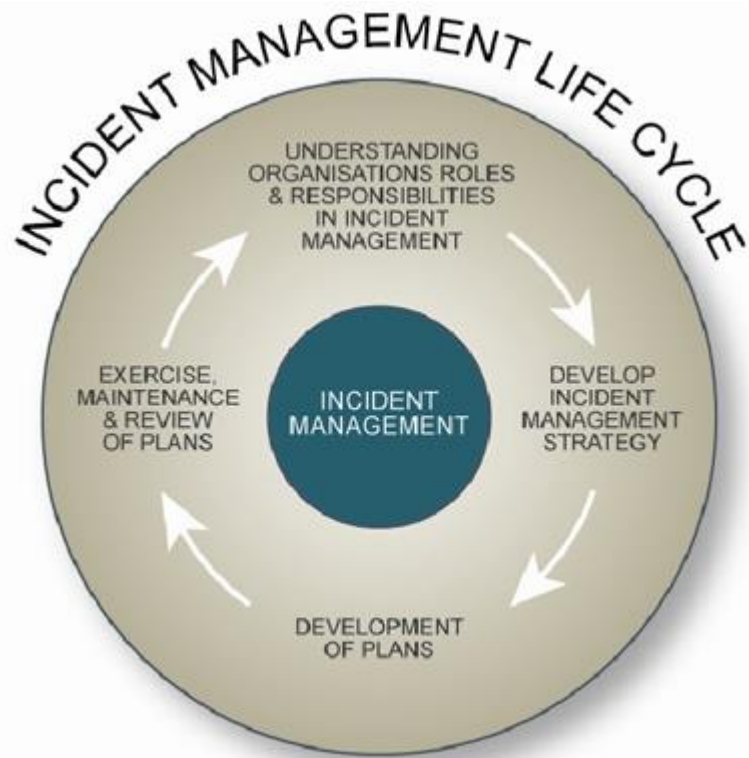


# CRITICAL INCIDENT MANAGEMENT

## *A Common Approach*

---



## CONTENTS

|  |           |
|--|-----------|
| <b>✘ Section 1: Critical Incident Management Overview.....</b>       | <b>1</b>  |
| ▪ Consultation .....   | 3         |
| ▪ Adoption .....   | 3         |
| ▪ Review.....  | 3         |
| ▪ Definitions.....   | 4         |
| ▪ Rationale .....  | 4         |
| ▪ Aims .....   | 4         |
| ▪ Critical Incident Management Team.....                             | 5         |
| ▪ Responding To A Critical Incident .....                            | 5         |
| <b>✘ Section 2 Critical Incident Management Record Keeping .....</b> | <b>6</b>  |
| ▪ Details .....  | 7         |
| ▪ Essential Tasks – Checklist: Day 1 .....                           | 9         |
| ▪ Essential Tasks – Checklist: Day 2 .....                           | 11        |
| ▪ Essential Tasks – Checklists: Longer Term Actions.....             | 13        |
| ▪ Reflection .....   | 15        |
| <b>✘ Section 3: Appendices.....</b>                                  | <b>16</b> |
| ▪ Spreadsheet of Staff Contact Numbers.....                          | 17        |
| ▪ Religious Education Booklet.....                                   | 18        |
| ▪ Critical Incident Contact Numbers .....                            | 25        |
| ▪ Suggested Press Releases .....                                     | 26        |
| ▪ NEELB Circular .....   | 28        |

# **SECTION 1**

## **Critical Incident Management Overview**

---

## SCHOOLS

|   |   |
|---|---|
|    | <p><b>Kilronan School</b></p>           |
|    | <p><b>Magherafelt High School</b></p>   |
|    | <p><b>Northern Regional College</b></p> |
|    | <p><b>Rainey Endowed</b></p>            |
|    | <p><b>Sperrin Integrated</b></p>        |
| <p><b>St. Mary's</b><br/>Grammar School, Magherafelt.</p>  | <p><b>St. Mary's Grammar School</b></p> |
|    | <p><b>St Pius X College</b></p>         |

## **CONSULTATION**

Each school has consulted with:

- staff
- parents/guardians
- pupils
- partner schools, businesses, organisations and suppliers

in the formulation of this plan.

## **ADOPTION**

- Each Senior Leadership Team reviewed the policy in June 2017.
- Each Board of Governors formally adopted the policy in June 2017.

## **REVIEW**

This policy will be reviewed annually in Term 3 by the Vice Principals of the Magherafelt Learning Partnership

## DEFINITIONS

**A critical incident** is a sudden or unexpected incident or sequence of events which causes trauma within a school community and which overwhelms its normal coping mechanism.

**Trauma** is an exposure to a terrifying and life threatening event resulting in helplessness in the face of danger, anxiety, fear and instinctual arousal.

## RATIONALE

Each school in the Magherafelt Learning Partnership is committed to providing a safe, caring, supportive environment wherein children and adults may live and learn together. It is recognised that, on occasion, critical incidents may occur inside or outside the school environment which may impact significantly on the school community. This Critical Incident Management plan seeks to put in place procedures and guidelines to support the school community during and after an incident. This plan is compatible with all policies in each school's portfolio of policies and takes account of recent Human Rights legislation (December 2003).

## AIMS

Our Critical Incident Management plan aims to:

Provide a sympathetic, sensitive, prompt and efficient response  
in the event of a critical incident, in particular by:

- Assessing hazards and situations which may require emergency action.
- Establishing responses to address these hazards.
- Liaising with all relevant emergency services.
- Developing an effective management plan for each critical incident.
- Disseminating planned procedures
- Assisting with the implementation of the management plan.
- Providing regular opportunities (at least yearly) for all staff to be kept informed of Critical Incident Management Plans.
- Reviewing and updating the Critical Incident Management plan.
- Ensuring the curriculum supports the psychological well – being of staff and students.
- Providing appropriate, regular and relevant Professional Development for staff.

## CRITICAL INCIDENT MANAGEMENT TEAM

| NAME | POSITION | HOME | MOBILE |
|------|----------|------|--------|
|      |          |      |        |
|      |          |      |        |
|      |          |      |        |
|      |          |      |        |
|      |          |      |        |
|      |          |      |        |
|      |          |      |        |
|      |          |      |        |
|      |          |      |        |
|      |          |      |        |
|      |          |      |        |
|      |          |      |        |
|      |          |      |        |

Other staff who have specific responsibilities relating to the incident, may be co-opted onto the team.

## RESPONDING TO A CRITICAL INCIDENT

| KEY TASKS  | TIME SCALE   |
|--|--------------|
| ▪ Collate and record factual information                                       | within hours |
| ▪ Critical Incident Management Team to meet with appropriate support personnel | within hours |
| ▪ Contact parents/guardians  | within hours |
| ▪ Brief key members of staff eg. Heads of Year                                 | within hours |
| ▪ Brief whole staff  | within hours |
| ▪ Inform pupils and arrange pastoral support                                   | within hours |
| ▪ Respond to media   | same day     |
| ▪ Identify high risk students and staff  | same day     |
| ▪ Identify vulnerable individual/groups and provide on-going support           | ongoing      |

Lead staff members to deal with each issue will be identified and supported by the Critical Incident Management Team.

*In the event of a major incident, guidance will be sought from the Emergency Services.*

### AFTER THE CRITICAL INCIDENT

- The Critical Incident Team will:
- Debrief (to include groups of staff and pupils)
  - Evaluate plan and amend (if appropriate)

## **SECTION 2**

### **Critical Incident Management Record Keeping**

---



**DETAILS**

**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:**

| <b>Name</b> | <b>Involvement</b> | <b>Known/Suspected</b> | <b>Contact Details</b> |
|-------------|--------------------|------------------------|------------------------|
|             |                    |                        |                        |
|             |                    |                        |                        |
|             |                    |                        |                        |
|             |                    |                        |                        |
|             |                    |                        |                        |
|             |                    |                        |                        |

**Staff members on Critical Incident Response Team:**

| <b>Name</b> | <b>Mobile Number</b> |
|-------------|----------------------|
|             |                      |
|             |                      |
|             |                      |
|             |                      |
|             |                      |

## ESSENTIAL TASKS - CHECKLIST

### DAY 1

#### 1. ALLOCATE ROLES TO STAFF MEMBERS

| Role                          | Person Responsible | Mobile Number |
|-------------------------------|--------------------|---------------|
| Phone calls                   |                    |               |
| Staff briefing and debriefing |                    |               |
| Pupils                        |                    |               |
| Parents                       |                    |               |
| Media                         |                    |               |

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

#### 2. ESTABLISH A CENTRAL INFORMATION POINT

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

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

#### 3. INFORM KEY PEOPLE AND SEEK SUPPORT AS APPROPRIATE

| List of Key Contacts                   | Phone Number | Done                     |
|--|--------------|--------------------------|
| ELB                                    |              | <input type="checkbox"/> |
| CCMS<br>Chair of Governor              |              | <input type="checkbox"/> |
| Critical Incident Response Team        |              | <input type="checkbox"/> |
| Local Clergy                           |              | <input type="checkbox"/> |
| Local Police / Fire Brigade / Hospital |              | <input type="checkbox"/> |
| Designated Medical Officer             |              | <input type="checkbox"/> |
| School Nurse                           |              | <input type="checkbox"/> |
| School Psychologist                    |              | <input type="checkbox"/> |
| Counselling Services eg Contact Youth  |              | <input type="checkbox"/> |
| Key Holders                            |              | <input type="checkbox"/> |

**4. BRIEF ALL STAFF**

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

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

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

**5. INFORM ALL PUPILS**

- Think:**
- Clear language (no euphemisms)
  - Dispel rumour
  - Offer support
  - Age appropriate

**6. MAKE CONTACT WITH PARENTS/GUARDIANS 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 DAY 1**

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

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

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

## ESSENTIAL TASKS - CHECKLIST

### DAY 2

1. RECORD ANY FURTHER INFORMATION/DETAILS/CONTACTS THAT HAVE COME TO LIGHT SINCE YESTERDAY

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

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

2. MAINTAIN CENTRAL INFORMATION POINT

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

3. PLAN FOR COVER/FLEXIBLE TIMETABLE/APPROPRIATE ROOMS ETC AS NECESSARY

4. BRIEF STAFF ON MORNING OF DAY 2

- Think:**
- Practical arrangements
  - Support for pupils
  - Self-Care

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

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

**5. Pupils**

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

**Details of action taken:**

| Pupil/Group of Pupils | Action Taken | By Whom | Time | Date |
|-----------------------|--------------|---------|------|------|
|                       |              |         |      |      |
|                       |              |         |      |      |
|                       |              |         |      |      |
|                       |              |         |      |      |
|                       |              |         |      |      |
|                       |              |         |      |      |

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

**6. PARENTS**

- Providing further information (as appropriate) eg letter / meetings etc.

**Details of action taken:**

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

**7. DEBRIEFING STAFF AT END OF DAY 2**

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

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

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

## ESSENTIAL TASKS - CHECKLISTS

### LONGER TERM ACTIONS

1. Memorials, rituals and ceremonies (e.g. memory books, art work, school event, planting tree).
2. Re-establish feelings of safety and predictability among school community.
3. Ongoing support of pupils' emotional coping (eg circle time, PDMU).
4. School support for a contact with families affected by the incident.
5. Ongoing monitoring of children who may be having difficulties – providing support and referring on as necessary.

| Potential Referral Agencies | Telephone Number |
|-----------------------------|------------------|
| Contact Youth               |                  |
| Other Counselling Agencies  |                  |
| Educational Psychology      |                  |
| Education Welfare           |                  |
| GP (through parent)         |                  |

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

| Name of Child | Referred to | Referred by | Date of Referral | Outcome |
|---------------|-------------|-------------|------------------|---------|
|               |             |             |                  |         |
|               |             |             |                  |         |
|               |             |             |                  |         |
|               |             |             |                  |         |
|               |             |             |                  |         |
|               |             |             |                  |         |

Person responsible for the above referrals:

**Name:**

(probably SENCO) .....

6. Ongoing 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 of upsetting in the future and plan to support staff and pupils.

**Details of action taken:**



## REFLECTION

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

Details of key lessons learned through management of this event.

**Completed by:** .....

**Status:** .....

**Date:** .....

# **SECTION 3**

## **Appendices**

---

## SPREADSHEET OF STAFF CONTACT NUMBERS

| NAME           | POSITION                     | HOME | MOBILE |
|----------------|------------------------------|------|--------|
| <b>YEAR 8</b>  |                              |      |        |
|                | <b>Head of Year 8</b>        |      |        |
|                | <b>8A</b> Form Teacher (sub) |      |        |
|                | <b>8A</b> Form Teacher       |      |        |
|                | <b>8B</b> Form Teacher       |      |        |
|                | <b>8C</b> Form Teacher       |      |        |
|                | <b>8D</b> Form Teacher       |      |        |
|                | <b>8E</b> Form Teacher       |      |        |
| <b>YEAR 9</b>  |                              |      |        |
|                | <b>Head of Year 9</b>        |      |        |
|                | <b>9A</b> Form Teacher       |      |        |
|                | <b>9B</b> Form Teacher       |      |        |
|                | <b>9C</b> Form Teacher       |      |        |
|                | <b>9D</b> Form Teacher       |      |        |
|                | <b>9E</b> Form Teacher       |      |        |
| <b>YEAR 10</b> |                              |      |        |
|                | <b>Head of Year 10</b>       |      |        |
|                | <b>10A</b> Form Teacher      |      |        |
|                | <b>10B</b> Form Teacher      |      |        |
|                | <b>10C</b> Form Teacher      |      |        |
|                | <b>10D</b> Form Teacher      |      |        |
|                | <b>10E</b> Form Teacher      |      |        |
| <b>YEAR 11</b> |                              |      |        |
|                | <b>Head of Year 11</b>       |      |        |
|                | <b>11A</b> Form Teacher      |      |        |
|                | <b>11B</b> Form Teacher      |      |        |
|                | <b>11C</b> Form Teacher      |      |        |
|                | <b>11D</b> Form Teacher      |      |        |
|                | <b>11E</b> Form Teacher      |      |        |
|                | <b>11F</b> Form Teacher      |      |        |
| <b>YEAR 12</b> |                              |      |        |
|                | <b>Head of Year 12</b>       |      |        |
|                | <b>12A</b> Form Teacher      |      |        |
|                | <b>12B</b> Form Teacher      |      |        |
|                | <b>12C</b> Form Teacher      |      |        |
|                | <b>12D</b> Form Teacher      |      |        |
|                | <b>12E</b> Form Teacher      |      |        |
|                | <b>12F</b> Form Teacher      |      |        |
| <b>YEAR 13</b> |                              |      |        |
|                | <b>Head of Year 13</b>       |      |        |
|                | <b>13</b> Tutor              |      |        |
|                | <b>13</b> Tutor              |      |        |
|                | <b>13</b> Tutor              |      |        |
|                | <b>13</b> Tutor              |      |        |
|                | <b>13</b> Tutor              |      |        |
|                | <b>13</b> Tutor              |      |        |
|                | <b>13</b> Tutor              |      |        |
|                | <b>13</b> Tutor              |      |        |

\* Preferred choice

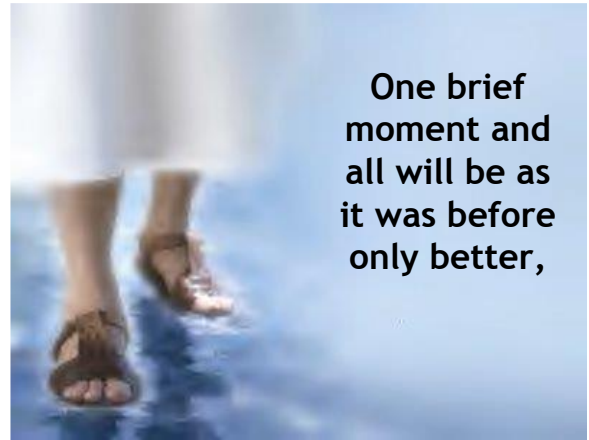


RELIGIOUS EDUCATION BOOKLET

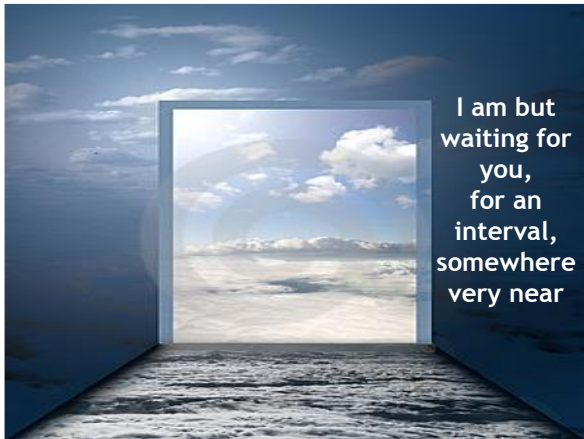


To live in hearts we leave behind  
Is not to die.

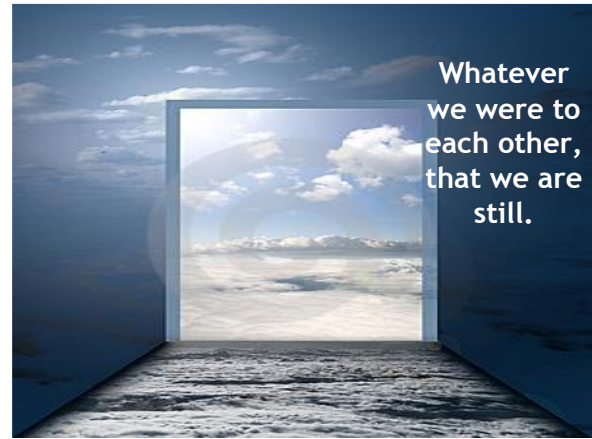
Thomas Campbell,



One brief  
moment and  
all will be as  
it was before  
only better,



I am but  
waiting for  
you,  
for an  
interval,  
somewhere  
very near



Whatever  
we were to  
each other,  
that we are  
still.



Laugh as we always laughed  
....  
Play, smile, think of me,  
pray for me.

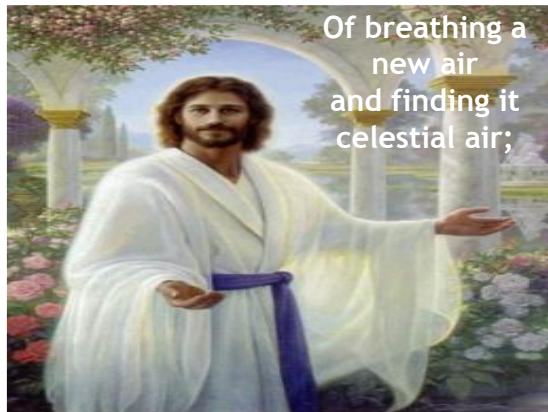


Think  
Of stepping on the shore  
and finding it heaven;

Of taking hold of a hand and finding it God's hand;



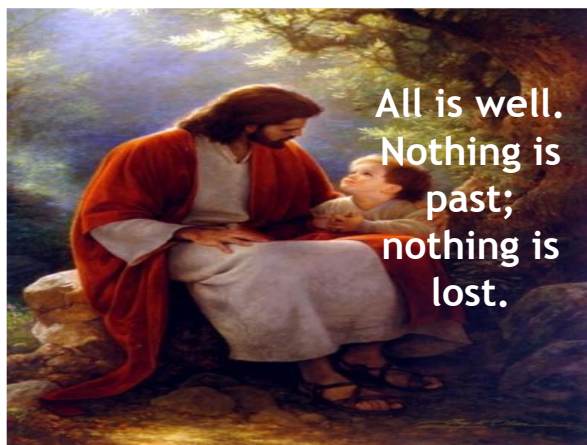
Of breathing a new air and finding it celestial air;



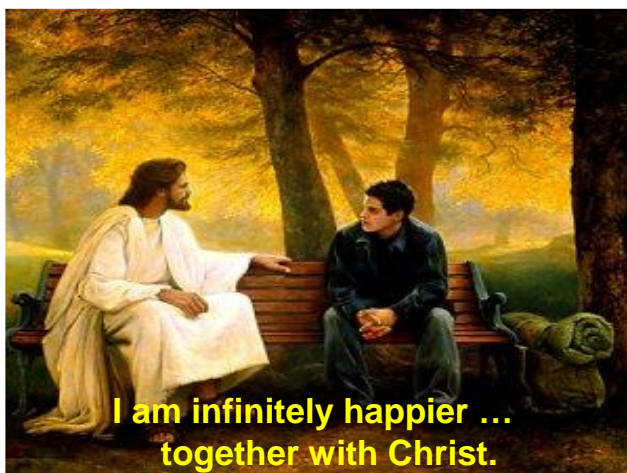
Of feeling invigorated and finding it immortality;



All is well. Nothing is past; nothing is lost.



I am infinitely happier ... together with Christ.



...  
I am home.



## **A CHILD LOANED**

“I’ll lend you for a little time  
A child of mine”. He said.  
“For you to love the while she lives,  
And mourn for when she’s dead.  
It may be six or seven years  
Or twenty-two or three,  
But will you, till I call her back,  
Take care of her for Me?  
She’ll bring her charms to gladden you,  
And should her stay be brief,  
You’ll have her lovely memories  
As solace for your grief.

I cannot promise she will stay,  
Since all from Earth return,  
But there are lessons taught down there  
I want this child to learn.  
I’ve looked this wide world over  
In my search for teachers true,  
And from the throngs that crowd life’s lanes,  
I have selected you;  
Now will you give her all your love,  
Nor think the labour vain,  
Nor hate Me when I come to call  
and take her back again?

I fancied that I heard them say,  
“Dear Lord, They will be done,  
For all the joy They child shall bring,  
For the risk of grief we’ll run.  
We’ll shelter her with tenderness,  
We’ll love her while we may,  
And for the happiness we’ve known,  
Forever grateful stay.  
But should the angels call for her  
Much sooner than we planned,  
We’ll brave the bitter grief that comes  
And try to understand”.

\* \* \* \* \*

## **A READING FROM THE BOOK OF WISDOM**

The souls of the virtuous are in the hands of God,  
no torment shall ever touch them.  
In the eyes of the unwise, they did appear to die,  
their going looked like a disaster,  
their leaving us, like annihilation;  
but they are in peace.

If they experience punishment as men see it,  
their hope was rich with immortality;  
slight was their affliction, great will their blessings be.  
God has put them to the test  
and proved them worthy to be with him;

He has tested them like gold in a furnace,  
and accepted them as holocaust.  
When the time comes for his visitation they will shine out;  
as sparks run through the stubble, so will they.

They shall judge nations, rule over peoples,  
and the lord will be their king for ever.  
They who trust in him, will understand the truth,  
those who are faithful will live with him in love;  
for grace and mercy await those he has chosen.

This is the word of the lord

## **A READING FROM THE LETTER OF SAINT PAUL TO THE PHILIPPIANS**

For us, our homeland is in heaven, and from heaven comes the saviour we are waiting for,  
the lord Jesus Christ, and he will transfigure these wretched bodies of ours into copies of  
his own glorious body. He will do that by the same power with which he can subdue the  
whole universe.

This is the word of the lord.

Gospel acc. may be sung, and if not then following is said:

**Alleluia, Alleluia!**  
**if we have died with Christ, then we shall live with him;**  
**if we hold firm, then we shall reign with him.**  
**Alleluia.**



## **A READING FROM THE HOLY GOSPEL ACCORDING TO JOHN**

### **Jesus raised his eyes to heaven and said:**

'Father, the hour has come:  
glorify your son so that your son may glorify you;  
and, through the power over all humankind that you have given him,  
let him give eternal life to those you have entrusted to him.  
and eternal life is this:  
to know you, the only true God, and Jesus Christ whom you have sent.  
I have glorified you on earth  
and finished the work that you gave me to do.

'Now father, it is time for you to glorify me  
with the glory I had with you before ever the world was.  
I have made your name known  
to the men you took from the world to give me.  
they were yours and you gave them to me,  
and they have kept your word.  
now at last they know that all you have given me comes indeed from you,  
for I have given them the teaching you gave me,  
and they have truly accepted this, that I came from you, and have believed that it was you  
who sent me.

I pray for them;  
I am not praying for the world  
But, for those you have given me,  
because they belong to you:  
all I have is yours, and all you have is mine  
and in them I am glorified.  
I am not in the world any longer,  
but they are in the world,  
and I am coming to you.

This is the gospel of the Lord.

## **SERVICE**

In our distress and sorrow the one word that is surely coming to us is **'Why?'** there is no answer that will take away our pain.

But there are answers that will give us strength.

In our prayer today we remember (Name) with Thanksgiving, our friend and pupil of this school. And we ask God's grace for ourselves too.

(Name) was baptised into Christ with the sign of the cross so we begin;

In the name of the Father and of the son and of the Holy Spirit. **Amen.**

## **A READING FROM THE PROPHET ISAIAH**

**The Lord will prepare a great feast for all nations on earth – He will remove the cloud of sorrow hanging over us. He will wipe away all tears. Then he will say, "He is our God! We have put our trust in him and he has rescued us. He is the Lord. Now we are happy and joyful because he has saved us."**

## **OFFERTORY (WITH MUSIC - NO WORDS)**

Representatives of the class of (Name)

*Bring forward flowers and a candle and a photo if possible*

## **PRAYERS**

We turn to our loving God and pray that (Name) be safe in the presence of Jesus. **Amen**

That the parents and relatives of (Name) may be strengthened at this time. **Amen**

That all the friends of (Name) be consoled at this time. **Amen**

That all who nurse and care for the sick may be blessed. **Amen**

That we all would live well and be ready to meet the Lord when He comes. **Amen**

## **OUR FATHER SAID TOGETHER**

**May the grace of our Lord Jesus Christ, the love of God and the fellowship of the Holy Spirit be with us all. Amen**

## CRITICAL INCIDENT CONTACT NUMBERS

|   |                                |
|---|--------------------------------|
| <b>Emergency Services: 999 or 112</b> in the Republic | <b>999</b> in Northern Ireland |
|---|--------------------------------|

|   |  |  |   |
|---|--|--|---|
| <i><b>Gardaí/Police</b></i>                 | <b>Magherafelt Station<br/>101</b>                 | <i><b>Hospital</b></i>                           | <b>MUH: 028 7963 1031<br/>Antrim: 028 9446 6446</b> |
| <i><b>Doctor</b></i>                        | <b>A/E MUH<br/>028 7963 1031</b>                   | <i><b>Dentist</b></i>                            | <b>A/E MUH<br/>028 7963 1031</b>                    |
| <i><b>Poisons<br/>Information</b></i>       | <b>A/E MUH<br/>028 7963 1031</b>                   | <i><b>Eircom/BT<br/>(for nuisance calls)</b></i> | <b>BT: 0800 661 441</b>                             |
| <i><b>Department<br/>Inspector</b></i>      | <b>Miss W Crawford<br/>028 9127 9640</b>           | <i><b>Chairperson<br/>BOM/BOG</b></i>            | <b>Mrs Symington<br/>028 79634177</b>               |
| <i><b>DES/DE</b></i>                        | <b>Bangor:<br/>028 9127 9627<br/>028 9127 9726</b> | <i><b>Director of<br/>Community Care</b></i>     | <b>Community Nurse Manager<br/>028 7965 9147</b>    |
| <i><b>Health Board<br/>Headquarters</b></i> | <b>Northern Health Board<br/>028 2563 3700</b>     | <i><b>EAO/Welfare<br/>Office</b></i>             | <b>Welfare Office<br/><br/>028 70868588</b>         |
| <i><b>INTO/UTU</b></i>                      | <b>Ulster Teachers Union<br/>028 9066 2216</b>     | <i><b>Principal</b></i>                          | <b>Mrs Heron</b>                                    |
| <i><b>Swine Flu Helpline</b></i>            | <b>0800 0514 142</b>                               |  |   |

## **SUGGESTED PRESS RELEASES**

### **PRESS RELEASE – NUMBER 1**

Date:

The staff and students of ..... School deeply regret the sudden death of one of our students. Our thoughts, prayers and the sympathy of the entire school community are extended to the family at this very difficult time.

The students of ..... are being supported by the Pastoral Care Team of the college, assisted by

### **PRESS RELEASE – NUMBER 2**

Date:

On behalf of the Board of Governors, Staff and Pupils of ..... School, I wish to offer our sincere condolences to the ..... family.

Our thoughts and prayers are with them during this difficult time.

The sudden death of ..... in such tragic circumstances has greatly shocked and saddened our entire school community.

..... was a very personable, bright boy/girl who was popular with pupils and staff alike. His/her love for life and school was evident to all who knew him/her and he/she will be greatly missed.

Our pupils will, of course, receive all appropriate support within the school from our dedicated Pastoral Care Team and the school counsellors.

This is a difficult time for all and we respectfully ask that the media allow the ..... family to grieve in private.

## **PRESS RELEASE – NUMBER 3**

Date:

The death of ..... a Year .... student at our school has come as a shock to all of us within our school community. .... was committed to achieving his/her best in his/her ..... studies. He/she was gentle and kind, very modest and unassuming. His/her personality was reflected in his/her warm, winning smile. He/she was a loyal friend who was very highly thought of by students and staff alike. The tragic nature of his/her death has added to our collected sense of loss. On behalf of the Board of Governors, Staff and Students of .... School, I wish to offer our sincere condolences to his brother/sister a current Year .... student and to the entire ..... family circle. Our thoughts and prayers are with them during this difficult time.

Our focus is also on providing a safe and protective environment for our students, and with as normal a routine as is possible under these very difficult circumstances. In this regard, only students, and their parents are being advised of the arrangements that the school has in place to meet the emotional needs of all.

The school has put in place special arrangements for .....’s friends who are sitting their GCSE examinations. Although the school timetable is scheduled to run, students who require additional support in relation to this tragedy will be supported by the school’s Pastoral Care Team assisted by CCMS and the NEELB Critical Incident Response Team. Staff Welfare Officers from CCMS and NEELB will also attend the school today to provide additional support.

Our thoughts and prayers are for ..... and their entire family circle.

NEELB CIRCULAR



North Eastern Education & Library Board

# MANAGING BEREAVEMENT TRAUMA AND LOSS

## CRITICAL INCIDENT SUPPORT FOR SCHOOLS



Awarded for excellence



INVESTOR IN PEOPLE

## **DEALING WITH BEREAVEMENT AND CRITICAL INCIDENTS**

### **Introduction**

This leaflet outlines the support mechanism which is available to assist schools in coping with the emotional issues that children, young people and adults in a school can experience as the result of a bereavement or critical incident.

*“A Critical Incident is an event that has the potential to create significant human distress and can overwhelm one’s usual coping mechanisms.”*

Marion Gibson

The serious injury or death of a pupil or member of staff can challenge the very heart of a school community, its identity and its ability to cope. It is therefore very important that, if such a tragedy occurs, the staff particularly the Principal and Senior Management Team receive effective support and guidance in meeting such challenges. The Board, in seeking to provide effective support, has a procedure in place to ensure that, if required, appropriate services are available to assist schools.

The information contained in this leaflet aims to assist schools from both a procedural and pastoral perspective, with each outlined in the accompanying flow chart entitled ‘NEELB Response to Critical Incidents’

### **1. Key Contact Details**

Schools should initially contact the relevant Schools Branch Officer at County Hall:

*Nursery and Primary Schools:*

Primary Officer/Assistant Advisory Officer (028) 2566 2391

*Post Primary and Special Schools:*

Post Primary/Assistant Advisory Officer (028) 2566 2387

The Schools Branch Officer will ask for certain details and complete an electronic record of the telephone call. The officer will immediately inform relevant Board Officers/Services as appropriate. Advice may be given to the school on procedures to be followed and support services available to the school community.

Where the school or the officer feel direct support and/or intervention is necessary a referral to the Educational Psychology Service, may be made.

If considered appropriate the Schools Branch Officer will contact the Board’s Press Officer who will work in conjunction with the Principal in regard to contact with the press.

## **2. Critical Incident Support and Intervention**

When a referral to the Educational Psychology Service is received it will be prioritised and the Co-ordinating Educational Psychologist will be contacted immediately.

The Co-ordinating Educational Psychologist will:

- determine the most appropriate immediate course of action and personnel to be involved;
- ensure that the school is contacted quickly and an assessment made of the support to be provided;
- ensure that Schools Branch is updated on the action taken.

## **3. Range of Support Available**

A range of support is available to schools. This includes:

- telephone contact with the school to offer support and assistance;
- assistance in the implementation of the school's Critical Incident Plan;
- assistance to the Principal, Senior Management Team and Board of Governors in planning and dealing with the immediate situation;
- provision of information on the possible effects of sudden bereavement, trauma and loss;
- support for the Principal in preparing and/or delivering assembly or 'breaking the news';
- provision of a briefing for school staff
- help in co-ordinating support for the school;
- assistance in helping staff to support pupils, teachers and parents affected by bereavement, trauma and loss;
- work with individual pupils;



- work with groups of pupils;
- work with staff;
- offer of guidance regarding Critical Incident management such as:
  - management of the media — advice provided by the Board’s Press Officer;
  - minimisation of secondary trauma;
  - information on the possible and likely symptoms of trauma;
  - identification of pupils and staff who are most vulnerable and possibly in need of support;
  - communication with pupils and parents;
  - information and guidance on bereavement, trauma and loss.
- liaison between the school and internal/external services;
- referral to other specialist support services for those severely affected by the incident.

Decisions concerning the appropriate support to be provided will normally be taken by the Co-ordinating Educational Psychologist in consultation with the Principal.

## NEELB RESPONSE TO CRITICAL INCIDENTS

### **School experiences Critical Incident**



### **School contacts Schools Branch**

Primary Officer/Assistant Advisory Officer (028) 2566 2391  
Post Primary/Assistant Advisory Officer (028) 2566 2387



### **School Branch Action**

Schools Branch will listen to the school's concerns and ask specific questions in order to complete a short record of the Critical Incident. This record will be used to inform relevant Board Officers/Services as appropriate. This creates an accurate record of the incident and relieves schools from the pressure of having to repeat the same information to others. If considered appropriate Schools Branch will also contact the Board's Press Officer.

Schools Branch Officers will offer schools initial advice, particularly in relation to Board policies, regulations and procedures. They will also make schools aware of the assistance which is available depending on the situation facing the school community. In the event that the school or the officer consider that more intensive support, advice or intervention is necessary, a referral can be made to the Educational Psychology Service.



### **Educational Psychology Service Action**

Where a referral is received by the Educational Psychology Service it is given priority and immediate contact is made with the appropriate Co-ordinating Educational Psychologist.

The Co-ordinating Educational Psychologist will consider the referral information and determine with the Principal the immediate course of action and the most appropriate personnel to be involved.

The Co-ordinating Educational Psychologist will also advise the school Educational Psychologist regarding the situation.