

**CRITICAL**  
**INCIDENT**  
**POLICY & PLAN**

## CRITICAL INCIDENT POLICY & PLAN

### **Introduction**

Tullygally Primary School aims to protect the well-being of its pupils and staff by providing a safe and nurturing environment at all times.

The school's mission statement states: **'In Tullygally Primary School, the needs of our pupils are at the heart of every decision we make.'**

The Board of Governors, through the Critical Incident Management Team has drawn up a Critical Incident Management Plan (CIMP) as one element of the school's policies and plans within the Pastoral Care arrangements.

A Critical Incident Management Team (CIMT) has been established to steer the development and implementation of the plan.

### **Definition**

The Governors and staff of Tullygally Primary School recognise a critical incident to be "an incident or sequence of events that overwhelms the normal coping mechanism of the school." Critical incidents may involve one or more pupils or staff members, or members of our local community.

Types of incidents might include:

- The death of a member of the school community through accident, violence, suspected suicide or other unexpected death
- An intrusion into the school
- An accident involving members of the school community
- An accident/tragedy in the wider community
- Serious damage to the school building through fire, flood, vandalism etc
- The disappearance of a member of the school community

### **Aim**

The aim of the CIMP is to help school management and staff to react quickly and effectively in the event of an incident, to enable us to maintain a sense of control and to ensure that appropriate support is offered to pupils and staff. Having a good plan should also help ensure that the effects on the pupils and staff will be limited. It should enable us to affect a return to normality as soon as possible.

## **Creation of a coping supportive and caring ethos in the school**

Our curriculum and pastoral care arrangements aim to help and support both staff and pupils, thus preparing them to cope with a range of life events. These include measures to address both the physical and emotional need of the school community.

### **Physical Needs**

- Evacuation plan formulated
- Regular fire drills occur
- Fire exits and extinguishers are regularly checked
- Public access doors are locked during school hours
- School doors are security locked during class time
- Rules of the playground are agreed and known by the school community

### **Emotional Needs**

The Governors and staff of Tullygally Primary School aim to use available programmes and resources to address the personal and social development of pupils, to enhance a sense of safety and security in the school and to provide opportunities for reflection and discussion. Further details can be found within other relevant policies such as Pastoral Care, Child Protection and Anti-Bullying

- ❖ Consultation has taken place with the whole school community as the Policy and Plan have been developed
- ❖ Staff have accessed training from the EA Southern Region, Pupil Personal Development Team as the policy has been developed
- ❖ Staff are familiar with the Child Protection Guidelines and Procedures and details of how to proceed with suspicions or disclosures
- ❖ Books and resources on difficulties affecting the primary school pupils are available
- ❖ Emotional health and well-being is an integral part of the the school curriculum
- ❖ The school uses Barnardo's Time 4 Me and REACH for support within the school on a weekly basis
- ❖ The school uses a range of other external agencies for support
- ❖ Inputs to pupils by external providers are carefully considered in the light of criteria about pupil safety, the appropriateness of the content, and the expertise of the providers.
- ❖ The school has a clear policy on anti-bullying and deals with bullying in accordance with this policy

- ❖ There is a comprehensive Pastoral Care System within the school, clearly displayed throughout areas of the school
- ❖ Pupils who are identified as being at risk are referred to the designated staff member, concerns are explored and the appropriate level of assistance and support is provided. Parents are informed, and where appropriate, a referral is made to an appropriate agency
- ❖ Members of staff are informed about how to access support for themselves

## **Critical Incident Management Team (CIMT)**

A CIMT has been established in line with best practice. Members bring a wealth of experience and expertise to the team and were selected on a voluntary basis and will retain their roles for at least one school year. The members of the team will meet biannually and after an incident to review and, if necessary, update the policy and plan. Each member of the team has a dedicated critical incident folder. This contains a copy of the policy, a site plan and materials particular to their role, to be used in the event of an incident.

- Mrs Andrews - Principal
- Mr Guy - Vice Principal
- Mrs Devlin - Designated Teacher for Child Protection
- Miss Redpath - Key Teacher The Dove's Nest (Nurture Class)

## **Preparation of CIMP**

### **Roles**

The key roles covered are as follows:

- ✚ Team Leader - Mrs Andrews - Principal
- ✚ PSNI Liaison - Mrs Haughian
- ✚ Staff Liaison - Miss Guiney
- ✚ Pupil Liaison - Mrs Devlin
- ✚ Parent Liaison - Miss Redpath
- ✚ Community Liaison - Mr Guy
- ✚ Media Liaison - Mr Bustard
- ✚ Administrator - Mrs Hughes - Secretary

(For key responsibilities of each role see **Appendix 1**)

## **Record Keeping**

In the event of an incident **Appendix 2 - Critical Incident Record** - will be completed regularly throughout the incident as a record of actions and procedures undertaken.

Administrator will have a key role in receiving and logging telephone call, sending letters, photocopying materials etc.

## **Confidentiality**

The management and staff of Tullygally Primary School have a responsibility to protect the privacy and good name of the people involved in any incident will be sensitive to the consequences of any public statements.

## **Critical incident rooms**

In the event of a critical incident the following rooms will be used:

- Staff room - to meet the staff
- The Dove's Nest - for meetings with pupils
- The Breakfast Room - for parents
- Principal's Office - for media - (if required)
- Computer room - for other visitors

(Immediate, short and medium term actions are detailed in **Appendix 3**)

## **Consultation and communication regarding the plan**

- All staff and parents were consulted and their views canvassed in the preparation and updating of this policy and plan
- An audit of the school's current arrangements was completed in preparation for updating the policy and plan
- The policy and plan for responding to critical incidents has been presented to all staff
- Each member of the staff has a personal copy of the plan
- All new and temporary staff (as appropriate) will be informed of the details of the plan by the Principal
- All teachers and support staff have a resource pack for supporting children in class

- The plan will be reviewed and, if necessary, updated bi-annually and after an incident.

## References

The CIMT has consulted resource documents provided to schools as well as publication listed in the resources section of this book.

These include:

- EA Southern Region Critical Incident Response Manual & Resources Disk
- Document Draft Every School a Good School - A guide to Managing Critical Incidents in Schools DE - PEHAW Work Stream
- Protecting Life in Schools - DE - PEHAW Work Stream
- Community Response Plan - Protect Life Strategy
- When Tragedy Strikes: Guidelines for Effective Critical Incident Management in Schools (INTO/Ulster Teachers Union 2000)
- Responding to Critical Incidents: Guidelines for Schools (NEPS 2007)
- Winstonswish Foundation, help for grieving children and their families [www.winstonswish.org.uk](http://www.winstonswish.org.uk)
- A national charity committed to improving the mental health of all children and young people. [www.youngminds.org.uk](http://www.youngminds.org.uk)
- **The Childhood Bereavement Network** (CBN) is a multiprofessional federation of organisations and individuals working with bereaved children and young people. [www.childhoodbereavementnetwork.org.uk](http://www.childhoodbereavementnetwork.org.uk)
- **Cruse Bereavement Care** exists to promote the well-being of bereaved people and to enable anyone bereaved by death to understand their grief and cope with their loss. [www.crusebereavementcare.org.uk](http://www.crusebereavementcare.org.uk)

