those affected directly or indirectly by the incident

**Guidelines for managing a Critical Incident**

* The Principal will take charge of the school’s response. In the case of the Principal being unavailable, the Senior teacher in liaison with the members of the Critical Incident Management Team (CIMT) will take charge. The Principal’s office will be the central liaison point.
* The CIMT will assess immediate practical needs
* The CIMT will contact next of kin of those directly involved if required
* A short simple statement of facts will be prepared by the Principal or Senior Teacher (see Appendix 3)
* All contacts from the media will be dealt with by the Principal or Senior Teacher
* Secretarial staff taking incoming calls will use a statement agreed by the CIMT
* When necessary, all members of staff will be informed and will be guided in relation to informing pupils
* The CIMT will determine the involvement of parents if appropriate
* Short and long term support will be offered to those affected
* There will be an evaluation of the way in which the incident was dealt with

**Appendices**

**Appendix 1** Critical Incident Management Team

**Appendix 2** Critical Incident Management Plan

**Appendix 3** Sample media press releases, statements and announcements for the

Principal and/or Senior Teacher, letter for parents

**Appendix 4** Evacuation Plan

**Appendix 5** Procedures for Critical Incident Management & CriticalIncident Report

Booklet

**Appendix 6 & 7** What and how pupils are to be told when a critical incident arises

**Appendix 8** Children and Young People’s Understanding of Death

**Appendix 9** List of useful contacts

**Appendix 10** Death by suspected suicide - staff guidelines

**Appendix 11** Information for parents – How to help your child

**APPENDIX 1**

**Members of the Critical Incident Management Team**

* Principal - Mrs McCann
* Senior Teacher – Mr Davidson
* Designated Teacher for Child Protection – Mrs Stewart
* Chair of Board of Governors or other member in his/her absence – Canon I Ellis or Mrs V Methven
* Non-teaching staff member – Mrs Heidi Graham
* School Secretary – Mrs Cheryl Spiers

(Other members of staff may be additional members of the CIMT as and when required. One/two members of staff may be asked to take responsibility for the normal running of the school whilst the CIMT is engaged in dealing with the incident.)

**APPENDIX 2**

**CRITICAL INCIDENT MANAGEMENT PLAN**

**General Information**

Preventative Strategies

* Regular review of relevant policies e.g. Health and Safety
* First Aid training
* Fire Drills
* PDMU Programme
* Preparation for the Eventuality of a Critical Incident
* A Critical Incident Report Booklet will be drafted
* Members of the CIMT will have ready access to pupil, staff and Governor contact details
* Members of the CIMT will have a register of emergency services and relevant outside agencies (See Critical Incident Report Booklet)
* Relevant members of staff (CIMT) will have a register of emergency services and relevant outside agencies (See Critical Incident Report Booklet Appendix 5)
* In the case of the site having to be evacuated, a venue to which pupils will be taken to will be identified (see Appendix 4)
* Opportunities to explore sensitive issues such as tragedy and death will be built into the PDMU and pastoral programmes

**In the Event of a Critical Incident:**

**Initial Response**

* The Principal (or Senior Teacher) should be contacted first
* The Principal (or Senior Teacher) should seek to clarify from relevant sources the nature and circumstances of the incident
* The CIMT will meet at the earliest opportunity and agree on procedures for managing the critical incident (See Appendix 5)
* If the incident is on site, health and safety measures will be put in place and the emergency services contacted
* Respond to any inevitable risk or threat e.g. evacuation or first aid
* Notify the other relevant authorities and agreed parties
* Agree the school routine for the day
* Inform staff – as soon as it happens - factual information on what has occurred, how the incident will be handled and how they can contribute to the school’s response. At the end of the day staff should be formally debriefed and any absent teachers should be briefed on the situation.

The initial briefing to staff should:

* give a brief statement of factual information; outline the school’s response and proposed plan of action;
* allow staff to ask questions and to get a response; outline staff responsibility for monitoring pupil and staff welfare;
* identify vulnerable staff and pupils who may be at risk;
* clarify specific responsibilities for staff;
* advise staff on procedure for dealing with media enquiries;
* advise staff on agreed procedure for informing pupils and parents;
* inform staff of the support services that are available;
* reassure staff and pupils that they will be supported; and
* advise staff of time/place of next briefing and debriefing session
* Update staff during the day on developments if
* Set up a recovery / designated room
* Inform parents and pupils
* Prepare and adapt a media statement (liaison with EA)
* Assess the initial impact of the critical incident on staff and pupils

Inform the pupils – as soon as possible. Be aware of the range of different groups and ages of pupils and ensure they are informed using appropriate language and methods of communication that they are familiar with. Use small groupings e.g. in a classroom setting. Agree what pupils are to be told as well as how they are to be told (see Appendix 6 & 7). Teachers will use a carefully worded announcement to read aloud in the classrooms.

If a death has occurred, it is important that the bereaved family’s right to privacy is respected and will include a statement of condolence as well as support arrangements to be put in place and how these can be accessed. Staff should be aware that young people’s understanding of death will depend on their cognitive and developmental stage (Appendix 8 provides information on the concept and common reactions to death in various age ranges).

Longer Term Issues

* School structures and routines will be re-established as soon as possible
* Supportive strategies / programmes for pupils and staff will be implemented
* There will be on-going contact with parents
* Actions taken will be reviewed and policies amended if appropriate
* The PDMU and pastoral programmes will be reviewed
* Staff will be mindful of anniversaries and other special dates

A critical incident can happen during weekends or holidays as well as during school hours so a copy of all information will be held at home by the Principal and Senior Teacher if such an incident arises.

**The use of appropriate outside agencies is crucial to providing long term support as is the use of appropriately trained members of staff who are known to those in need of help.**

**STAFF TRAINING**

All staff will be made aware and briefed on the Critical Incident Policy and Procedures. The Principal, who will manage the Critical Incident, will attend any relevant updated training.

**USEFUL RESOURCES**

A Guide to Managing Critical Incidents in Schools - DENI

Social Workers

Critical Incident Management Plan

Relevant School Policies.

**APPENDIX 3**

**Sample Announcements**

Announcements to pupils

Advice for teachers

Remember announcements should be simple, straightforward and sincere. The following examples provide a suggested structure and are not intended to be adhered to rigidly. After the announcement pupils should be assured that they will have the opportunity to talk about the critical incident.

1. Fatality After a Road Traffic Accident

We are taking this time to think about \_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_, a Year \_ pupil who died last night in a road traffic accident. \_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_ was travelling with his/her family to \_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_ when the accident occurred. We do not know any further details about the accident at this time except that the rest of the family is safe.

\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_’s funeral is being held at \_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_ on \_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_. A funeral is a special time to remember a person who has died. The school will let your families know about the funeral arrangements in a letter which will be sent home tomorrow.

Let’s take a moment of silence to think of \_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_, to remember all the good things about her/him and to say goodbye. In our silence we will express our loving thoughts.

2. After A Sudden Death

Sadly, a tragedy has happened in our school community. \_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_, a Year \_ pupil has died suddenly. We want to respect the family’s need for privacy at this time but you will be given information about funeral arrangements as soon as possible. This kind of tragic news is hard to accept. You may experience many feelings within the next few days. Everyone deals with loss differently and it is important to respect the way others grieve. We want to listen to your feelings and concerns so support staff are available in \_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_. Feel free to arrange to go there and talk to someone.

3. After a suspected suicide…

A tragedy has happened. …………………………, a Year pupil, has died suddenly. Details of ………………….’s premature death will not be released to protect the privacy of family members. You will be given information about funeral arrangements as soon as possible. This kind of tragic news is hard to accept. You may experience many feelings within the next few days. Everyone deals with loss differently. It is important to respect the way others grieve. Counsellors are available in ………...... Feel free to arrange to go and talk to the counsellors. They want to listen to your feelings and concerns.

**PRESS RELEASE**

Information for Staff

1. Schools are under no obligation to speak to the press. If, however, schools feel it is necessary to issue press statements the following guidance may be useful. Remember that support and guidance are available from the Education Authority Communications Officers. They will act on behalf of schools when asked.
2. Press statements can be issued and updated as new and accurate information becomes available. Explain that the whole school has been deeply shocked and that all available resources and support services have been gathered. Outline what steps are being taken to provide support for students and staff in an effort to get things back to ‘normal’ as soon as possible.
3. Press statements should include:

* Facts about the incident, what has been done and what is planned.
* Information regarding the implementation of the school’s Critical Incident Management Plan and the fact that the situation is under control.
* Affirmation of the principles of critical incident management in order to reduce and prevent further stress; stabilise the situation; normalise and promote the functioning of the school, its staff and pupils; and ensure everyone receives the help they need.

**MEDIA INTERVIEWS**

INFORMATION FOR STAFF

1. It can be difficult to manage media interviews especially when a school is dealing with a critical incident. A school should think carefully before agreeing to any interview(s). Advice should be sought from Communications Officers. It is important in advance of a media interview to ascertain the main focus of the message, for example, is it about providing public reassurance or is it about clarifying public misunderstanding.
2. Schools should have a ‘one spokesperson’ practice. The spokesperson should be well briefed on the details and expectations of the interviewer. Briefing should include the most likely questions that may be asked. Negative lines of questioning and difficult questions should be anticipated and appropriate responses prepared. If media deadlines cannot be met it is essential to say so and to keep to new deadlines if agreed.
3. Before making a media statement. The school’s spokesperson should:

* liaise with the Chair of the Board of Governors and/or relevant Education Authority Communications Officers in order to identify two or three key messages to be highlighted;
  + write these down before the interview and refine for accuracy, clarity, simplicity and impact;
  + keep spoken comments simple, factual and short so that key points such as what has been done so far, are not edited out;
  + be aware that interviews, if not live, may be edited and comments taken out of context;
* take time to respond to questions and seek clarification if necessary;
* be aware of legal issues, particularly the language/terminology used;
* avoid making comments which imply blame or fault for any part of the incident, as there could be significant legal implications;
* remember that official enquiries are likely to follow serious incidents. Media comments on the public record may have a bearing on such proceedings;
* avoid ‘off the record’ comments at all times;
* express concern and the school’s grief, restricting answers to facts and accentuating the positive developments following the event.

Sample PRESS RELEASE 1

**School grieves sudden death of pupil**

As reported by the PSNI, a pupil at Newcastle Primary School died tragically on …………………. The circumstances of …………………………’s death are not known at this time and an investigation is currently ongoing.

This is a tragic loss to ………………………….’s family and to our school community. To assist in supporting our staff and pupils through this time of grief, additional trained staff from the EA’s Critical Incident

Response Team have been assigned to the school to provide support. A letter has been sent by the school to parents, informing them of this incident and providing information on the support services available

through the school.

A special assembly to remember ………………………… has been arranged for ……………………….

Contact: Mrs Jennifer McCann, Principal of Newcastle Primary School at 028 43722559

Sample Press Release 2

Date

As reported by the PSNI, \_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_ (use caution if naming a pupil), a pupil at \_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_ school died tragically on \_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_. The circumstances of \_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_’s death are not known at this time and an investigation is currently on-going.

This is a tragic loss to \_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_’s family and to our school community. To assist in supporting our staff and pupils through this time of grief, additional trained staff from the EA’s Critical Incident Response Team has been assigned to the school to provide support. A letter has been sent by the school to parents, informing them of this incident and providing information on the support services available through the school.

A special assembly to remember \_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_ has been arranged for \_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_.

Contact: \_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_ Principal, \_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_ School at \_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_.

Sample Press Release 3

**Historic school destroyed by fire**

Date

\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_ School was destroyed by fire in the early hours of \_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_ morning. Fire and Rescue Services and the PSNI responded to a 999 call reporting the blaze at \_\_\_\_ am/pm on \_\_\_\_. There were no injuries reported. The cause of the fire is under investigation. Damage is estimated at £ \_\_\_ million.

“It is a tragedy to have lost this school, not only for our students and their families, but for our community.” \_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_, Chairperson of the Board of Governors said. “Schools are much more than a place of learning. They are where our communities meet for special events, to vote and to play. \_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_ school, in particular, was a landmark in our community with historical building designation.” \_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_ School was built in 1906 and has undergone substantial renovations in recent years.

Arrangements have been made to house \_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_ school’s \_\_\_\_\_\_\_ pupils at \_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_ for the remainder of this school term, with the addition of temporary classrooms at \_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_. All parents were contacted by telephone on Sunday.

To assist in supporting our staff and pupils through this time of shock and loss, additional trained staff from the EA’s Critical Incident Response Team have been assigned to the school to provide support.

Contact: \_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_ Chair of Board of Governors of: \_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_

School at: \_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_.

**PREPARED STATEMENT FOR MEDIA**

We are sorry to learn of the tragic………………………………. of ................................................

We hope at this time the school would be given the privacy needed to support our pupils at this difficult time, etc.

NB: If the Principal wishes to comment about the pupil, they may want to gain permission from the family to include:

Sporting achievements

Musical talents

Academic success

Personal attributes

**SAMPLE LETTER TO PARENTS**

**PRO FORMA LETTER (for parents) -** Informing parents of a sudden death

SAMPLE 1

Date:

Dear Parent

It is with great sadness that I have to inform you of the sudden death of \_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_ use caution if naming a pupil (a pupil in Year \_\_\_\_\_\_/a Year \_\_\_\_\_ Teacher). The pupils were told this morning by their Principal/class/form teacher.

\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_ died of (an asthma attack, meningitis etc) and the pupils have been reassured this is something that does not happen very often. Your child may or may not want to talk about it but it is likely that he/she will need extra love and support from you in the days ahead. This does not mean that anything is wrong with him/her. It only means that this traumatic event has been too powerful for him/her to deal with on his/her own. He/she may be feeling anxious. Take time to listen to your child and try to provide a predictable routine for him/her at home. Avoid too many absences to start with.

We have enclosed an information leaflet for you which may be useful at this time.

Trained staff from the Education Authority’s Critical Incident Response Team are helping to support us through this difficult time. It is sometimes necessary for a member of the team to speak to a class or to individual pupils who may be distressed. He/she will be guided by the Principal/class teacher in this. If you do not wish your child to receive such support from the team, please contact us immediately.

We are deeply saddened by this great loss but are trying, for the pupils’ sake, to keep the school environment as normal as possible. Our thoughts are with \_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_’s family at this tragic time and the school community sends them sincerest sympathy and support.

\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_’s funeral is on \_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_ at \_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_ am/pm at \_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_. We are in touch with the family regarding their wishes for the school’s representation at the Service.

If you require further clarification or have any concerns, please do not hesitate to contact me.

Yours sincerely

PRINCIPAL

**SAMPLE 2**

Date:

Dear Parent/ Carer

It is with great sadness that I have to inform you of the sudden death of NAME, (a pupil in Year XX/ a Year XX Teacher/ Learning Support Assistant, etc). The children were told this morning by their class teacher/ Principal at assembly.

NAME died of (an asthma attack, meningitis etc) and the children have been assured this is something that does not happen very often. Your child may or may not want to talk about it but it is likely that he/ she will need extra love and support from you in the days ahead. This does not mean that anything is wrong with him/ her. It only means that this traumatic event has been too powerful for him/ her to deal with on his/her own. He/ she may be feeling anxious. Take time to listen to your child and try to provide a predictable routine for him/ her at home. Avoid too many absences to start with.

We have enclosed an information leaflet for you which may be useful at this time.

Trained staff from the EA’s Critical Incident Response Team are helping to support us through this difficult time. It is sometimes necessary for a member of the team to speak to a class or individual pupils who may be distressed. He/she will be guided by the Principal/ class teacher in this.

If you do not wish your child to receive such support from the team, please contact us immediately.

We are deeply saddened by this great loss but are trying, for the children’s sake, to keep the school environment as normal as possible. Our thoughts are with NAME’s family at this tragic time and the school community sends them sincerest sympathy and support.

NAME’s funeral is on DAY/ DATE at TIME am/pm at (Name of Church or Crematorium). We are in touch with the family regarding their wishes for the school’s representation at the Service.

Yours sincerely

**APPENDIX 4**

**Evacuation Plan**

In the event of having to evacuate the school building the emergency evacuation plan will be followed as per fire drills.

In the event of having to evacuate the school grounds the following emergency area has been arranged:

SERC, Castlewellan Road, Newcastle, BT33 0UR

Teachers and staff will supervise the evacuation of their respective classes, check areas and ensure a safe and orderly passage to the above area via the pedestrian gate from the adventure playground into Dunwellan.

**TEACHERS WILL BE RESPONSIBLE FOR REGISTERS AND PUPIL CONTACT INFORMATION.**

**APPENDIX 5**

**Procedures for Critical Incident Management & Critical Incident Report Booklet**

**Principal/ Senior Teacher**

* Seeks clarification
* Summons the CIMT to inform of incident
* Prepares relevant statements/letters
* Liaises with relevant staff
* Ensures health and safety measures are in place
* Convenes and informs staff
* Contacts relevant parents
* Arranges staff cover if appropriate – or delegates a teacher to arrange this

**Secretary**

* Ensures phone lines are operative
* Calls emergency services if appropriate
* Contacts external agencies

**Teachers**

* Ensure the physical and emotional wellbeing of pupils

**Critical Incident Report Booklet**

**Initial Report**

Information received from: \_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_

Contact details: \_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_

Name of person informed: \_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_

Information passed to: \_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_

(Name of person with overall responsibility)

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

**Details of incident received so far:**

**Unconfirmed reports:**

**Details of people known to be involved:**

|  |  |  |  |  |
| --- | --- | --- | --- | --- |
| **Name** | **Pupil / Member**  **Of staff or local**  **community** | **Involvement - describe** | **Known/**  **Suspected** | **Contact details** |
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**Immediate Action**

Critical Incident Team Management Informed:

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

Arrange meeting of Critical Incident Management Team:

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

Staff members on Critical Incident Response Team: -

Name and Mobile telephone number:

Mrs Jennifer McCann – 07803201204

Mr Aaron Davidson – 07731359827

Mrs Karen Stewart - 07835166990

Canon Ian Ellis – 07930256564

Mrs Vikki Methven – 07762102832

Mrs Heidi Graham – 07884072082

Mrs Cheryl Spiers - 07888828273

**Essential Tasks – Checklist**

**Stage 1**

Central Information Point is the Principal’s Office

**1. Hold a meeting of CIMT to assess the on-going danger**

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

* Assess the ongoing danger and take necessary action e.g. evacuation / first aid / emergency services
* Find out facts and assess its significance for the school
* Determine the response that will be implemented. This can be reviewed as new information emerges.
* Establish a central information point
* Set up dedicated phone line

**2. Allocate roles to staff members**

* Phone calls
* Staff briefing & debriefing Pupils
* Parents
* Media
* Practical arrangements (eg staff cover)
* Secretarial Staff/ Emergency Services/Health and Safety

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

1. **Inform key people and seek support as appropriate / link with other agencies:**

**List of key contacts. Phone number**

Chair of Governors 07930256564

Fire/Ambulance/Police 999

Police 028

Doctor/Health Centre 028

Downe Hospital 028 44613311

Key holder – Mr John Kelly 07756857967

Education Authority (SE Region) 028 90566200

Critical Incident Response Team Education Authority – 028 37512515

SE Health and Social Care Trust (Newcastle) – 028 4373346

Crisis/Bereavement Service 028 90566875

Counselling 4 Youth 028 90731571

CRUSE 028 90323986

Childline 028 90327773

Youthline 0808 8088000

Relate Teen 028 90326709

Samaritans 08457 909090

Child Death Helpline 0800 282986

Staffcare Services 0500 127079

NSPCC 028 90351135

DENI 028 91279279

BBC (Radio Ulster) 028 90338000

UTV 028 90328122

Downtown Radio 028 91615555

Translink Downpatrick 028 44612384

Newcastle 028 43722296

Educational Psychologist 028 90566200

Education Welfare Officer 028 90566327

Care Call 028 90245821

1. **Brief all staff.**

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

Done: By: \_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_

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

**5. Inform all pupils.**

* Think - Clear language (no euphemisms)
* Dispel rumour
* Offer support
* Age appropriate
* Are there pupils more closely affected who need to be informed
* separately or in a small group?

Done: By: \_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_

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

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

* Think:
  + by phone
  + by letter
  + visit to home ?

Done: By: \_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_

How ? \_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_

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

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

Think:

* prepared statement
* measured tone

Done: By: \_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_

How ? \_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_

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

**8. Debrief staff at the end of Stage 1/ end of day.**

Think:

* thank staff
* advise about self-care
* info about next day

Done: By: \_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_

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

**9. Meeting of CIMT**

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

**Essential Tasks – Checklist**

**Stage 2**

**1. Record any further information/details/contacts that have come t0 light since yesterday**

Done: By: \_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_

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

* Maintain central information point.
* Maintain dedicated phone line.

**2. Plan for cover/flexible timetable/appropriate rooms/refreshments etc. as necessary.**

**3. Brief staff on morning of Stage 2**

Think –

* Practical arrangements
* Support for pupils
* Self-care

Done: By: \_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_

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

**4. Pupils**

* Providing further information (as appropriate).
* Showing care and support.
* Providing comforting routine and predictability.
* Allowing pupils some involvement / outlet.
* e.g. cards / drawings / poems / ceremonies.

**Details of action taken:**

|  |  |  |  |  |
| --- | --- | --- | --- | --- |
| **Individual/Group/Class** | **Action Taken** | **By Whom** | **Time** | **Date** |
|  |  |  |  |  |
|  |  |  |  |  |
|  |  |  |  |  |

**5. Parents**

* Providing further information (as appropriate) e.g. letter/meetings etc.

**Details of action taken:**

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

* Consideration of memorial services

**6. Debriefing staff at end of Stage 2.**

Think

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

Done: By: \_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_

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

**7. Debriefing CIMT at end of Stage 2.**

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

**Essential Tasks – Checklists**

**Longer Term Actions**

**1.**Referrals for pupils.

**2.** Funerals, services, rituals and ceremonies (e.g. memory books, artwork, school event, planting tree).

**3.** Re-establishment of feelings of safety and predictability among school community.

**4.** Ongoing support of pupils and staff.

**5.** School support for families affected by the incident.

**6.** Ongoing monitoring of children who may be having difficulties – providing support and referring on as necessary.

**Potential Referral Agencies Telephone number**

Counselling 4 Youth 028 90731571

Educational Psychology 028 90566200

Education Welfare 028 905656327

Family Works 028 91821721

**Details of referrals made as a direct result of this incident:**

|  |  |  |  |  |
| --- | --- | --- | --- | --- |
| **Name** | **Referred to** | **Referred by** | **Date of referral** | **Outcome** |
|  |  |  |  |  |
|  |  |  |  |  |
|  |  |  |  |  |

Person responsible for the above referrals: Mrs J McCann, Principal/SENCo

**6.** On-going support of staff on stress/bereavement coping, through meetings/ talks/ referral to staff support agencies.

**Details of action taken:**

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

**7.** Anticipate events/anniversaries/reminders that may be difficult or upsetting in the future and plan to support staff and pupils.

**Details of action taken:**

**REFLECTION**

**(To be completed 6 weeks after the event)**

Details of key lessons learned through management of this event.

Completed by: \_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_ Date: \_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_

Signed: \_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_ Date: \_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_

(For the Board of Governors)

Signed: \_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_ Date: \_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_

(Principal)

**Appendix 6 & 7**

**What and how pupils are to be told when a Critical Incident Arises**

**ANNOUNCEMENTS TO PUPILS**

**ADVICE FOR TEACHERS**

Remember announcements should be simple, straightforward and sincere. The following examples provide a suggested structure and are not intended to be adhered to rigidly. After the announcement pupils should be assured that they will have the opportunity to talk about the critical incident.

1. Fatality After a Road Traffic Accident

We are taking this time to think about \_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_, a Primary \_\_ pupil who died last night in a road traffic accident. \_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_ was travelling with her family to \_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_ when the accident occurred. We do not know any further details about the accident at this time except that the rest of the family is safe.

\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_’s funeral is being held at \_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_ on \_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_. A funeral is a special time to remember a person who has died. The school will let your families know about the funeral arrangements in a letter which will be sent home tomorrow.

Let’s take a moment of silence to think of \_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_, to remember all the good things about her and to say goodbye. In our silence we will express our loving thoughts.

2. After A Sudden Death

Sadly, a tragedy has happened in our school community. \_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_, a Primary \_\_ pupil has died suddenly. We want to respect the family’s need for privacy at this time but you will be given information about funeral arrangements as soon as possible.

This kind of tragic news is hard to accept. You may experience many feelings within the next few days. Everyone deals with loss differently and it is important to respect the way others grieve. We want to listen to your feelings and concerns so support staff are available in \_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_. Feel free to arrange to go there and talk to someone.

BREAKING THE NEWS TO PUPILS

ADVICE FOR TEACHERS

Before telling the pupils about an incident consideration needs to be given to issuing the “Information sheet for Pupils” and allowing time for discussion.

If the incident involves the disappearance or sudden death of a pupil or member of staff it is important to consider the wishes of “the family” and remember their right to privacy.

Teachers should relay the information, agreed at the staff briefing, to pupils at schools - preferably at the same time. Relaying the information to vulnerable pupils and pupils absent from school also needs to be considered. Any “news” should contain appropriate language and factual information only with clear, concise, “bite size” explanations delivered in a calm manner.

REMEMBER

Be patient - you many have to repeat the information many times. Be honest, specific and straightforward - it is acceptable to say you do not have all the answers. Be available for the pupil. Monitor initial reactions.

Allow time for pupils to discuss their feelings. Provide reassurance and information about the school support which is available. Inform pupils of a designated area should they be unable to stay in class. Monitor ongoing and developing reactions. Refer on for additional support if in doubt.

Share your own feelings, if appropriate; acknowledge the pupil’s feelings: if necessary, use pictures and social stories to aid understanding.

Be prepared that a pupil may come back and ask more questions.

Be proactive: if you can, have information ready for possible questions. Assure pupils they will be kept updated.

**Appendix 8**

**CHILDREN AND YOUNG PEOPLE’S UNDERSTANDING OF DEATH**

**INFORMATION FOR STAFF**

Children and young people’s understanding of death will depend on their cognitive and developmental stage. They will revisit the loss as they mature, reach significant milestones and become more able to talk about their experiences and questions in relation to death. Children and young people with learning difficulties will progress through the developmental stages at a slower pace or indeed may remain at an early stage in their understanding of death.

Children and young people do experience similar feelings to adults following a death but often express their feelings differently depending on their development age.

|  |  |  |
| --- | --- | --- |
| Age | Concept of Death | Possible Reactions |
| **2 to 5 years** | • Death seen as reversible  • May feel they have caused the death  • Magical thinking - make up fantasies to fill gaps in knowledge | • Fears abandonment and separation  • Loud protest  • Despair  • Indignant at changes in patterns or routine  • Sleep problems  • May revert to “baby” behaviours |
| **5 to 11 years** | • More exposure to death and understanding of death as permanent | • Withdrawal, sadness, loneliness, depression  • Anger, guilt, temper tantrums, nightmares  • Behaviour, learning or school problems  • Perfect child, brave and in control  • May become preoccupied with death |
| **Over 11 years** | • Death permanent  • Denial - it can’t happen | • Withdrawal, sadness, depression, loneliness  • Anger, rejection, guilt  • Joking, sarcasm  • Dependence or regressing to younger age  • Insecurity, low self-esteem |

There is no right or wrong way to grieve. It is important to allow children and young people to grieve in their own way and their own time. They may seesaw in and out of grief, needing time to play and have fun as well as to cry.

**RESPONDING TO PUPILS’ QUESTIONS FOLLOWING A SUDDEN DEATH**

**INFORMATION FOR STAFF**

1. It can be very difficult to respond to questions from children following a sudden death especially when the member of staff is also shocked and bereaved. Many factors will influence a pupil’s idea of death - their developmental stage, their experiences, their ethnic, religious, and cultural backgrounds, and their personal way of seeing things.
2. It is useful to agree a ‘script’ for all staff. The advantages of this are that staff will have a form of words to use so they are not caught unawares and that pupils get to hear a reassuring message over and over again. This is particularly reassuring and helpful to young pupils or pupils with special needs when processing the information.
3. Some questions will reveal that children feel insecure about whether the adults in their lives will be around to look after them. Reassure them that even though nobody knows the future, they can be sure that there will always be reliable adults to look after them.
4. It is not unusual for young children to ask the same question again and again. Repeating questions and getting answers helps the child understand and adjust to the loss of someone loved.
5. Sometimes children become very interested in physical details. Keep the reply very simple and factual. Repeat it as often as necessary and do not be drawn into giving further details. Be careful not to use euphemisms such as ‘sleep’ or ‘went way’ for death. Keep it simple, factual and clear. Younger children find it difficult to understand the permanence of death. Euphemisms will only make it worse.
6. When answering questions about death tell a pupil only what he or she is capable of understanding. There is no need to be evasive, but modify explanations to what the pupil can comprehend; use language the pupil can understand; and what is said is important, but the manner in which it is said has even greater significance. Be aware of voice tone. Try to answer the questions in a matter-of-fact way without too much emotion.

Suggested Answers to Certain Questions

**Question: Why did \_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_ die?**

**Answer:** “There are some things we understand and some things we don’t understand. We do/don’t know exactly why \_\_\_\_\_\_ died. The doctors have told us the reason was \_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_.”

**Question: Why Do People Die?**

**Answer:** Dying is a natural part of life. All living things like plants, animals, and people are special parts of the natural world. Nature almost always gives us long, healthy lives. Like all things in nature, after many years’ people grow old and reach the end of life. This is called death.

**Question: Is Death Like Sleeping?**

**Answer:** No. Dying is not like sleeping at all. People sleep to rest and stay healthy. Sleep gives hard working parts of our body time to build up strength again. Think of how good you feel after you sleep. You feel so good because your body is rested and ready for another day. When someone dies, their body stops working. It is not resting anymore. Its job is over.

UNDERSTANDING YOUR REACTIONS

INFORMATION FOR PUPILS

You have experienced an incident which has been very upsetting for you. Even though this event is over, you may still be experiencing some reactions to it. This is normal. It is unlikely that you have experienced anything like this before and so you may never have been faced with such reactions.

|  |  |
| --- | --- |
| Your reaction may last a few days, a few weeks or longer. Your parents, teachers and friends can help you cope with this and get rid of some of these feelings and reactions. Sometimes this might be a bit more difficult and you might need more help. This does not mean that anything is wrong with you. It only means that the event is just too powerful for you to deal with on your own. Here are some reactions you might experience. | |
| THINKING | FEELINGS |
| * Confused Nightmares/bad dreams * Poor concentration * Restless * Not interested in what is going on * Spending a lot of time thinking about what happened | Worried  Guilty  Angry  Sad  Easily upset  Cross  Overwhelmed |
| BEHAVIOURS | PHYSICAL COMPLAINTS |
| * Loss of appetite * Being very quiet * Agitated * Being quarrelsome/arguing | Feeling tired all the time  Unable to rest or settle  Feeling sick or a knot in your tummy  Cold and shivery |

**PUPILS RETURNING TO SCHOOL AFTER BEREAVEMENT**

**INFORMATION FOR TEACHERS**

Returning to school after bereavement can be difficult for a bereaved pupil. It can also be difficult for peers and staff to know how best to support the pupil. The circumstances of the bereavement and the age and developmental stage of the pupil will determine the approach used by teachers.

The following advice may be helpful in planning a positive return to school

1. Speak to the bereaved pupil. Check how he/she feels about coming back to school and what he/she may want to happen. Discuss the support that will be available. Speak to the parents to find out what they may want.
2. Discuss with class peers how they feel and how they can support the pupil. Discuss normal grief reactions. Encourage them to share their feelings and experiences of bereavement and how they coped. They may have sent cards or messages.
3. Ask a group of friends to be supportive during the first days following the return to school.
4. Consider a phased return. Plan for the day of the return of the pupil with a key member of staff taking the lead. When the pupil comes back to school it is important to acknowledge the loss. You may wish to say something like “I am/we are sorry that \_\_\_\_\_\_ died. I/We know you are sad and I/we want to support you at this time”.
5. Consider giving the pupil age appropriate information on normal bereavement responses and grief reactions.
6. Allow for possible changes in emotions, behaviours, concentration, and work levels. All teachers need to be made aware.
7. Allow for “time out” when the pupil wants to be in a quiet place or to talk with a school counsellor, pastoral care teacher or another member of staff.
8. Carry on normal routines with normal approaches to discipline, with sensitivity.

Once a pupil returns to school following bereavement complete a record of this and place on pupil’s file.

**CONFIDENTIAL**

SCHOOL RECORD ON A PUPIL WHO HAS EXPERIENCED LOSS/BEREAVEMENT

**This document should be treated as confidential and its content shared and stored in accordance with Data Protection and Child Protection Policies.**

Name: \_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_ DOB: \_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_ Age: \_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_

|  |
| --- |
| Faith/culture: \_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_  Key Support Person: \_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_  IMPORTANT INFORMATION: *(to include relationship of pupil to deceased, nature of bereavement, illness, accident, sudden death)* |
| FAMILY DETAILS: *(names, ages, relationships, school etc)* |
| SIGNIFICANT DATES: *(anniversary, birthday, child’s/young person’s birthday etc)* |
| ADDITIONAL COMMENTS BY STAFF: |

**Appendix 9**

**List of useful contacts**

This list should be reviewed each school term and updated if necessary. It is important that all members of the school’s Critical Incident Management Team have a copy of this list at home as Critical Incidents can occur during weekends and school holidays. When contacting EA always say that you are calling in regards to a CRITICAL INCIDENT.

028 37512515 – Education Authority

|  |  |  |  |
| --- | --- | --- | --- |
| Organisation | Name | Phone | Email |
| Principal | Jennifer McCann | 02897561056  07803210204 | [jmccann993@c2kni.net](mailto:jmccann993@c2kni.net) |
| Senior Teacher | Aaron Davidson | 07731359827 | [adavidson973@c2kni.net](mailto:adavidson973@c2kni.net) |
| Designated Teacher for Child Protection | Karen Stewart | 07835166990 | [kstewart836@c2kni.net](mailto:kstewart836@c2kni.net) |
| Building Supervisor | John Kelly | 07756857967 |  |
| Chair of Board of Governors | Canon Ian Ellis | 028 43722439 07930256564 |  |
| Vice Chair of Board of Governors | Vikki Methven | 028 43722354  07762102832 |  |
| School Secretary | Heather Crory | 07732900998 |  |
| EA Critical Incident Response |  | 02837512515 |  |
| EA’s Chief Executive | Gavin Boyd | 028 90694964 |  |
| Local Police |  | 999/101 |  |
| Local Fire and Rescue Service | Newcastle | 028 44839308 |  |
| Local Hospital | Downe Hospital | 028 44613311 |  |
| Nearest Doctor’s Surgery | Newcastle Surgery | 08456008000 |  |
| School Nurse | Cherry Spiers | 028 44613511 |  |
| EA’s Emergency Out of Hours |  | 028 90566888 |  |
| EA’s Health and Safety Officer | Brendan O’Reilly  Katrina McCann | 028 90564302 | [brendan.oreilly@eani.org.uk](mailto:brendan.oreilly@eani.org.uk)  [katrina.mccann@eani.org.uk](mailto:katrina.mccann@eani.org.uk) |
| EA’s Maintenance Officer | Eugene Doyle | 02890566248  07803832464 |  |
| Educational Psychologist | Deborah Doran | 02890566200 | [psychologyunit@eani.org.uk](mailto:psychologyunit@eani.org.uk) |
| Education Welfare Officer | Alina Burke | 028 44615704  90566941 |  |
| EA Child Protection Support Service (CPSS) |  | 028 95985590 |  |
| Social Services – Local Gateway Team | Southern Region | 0800 7837745 |  |
| Counselling Services (pupils) | Family Works | 028 91821721 |  |
| Local Church or Clergy/Faith Workers (staff) | Rev Boreland  Pastor Patterson | 028 43726650  07735333662 |  |
| Local Health and Care Trust | **Newcastle** | **028 4373346** |  |
| Staff Support and Welfare | Lynette Bailie | 02890566270 | [lynette.bailie@eani.org.uk](mailto:lynette.bailie@eani.org.uk) |

**Appendix 10**

**DEATH BY SUSPECTED SUICIDE - STAFF GUIDELINES**

**INFORMATION FOR STAFF**

1. The term suicide should not be used by a school until it is determined by the Coroner’s Office. Where an inquest is required it may be a considerable period of time after the death.

2. When providing support for vulnerable pupils, it would be prudent to make a working assumption of suicide, if all reasonable indicators suggest that this might be the case. Pupils and members of the community may be inclined to describe a death as a suicide before this has been established. Phrases such as ‘tragic event’ or ‘sudden death’ should be used by the school when talking to pupils.

3. In the aftermath of a sudden death within the school community pupils’ vulnerability may increase. Teachers should realise that some pupils may develop suicidal ideation and/or self-harm. Staff need to be proactive in identifying and monitoring these pupils. Pupils considered to be ‘at risk’ should be immediately referred to the Designated Teacher for Child Protection who will then notify parents and advise them of the referral pathway to obtain support for their child. This will include the child’s doctor and the Child and Adolescent Mental Health Services (CAMHS).

4. Schools should maintain contact with parents to ensure that appropriate action has been taken to protect and support the pupil. Careful records should be kept and securely stored as set out in the school’s data protection guidelines. Action must also be taken to identify other at risk groups in the school, including close friends and relatives and to direct them to appropriate support. Information for parents can be found at Appendix 12. At any time, parents, school staff or pupils can contact the “Lifeline 24/7” crisis response helpline service (Tel: 0808 808 8000).

5. Where there appears to be an emerging cluster of perceived suicides in a school or a number of schools in close proximity, the education and library board’s Critical Incident Response Teams will liaise with the relevant Health and Social Care Trusts. This coordinated response will ensure an appropriate community response to the situation while minimising sensationalism and avoiding the glamorising of suicidal behaviour.

6. As with any death, schools may wish to remember the person who has died and to pay tribute to their memory. When an apparent suicide has occurred, schools should be careful to remember the person without condoning the means of death. It is important that events are reported in a sensitive and measured way so that other vulnerable young people are not put at risk. The language used is very

important.

7. Schools should remember to be vigilant around the time of the inquest, court cases and the anniversary of a death and access any support services as may be required.

**GUIDELINES FOR STAFF**

**Your Responsibilities**

You have two major responsibilities:

1. To respond with empathy and in a non-judgemental way to the pupil in need.

2. To follow the usual safeguarding procedures with an appropriate referral to ensure the pupil’s safety.

**Responding to a Distressed Pupil**

• **Listen**. It can be very difficult for a young person to disclose distress so it is essential that he/she is given time and attention. Privacy is also important.

• **Take it seriously**. Disclosures of distress should never be minimised. The young person should be taken seriously but the adult should not express alarm. The young person needs to feel safe and have confidence in adults.

• **Accept the possibility of suicidal thoughts**. These feelings are real and should not be dismissed.

• **Do NOT promise confidentiality**. Ensure that the young person knows that the information will be handled sensitively but that it must be shared with others to safeguard them.

• **Show a caring attitude**. It is acceptable to express care for the young person and a commitment to their well-being.

• **Be open**. If suicidal intent is suspected, it is appropriate to ask the young person whether they are thinking of harming themselves and have any plans.

• **Supervise closely**. Keep the pupil with you until you can deliver them to the care of the Designated Teacher for Child Protection (or appropriate alternative). Sometimes it is more helpful for the teacher to whom the pupil expressed their distress to be the one who stays with him or her while the designated teacher makes safeguarding arrangements.

**Response to Suicide Ideation Disclosure**

The Designated Teacher for Child Protection (or appropriate alternative) should ensure that the pupil is safeguarded by doing the following:

**Continue to supervise closely.** The pupil should not be left unsupervised at this stage.

**Contact parents**. Parents should be advised of the content of the disclosure, the school’s concern and asked to take the child or young person to the doctor for an ‘emergency mental state assessment’ and potential referral to Child and Adolescent Mental Health Services.

**Safely hand over the young person into the care of parents**. Parents should be advised to supervise very closely.

**Contact the young person’s doctor**. It may be helpful if schools also contact the doctor directly to inform him/her of the concerns.

**If the above is not possible**

If the school cannot safely deliver the young person into the care of parents, or has concerns that appropriate support will not be sought/provided, it is possible for school staff to bring a child or young person directly to an Accident and Emergency Department acting in loco parentis.

**Follow-up**

The Designated Teacher (or other member of staff) should remain in contact with parents and plan to support the young person upon return to school. In planning to support the young person the school should consider seeking medical/psychiatric advice.

**Available Support**

1. School’s Key Contact for Pastoral Care

2. Independent Counselling Service for Schools

3. Lifeline – 0808 808 8000

Lifeline offers immediate help over the phone 24/7. It is a helpline service for those experiencing distress or despair and deals with issues such as suicide, self-harm, abuse, trauma, depression and anxiety. Pupils can phone directly for individual counselling. Lifeline can also put an individual in touch with follow-up services to ensure the best possible response meets individual needs. Lifeline also gives support and guidance to families and carers, concerned friends, professionals, teachers, youth workers, clergy, faith workers and communities about how to support a young person that may be a risk. A number of other agencies provide support to pupils and others.

These include:

• NSPCC - 0808 800 5000

• Samaritans - 0845 790 9090

• Childline - 0800 1111

**Appendix 11**

**INFORMATION FOR PARENTS – HOW TO HELP YOUR CHILD**

**UNDERSTANDING YOUR CHILD’S REACTIONS AND HOW YOU CAN HELP**

**INFORMATION FOR PARENTS**

When a child or young person experiences a traumatic incident it can be very upsetting for them and for you. Even though the event is over your child may still be experiencing reactions to it. It is normal for children and young people to be upset after such a happening. It is unlikely that they have experienced such an event before and so their reaction may be challenging for you.

Their reaction may last a few days, a few weeks or longer. Reassurance, understanding and support from you, along with their teachers and their friends can help them to cope. Here are some common reactions to a traumatic incident. You might have noticed some of these.

**THINKING/FEELINGS**

Confused

Worried

Nightmares/bad dreams

Guilty

Poor concentration

Anxious

Restless

Fearful

Not interested in what is going on

Easily upset

Spending a lot of time thinking about what happened

Cross

Panicky

Thinking that they cannot cope

Overwhelmed

**BEHAVIOURS/PHYSICAL COMPLAINTS**

Loss of appetite

Feeling tired all the time

Being very quiet

Unable to rest or settle

Nervous Feeling sick/knot in tummy

Being quarrelsome/arguing

Cold and shivery

**REMEMBER**

1. These are normal reactions.

2. The reactions should lessen in time normally over the next few weeks.

3. If you continue to have concerns some more specialist help may be needed.

Talk to your doctor about this.

**HELPING YOUR CHILD**

***It is important that you are strong enough to bear whatever your child wants to talk about and to answer their questions.***

|  |  |
| --- | --- |
| **Do** | **Do Not** |
| Take time to listen and answer questions.  Be honest in your explanations and in  showing your own sadness or grief.  Let them know their feelings are  important.  Give plenty of reassurance and affection. Let them know you love them and will be there for them.  Keep to routines and patterns as much as possible.  Be aware that changes such as clinging or aggressive behaviour or physical problems may be an expression of grief.  Take things one day at a time. | Try to hide your own sadness or grief but try not to overwhelm them with such.  Tell your child not to worry or be sad - they cannot control their feelings.  Feel like you have to have all the answers or get it right all the time.  Be surprised at your child’s ability to set grief aside and alternate between sadness and happiness. Time with friends and playmates enables them to release anxiety about incidents over which they have no control. |