

Carrick Primary School



Critical Incident Management Policy

Carrick Primary School

Vision Statement

Forward Together: Ar aghaidh le chéile.

Mission Statement

In Carrick Primary School we aim to provide a safe, caring and stimulating environment to realise and celebrate the academic and non-academic potential of all our pupils. We expect our pupils to work hard and encourage parents to assist us in laying the important foundations for future learning.

School Aims

In our school we aim to:

- develop and strengthen each pupil's understanding and love of Catholic values by promoting the Catholic ethos throughout the school;
- create a safe, enjoyable learning environment, in which effective learning is facilitated and quality teaching is provided;
- implement all aspects of the Northern Ireland Curriculum;
- help our pupils to develop a positive attitude towards life and a love of learning;
- value, respect and nurture every child in our care;
- encourage pupils to respect themselves and others and to support and care for one another;
- equip our children with the necessary life skills to enable them to participate in a fast changing society;
- endorse the United Nations' Convention on the Rights of the Child and work towards the implementation of policies and practices which reflect the Convention; and
- involve the parents, Board of Governors and wider community in the life of the school and in the holistic development of the children in our care.

We, the staff of Carrick Primary School, endorse the Convention on the Rights of the Child and will continue to work towards the implementation of policies and practices which reflect the Convention.

Carrick Primary School
Critical Incident Management Policy

Rationale:

A critical incident can be defined as: *“a sudden, unexpected and tragic event or sequence of events which causes trauma and confusion within a school community and which overwhelms its normal coping mechanism”*.

It may affect pupils, staff, parents and Governors, may relate directly to the safety of the school community or may involve an incident beyond the school premises. 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 Carrick Primary School Community.

The Critical Incident Policy and Procedures cannot cover every aspect of recovery from a critical incident. Occurrences may arise which cannot be foreseen or considered beforehand. The critical incident may occur during the school day, during the early morning or evening or night, during the school holidays or on a school trip.

It is important that the Critical Incident Policy and Procedures are easily understood and enable us, as a school community, to mobilise our resources promptly and effectively.

The following factors must be considered in relation to the Critical Incident Policy:

- that it is followed as closely as possible;
- that each designated person understands his/her role and is competent in carrying it out;
- that other people do not take unilateral action;
- that consideration and sensitivity is shown by all and to all;
- that children, staff and parents are protected from press intrusion;
- that normal routines be resumed as soon as possible and maintained appropriately;
- that there is a realisation that recovery or even partial recovery may be an extremely challenging process.

The **Critical Incident Management Team** (CIMT) has responsibility for ensuring that procedures are properly addressed at times of high emotion. If the incident involves or may involve legal action, a precise response to the incident should be planned, implemented and reviewed by the CIMT. Other members of staff may be co-opted onto the CIMT as and when required. Other members of staff may be asked to take responsibility for aspects of the day to day running of the school whilst the CIMT is engaged in dealing with a Critical Incident. Key roles are identified in **Appendix 2**.

Critical Incident Management Team in Carrick

Mr G Murdock	(Chair of Board of Governors)
Mrs A Cassidy	(Principal)
Mrs A Duffin	(Vice-Principal)
Mrs M McCann	(Leadership Team Member)

All members of the Critical Incident Management Team must:

- Have a copy of the Critical Incident Policy at home and in school;
- Be aware of their role within each part of the plan, to enable the school to react swiftly and appropriately;
- Have a contact number for each other, for 24-hour contact;

- In the event of a school trip/visit, have access to a list of names and contact numbers for all staff and all pupils;
- Have a register of Emergency Services and relevant outside agencies. (see **Appendix 4a**)

Members of the secretarial staff will also retain a register of emergency services and relevant outside agencies.

In the event of a Critical Incident, the CIMT will access advice and/or support from CCMS and from the Education Authority's (EA) Critical Incident Response Team. Contact numbers of Governors, staff, CCMS and EA's Critical Incident Response Team are included in **Appendices 4a and 4b**.

Aims of the Critical Incident Management Policy:

- To maintain a duty of care;
- To minimise educational and administrative disruption within school;
- To enable normal working patterns to be resumed within the shortest possible time.

Objectives:

- 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 children and staff is deemed paramount;
- To ensure that the school responds in a sensitive, consistent and effective manner which reduces confusion, panic and extreme emotion;
- To have in place a Critical Incident Management Team, the membership of which is known to all relevant parties;
- To have in place a Critical Incident Management Plan, the details of which are familiar to all relevant parties (see **Appendices 1a and 1b**);
- 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 communicate information appropriately and sensitively to relevant parties;
- To offer sensitive, non-intrusive support in the short and medium term to all those affected directly or indirectly by the incident.

Examples of Critical Incidents

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, whilst at a school related activity, at home or in some other context. Examples include:

- The death of a child or member or staff through natural causes;
- Death or serious injuries, through accidents or through tragic circumstances;
- An accident involving a child, parent or member of staff;
- An act of violence;
- A school fire, flood or explosion.

Guidelines for managing a Critical Incident

- The Principal will take charge of the school's response and will immediately contact the other members of the Critical Incident Management Team (CIMT).
- In the case of the Principal being unavailable, the Vice Principal will take charge.

- The CIMT will access advice and support from CCMS and from EA's Critical Incident Response Team.
- The Principal's office will be the central liaison point.
- The CIMT will assess immediate practical needs.
- The CIMT will contact the next of kin of those directly involved, where appropriate.
- A short simple statement of facts will be prepared by the CIMT.
- All contacts from the media, will be dealt with by the Principal, in liaison with CCMS, EA and the CIMT.
- Secretarial staff, taking incoming calls, will use a statement agreed by the CIMT, EA and CCMS.
- All members of staff will be informed, as appropriate, and will be guided by the CIMT in relation to informing children.
- The CIMT will determine the involvement of parents, where appropriate.
- Short and long term support will be offered to those affected.
- Following the incident there will be an evaluation of the way in which the incident was managed.

The use of appropriate outside agencies is deemed crucial in terms of providing long term support, as is the use of appropriately trained members of staff, who are known to those in need of help and/or support.

Preventative Strategies

- Regular review or relevant policies e.g. Safeguarding/Child Protection, Health and Safety, Care and Welfare and ESafety.
- First Aid Training and Policy.
- Fire Safety Policy and Procedures.
- PDMU Programme.

Emergency evacuation drills are familiar to all members of the school community and practised regularly (**See Appendix 3**). Opportunities to explore sensitive issues such as tragedy and death will be built into the school's PDMU Curriculum, RE Curriculum, pastoral programmes, Circle Time activities and assemblies, at an age appropriate level.

This Critical Incident Policy forms part of Carrick Primary School's Care and Welfare arrangements and is monitored and amended appropriately. Implementation of this policy will be monitored by the Principal and Vice Principal in consultation with pupils, staff, parents and Governors. Feedback from ongoing monitoring will inform amendments. New ideas and strategies will be incorporated as a result of feedback, pastoral meetings and staff training. This policy will be reviewed every three years, or sooner if required.

Signed: Mrs A Cassidy (Principal)

Signed: Mr G Murdock (Chairperson, Board of Governors)

Date Ratified: March 2022

Date of Review: March 2025

Appendix 1a: Critical Incident Management Plan - Essential Tasks

It is important to remember that no two incidents are alike. Always assess need first using these guidelines flexibly and in relation to the information available.

Day 1

Immediate actions

Assess the danger, gather factual information and take appropriate action

1. Initiate agreed school evacuation procedures and if necessary, arrange for First Aid.
2. Establish a 'command' centre, identify who is in charge and set regular briefing times.
3. Notify the emergency services/other relevant authorities, including the Chairperson of the Board of Governors, EA, CCMS and members of the Leadership Team and the CIMT.
4. The CIMT will meet at the earliest opportunity and agree on procedures for managing the Critical Incident.
5. Maintain structures and routines where possible.
6. Liaise with EA and CCMS personnel.
7. Create a calm, purposeful environment.

Short term actions

Co-ordinate the school's response and meet with staff

1. Liaise and delegate, discuss intervention plan, agree how and what Governors, staff and pupils should be told.
2. Collect, record, verify and update details (time, place, those involved etc).
3. Continue to liaise with the Chairperson of Board of Governors, CIMT, EA and CCMS.
4. Notify members of the Board of Governors, all staff, parents and other pupils.
5. Prepare a media statement, where relevant.
6. Set up a recovery room in the school, where relevant (provide fluids, tissues, comfortable chairs etc)

Organise contact with pupils and parents

1. Give the facts of the critical incident, keeping in mind legal implications and respecting privacy.
2. Inform parents by telephone or in person if their child is involved, as soon as the initial information is confirmed. Remember that the media and/or children with mobile phones may have reached them first with inaccurate information.
3. Continue to liaise with the Chairperson of Board of Governors, CCMS and EA.
4. Ensure a correct and consistent message is given.
5. Provide sources of help for pupils and families and encourage communication between parents and school.
6. Suggest possible reactions of pupils and plan a response for these reactions.
7. Confirm the school's response plans.

Restore the school to regular routine as soon as practicable

1. Plan visits to injured and /or bereaved.
2. Continue to liaise with the Chairperson of the Board of Governors, CCMS and EA.
3. Plan rituals and assemblies, where appropriate.
4. Monitor pupils and staff.

Obtain updated factual information

1. Continue to inform staff, pupils and parents.
2. The Principal consults with the families affected to determine their wishes concerning public announcements and information for school staff, pupils and Governors.
3. Continue to liaise with the Chairperson of the Board of Governors, CCMS and EA.

Medium term actions

Continue to monitor the well-being of students and staff

1. Organise assistance, such as transport home, for staff or students who are distressed. Try to ensure that they are not alone on the evening after a critical incident.
2. Identify at risk pupils and/or staff and arrange for follow-up support, involvement with other professionals and make referrals as necessary.
3. Assess the need for the debriefing of staff and pupils, with expert help.
4. Arrange for the support of the CIMT.
5. Continue to liaise with the Chairperson of the Board of Governors, CCMS and EA.

Appendix 1b: Critical Incident Management Plan – Action Framework

Introduction	<p>Critical Incidents happen and it is therefore important that we have a plan in place, so that we are able to respond and manage a traumatic situation, should it occur. Critical incident management is an integral part of normal school management practice.</p> <p>We consider a critical incident to be any event which causes trauma to our school community and overwhelms our normal coping mechanisms.</p>
Aims	<ol style="list-style-type: none"> 1. To respond to a critical incident in an informed manner. 2. To create a positive climate where the needs of staff and pupils are met in critical incident situations. 3. To recognise which incidents may be critical for the school community. 4. To create a safe school environment whereby the physical, social and psychological health of pupils and staff is prioritised. 5. To monitor and review the policy for dealing with emergencies. 6. To promote active coping skills within the curriculum. 7. To establish positive working relationships and dialogue with parents and outside agencies, thus enabling full and effective collaboration in the event of a critical incident.
Implementation: Outline procedures for managing a critical incident	<ol style="list-style-type: none"> 1. Roles and responsibilities for all staff and Governors 2. Communication 3. Key actions 4. Support personnel
Links with other school policies	<ol style="list-style-type: none"> 1. Pastoral Care 2. Child Protection/Safeguarding/Health and Safety/Fire Safety/ESafety/First Aid
Curricular links/support	<ol style="list-style-type: none"> 1. PDMU 2. Circle Time 3. Assemblies
Professional development	<ol style="list-style-type: none"> 1. Identify relevant training needs
Monitoring and review of policy	<ol style="list-style-type: none"> 1. This policy will be reviewed every three years or following any Critical Incident or when new procedures are

Appendix 2: Critical Incident Management – Key Roles

Principal, Vice Principal and Leadership Team Member

- Seek clarification of the incident/situation.
- Call Emergency Services if appropriate.
- Assemble the CIMT to inform the members of the incident.
- Convene and inform all staff, Governors and pupils (where appropriate).
- Contact external agencies (EA/Social Services/Consultants/CCMS).
- Prepare relevant statements/letters for the media, parents, pupils and office staff as appropriate, following CCMS/EA guidelines.
- Contact relevant parents.
- Support the physical and emotional wellbeing of pupils and staff, where relevant.
- Arrange staff cover if necessary and appropriate.
- Liaise with the Building Supervisor to ensure access for essential personnel.
- Ensure health and safety measures are in place.

School Secretary

- Ensures phone lines are operative and office staff available.
- Ensures office staff relay agreed information, following inquiries from other parents and/or external agencies.
- Liaises with school First Aiders to provide First Aid as appropriate.
- Manages the daily arrangements of the school, website/texts to parents/and school information, in liaison with the CIMT, as appropriate.

Appendix 3: Emergency Evacuation Procedures

In the event of a fire, a fire drill or an emergency evacuation, the following procedures must be followed.

1. The fire alarm will sound in the whole school, including the kitchen area. The fire brigade and/or police will be contacted by Mrs Cassidy/Mrs O'Brien when the fire alarm is sounded.
2. When the fire bell rings please bring your class to the nearest exit (as specified below) or to the safest exit. All other staff members, kitchen staff, coaches, tutors and volunteers will exit by the nearest or safest exit.

Teacher	Exit	Door
Mrs O'Hagan	P.1 Cloakroom Door	1
Mrs Kelly	Foundation Stage Resource Area	2
Mrs Duffin	P2 Cloakroom Door (front of school)	3
Mrs Murray	P2 Cloakroom Door (front of school)	3
Mrs McPolin	P1/P3 Cloakroom Door (back of school)	4
Mrs McCann	P3 Cloakroom Door (front of school)	5
Mrs O'Hare	P4 Cloakroom Door (side of school)	6
Mrs O'Grady	Key Stage One Resource Area (front of school)	7
Mrs Doyle	P.5 Cloakroom Door (back of school)	8
Mrs Fitzpatrick	P.5 Cloakroom Door (back of school)	8
Mrs Harkin	P.7 Cloakroom Door (front of school)	9
Mr Keenan	P.7 Cloakroom Door (front of school)	9
Mr Murdock	P.7 Cloakroom Door (front of school)	9
Mrs Doran	P.7 Cloakroom Door (front of school)	9
Office Staff/Mrs Magill	Main Entrance (front of school)	10
Kitchen Staff	Kitchen Entrance (side of school)	11
Dining Hall	Dining Hall Entrance (back of school)	12

3. The assembly point for all classes will be the Hard Play Area at the front of the school.
4. All classes will make their way to the Hard Play Area by the above routes or by a safer route. All pupils and staff, including kitchen staff, will assemble on the Hard Play Area.
5. Mrs Magill will escort any pupils in the Learning Support Room to the Hard Play Area. Pupils must not return to their classrooms. They will rejoin their class in the Hard Play Area. This also applies to pupils receiving tuition or coaching outside the classroom e.g. Music, Peripatetic Teaching or P.E. activities.
6. In the event of the Hard Play Area being an unsafe area, the staff will lead the children, class by class, down the avenue and across to the Village Green Area.

7. In the event of a child being in the bathroom when the fire bell rings, he/she must not return to the classroom, but instead must exit the school by the nearest, safest exit and rejoin his/her class in the Hard Play Area.

8. To avoid congestion on entering the Hard Play Area, Primary One and Primary Five classes will enter by the double gates closest to the P7 classrooms. Primary Two, Three and Four classes will use the double gates at the front of the school. Primary Six and Primary Seven will use the single gate closest to the Primary 7 classroom. Classes will line up at the first available spot facing the school.

9. In the event of an emergency during break or lunch/dinnertime, all staff members on duty will escort the pupils in their charge to the assembly point via their designated exit or via a safer route.

REVISION OF FIRE SAFETY PROCEDURES

The Principal will revise the Fire Drill instructions once a term, at assemblies or in the classrooms, to avoid any confusion in the event of a fire, a fire drill, or an emergency evacuation.

CLASS INSTRUCTIONS

A. When you hear the alarm it is important to line up quickly and quietly.

B. Walk in single file to the nearest exit or safest exit.

C. Do not run.

D. Do not take anything with you.

E. If you are outside your class when the alarm sounds, it is important that you join the closest evacuating class and inform the staff members with that class. If all classes have been evacuated, make your way to the Hard Play Area, join your own class and tell your teacher.

F. DO NOT return to your classroom.

G. When you have reached the assembly point, line up quietly in single file.

H. Teachers will call the roll, using class lists.

I. You must not return to the school once you have exited the school, until Mrs Cassidy or Mrs Kelly gives permission for all classes to return.

J. Teachers from Foundation Stage will report any missing pupils to Mrs Duffin (Foundation Stage Coordinator).

K. Teachers from KS1 will report any missing pupils to Mrs McCann (Key Stage 1 Coordinator).

L. Teachers from KS2 will report any missing pupils to Mr Murdock (Key Stage 2 Coordinator).

M. In the event of a missing pupil, class lists will be checked again and any pupil who is still missing will be reported to the Principal.

Appendix 4a: Board of Governors 2018-2023

Names	Telephone Numbers	email	Role
Rev Father Brendan Kearns			Trustee
Mrs Anne Cassidy		acassidy452@c2kni.net	Secretary (Non-Voting)
Mr Kieran Fegan			Co-opted Member
Mr Declan McAteer			Trustee
Mr Gerard Murdock			Trustee
Mrs Amanda Duffin			Teacher Representative
Mr Seamus Fegan			EA Representative
Mr Maurice Fitzpatrick			EA Representative
Mrs Pauline Sheehan			Trustee
Mrs Niamh McCarthy			Parent Representative
Mrs Claire Loughran			DE Representative

Emergency Contact Numbers

EA's Critical Incident Officer	028 37 512515
CCMS Critical Incident Officer	028 30 262423/07720428679
CCMS Teachers Welfare Service (Dromore)	028 90 426972/02887727935
CCMS Health and Safety Unit	028 90 426972

Appendix 4b: Names and Contact Numbers of Staff Members

<u>Staff Name</u>
Anne Cassidy
Kathy Doran
Sean Murdock
Emma Harkin
David Keenan
Orlaith Doyle
Emma Fitzpatrick
Bronach O'Grady
Angeline O'Hare
Patricia McPolin
Mary McCann
Amanda Duffin
Tracey Murray
Eileen O'Hagan
Claire Kelly
Nuala Magill
Ursula O'Brien
Julie Coulter
Roisin Gibney
Fiona Todd
Leona Loughran
Kathy Byrne
Susan Rice
Denise McKay
Judy McStay
Sandra McStay
Patsy Mulholland
Paul Magennis
Aneta Sochalska
Teresa McAnulty
Jayne Medlicott
Ellen Heaney
Olivia Haughian
Joanne McGreevy
Seana Fegan
Caoimhe Turley
Emer Hickey
Anna Gallagher