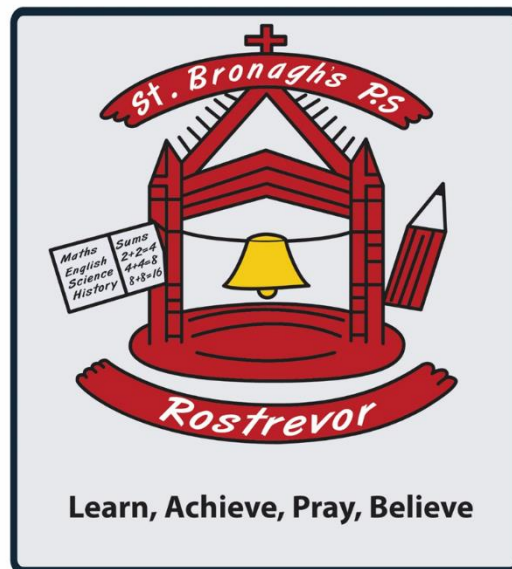


St Bronagh's Primary School



Critical Incident Policy

Date approved by Board of Governors: Spring 2026

Review date – Autumn 2029.

Rationale

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

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 St. Bronagh's Primary School Community.

The Critical Incident Policy and Plan 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 evening, during the school holidays or on a school trip.

It is important that the Critical Incident Policy is easily understood and swings into action immediately.

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

- That it is followed as closely as possible;
- That designated personnel understand their tasks and are competent in carrying them out;
- That other people do not take unilateral actions;
- That consideration and sensitivity is shown by all;
- That children, staff and parents are protected from press intrusion;
- That normal routines be resumed as soon as possible and maintained appropriately;
- There is a realisation that total recovery may take a lengthy period of time.

The Critical Incident Management Team (CIMT) has responsibility for ensuring that procedures are properly addressed at times of high emotion. If the incident involves legal action, a precise response to the incident should be known and be able to be verified by more than one person.

Aims of the Critical Incident Policy:

1. To maintain a duty of care.
2. To minimise educational and administrative disruption within school.
3. To enable normal working to be resumed in 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 (Appendix 1).
- 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 related activity, at home or in some other context:

- The death of a child or member of staff through natural causes.
- Death or serious injuries through accidents.
- 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.
- In the case of the Principal being unavailable, 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.
- All contacts from the media will be dealt with by the Principal, in liaison with CCMS.
- Secretarial staff taking incoming calls will use a statement agreed by the CIMT.
- Where necessary, all members of staff will be informed and will be guided 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.
- There will be an evaluation of the way in which the incident was managed.

This Policy forms part of the school's Pastoral Care Policy and is monitored and amended appropriately. Implementation of this policy will be monitored by the Principal and Vice-Principal, in consultation with staff and parents. Feedback from ongoing monitoring will inform amendments. New ideas and strategies will be incorporated as a result of feedback, staff meetings and staff training.

Appendix 1

CRITICAL INCIDENT MANAGEMENT PLAN

In the Event of a Critical Incident:

Initial Response

• The Principal should be contacted first (if not available, the Vice-Principal). If the critical incident occurs in a classroom the:

<p style="text-align: center;">URGENT! Assistance required in P?</p>
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notice is sent with two children to alert Mr Mussen/Mrs Crimmins and secure immediate assistance (P1-P3 will use the emergency cards, P4-P7 will use the internal phone system).

- The Principal (or Vice-Principal) will seek to clarify from relevant sources the nature and circumstances of the incident.
- The CIMT (Mr Mussen, Mrs Crimmins, Mr Murney and Mrs Joyce) will meet at the earliest opportunity and agree on procedures for managing the critical incident (Appendix 2).
- If the incident is on site, health and safety measures will be put in place and the emergency services contacted by the secretary, who will also facilitate the arrival of the emergency services.

Longer Term Issues

- School structures and routines will be re-established.
- Support strategies for pupils and staff will be implemented.
- There will be ongoing contact with parents.
- Actions taken will be reviewed and policies amended if appropriate.
- The pastoral care procedures and PDMU Curriculum will be reviewed.
- Staff will be mindful of anniversaries and other special dates.

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

Preventative Strategies

- Regular review of relevant policies: Safeguarding, Child Protection, Health and Safety, Evacuation Policy, Pastoral Care.
- First Aid training.
- Fire Drills termly.
- PDMU and PATHS Programmes.

All members of the Critical Incident Management Team must:

- Have a copy of the Critical Incident Policy and Procedures at home and school.
- Be aware of the roles of each part of the plan to enable the school to react swiftly and accordingly.
- Have a contact number for each other for 24-hour contact.
- In event of a school trip/visit, have access to a list of names for staff and pupils.
- Have a register of Emergency Services and relevant outside agencies.

Emergency evacuation drills are familiar to all members of the school community and practised regularly.

Opportunities to explore sensitive issues such as tragedy and death will be built into the PDMU Curriculum and pastoral programmes at an age-appropriate level.

Appendix 2

PROCEDURES FOR CRITICAL INCIDENT MANAGEMENT – KEY ROLES

Principal and Vice Principal -

- Seek clarification of incident/situation.
- Call Emergency Services if appropriate.
- Summon the CIMT to inform of incident.
- Prepare relevant statements/letters for the media, parents, pupils and office staff as appropriate, following CCMS/EA guidelines.
- Convene and inform all staff.
- Contact external agencies EA/social services.
- Contact relevant parents.
- Support the physical and emotional wellbeing of pupils.
- 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

- Ensure phone lines are operative and office staff available.
- Contact emergency services and facilitate their arrival on the premises.
- Ensure office staff do not vary from the script.
- Liaise with school First Aiders to provide support as appropriate.
- Manage the daily arrangements of the school, website/texts to parents/and school information as appropriate.