Brackenagh West Primary School

Critical Incident Policy and Procedures

Brackenagh West PS - Critical Incident Policy and Procedures

In drawing up this policy guidance has been taken from the document: Every School a Good School - A guide to Managing Critical Incidents.

Definition

A critical incident may 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. (Every School a Good School- A Guide to Managing Critical Incidents)

Although it is not possible to prepare in detail for every situation it is essential to have a general plan to hand which outlines the steps that need to be taken. The best preparation which schools can make is to have a Critical Incident Management Team and Procedures in place.

Critical Incident Management Team

The composition of our Critical Incident Management Team will vary according to the circumstances and the incident.

In Brackenagh West PS the core team comprises:
- Mr Michael Peacock, Principal
- Mrs Moira Rea, Designated Teacher for CP
- Mrs Karen Annett, Vice-Principal & Deputy Designated Teacher for CP
- Mr Dave Keown, Chair of BOG

Incidents which 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 a contagious illness;
• Immediate evacuation of the school with no likelihood of return for a number of hours.

Procedures within the school during the Incident by the Critical Management Team

- Respond quickly, sensitively and work together as a team
- Keep Calm
- Call for help

- Ensure pupil/s safety
- Contact to be made with parents/guardians
- Sustain the effort until Emergency Services arrive
- Record Critical Incident in 'Critical Incident Recording Book' (team leader) using the proforma from 'Every School a Good School - A guide to Managing Critical Incidents'

AFTER THE INCIDENT

The aim of the work carried out in school during the weeks, months and sometimes years following a critical incident is to help its immediate and broader community cope with and recover from the critical incident. A return to normal routine requires careful and sensitive planning, timing and implementation. Staff will continue to monitor pupils' emotional wellbeing and be attentive to pupils with ongoing difficulties.

Support for Pupils

Returning to school for some pupils after a critical incident may be very difficult and every attempt will be made to provide as much continuity as possible.

Suitable arrangements to support a pupil or pupils returning to school will be made.

Support for Staff

Some staff may need support in the longer term. The strain on staff of leading a school through a critical incident can be profoundly disturbing and may not be identified until after the crisis. Staff, both teaching and non-teaching, can often underestimate the impact on them and may not recognise that they are experiencing difficulty. The Critical Incident Management Team must be alert to this possibility and ensure that Staff is directed to sources of support.

The Critical Incident Response Team (CIRT) can provide advice and/or support to the school in the aftermath of a critical incident.

The EA Critical Incident Response Team includes a range of personnel from EA Support Services:

- Behaviour Support Team
- Educational Psychology Service
- Education Welfare Service
- Health & Welfare Services

A list of useful contacts is kept in the General Office and with the Principal. Each member of the school's Critical Incident Management Team has a copy as Critical Incidents can occur during weekends and school holidays.