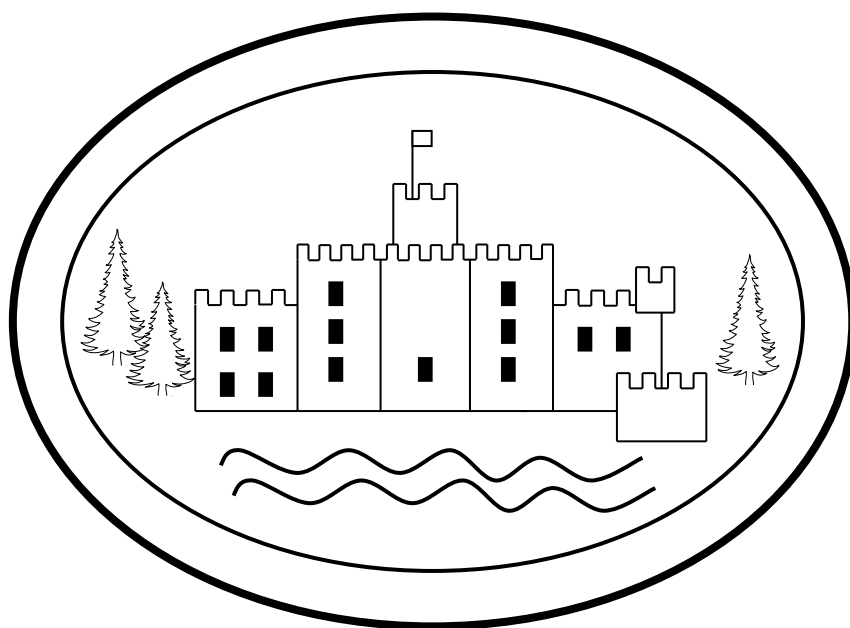# Augher Central

Primary School

Critical Incident

Management Policy (CIM)

Critical Incident Policy

1. Introduction/Rationale

Whilst they do not occur frequently, critical Incidents can happen, and it is therefore important that we have a plan in place to best respond and manage a traumatic situation should it occur. Critical incident management is an integral part of normal school management practice.

2. Aim

The aim of the CIM Plan 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 effect a return to normality as soon as possible.

3. Procedure

The governors and staff of Augher Central Primary School recognise a critical incident to be "an incident or sequence of events that overwhelms the normal coping mechanism of the school".

Types of incidents that might affect a school?
- The death of a member of the school community
- 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.

For an incident to be declared 'critical' consultations must first take place between the person at the school handling the incident (usually the Principal or Delegate) and a CCMS/EA/DENI representative. In responding to an incident, the aim should always be to ensure that rapid and appropriate action is taken; accurate information is provided; normal school routines are maintained as far as possible and immediate, sensitive and non-intrusive support is offered.

An emergency is difficult to define and the procedures will not apply to all emergencies.

The two most frequent on-site emergencies are likely to be the need to evacuate the building or a serious/fatal accident.

3.1 Action Plan when Dealing with a Critical Incident

Very often the Education Authorities (EA's) senior Education officer and his/her team will take over much of the management of the incident, leaving the principal free to deal with pupils, parents and colleagues. In any event, as soon as an incident is declared 'critical', a plan of action will be put in place (see appendix 2)

4.0 Information Management & Data Privacy:

The following information will be held in school and will be made available to each member of the Critical Incident Management Team:

- Telephone and Mobile Numbers of all staff
- Names of Key Holders
- Significant medical information relating to pupils and staff on school outings.
- Telephone Numbers of Board of Governors.
- Contact List of all Critical Incident Support Personnel.

This information along with incident reports and details will be maintained in accordance with Data Privacy guidelines.

5.0 Critical Incidents Management Team (CIMT)

Team Leader: Mrs Andrea Sawyers
PSNI Liaison: Mrs Audrey Keys
Staff Liaison: Mrs Laura Spence
Pupil Liaison: Mrs Helen Irvine
Parent Liaison: Mrs Andrea Sawyers
Community Liaison: Rev Olie Downey
Media Liaison: Mrs Andrea Sawyers
Administrator: Jenny Allen (school hours) Andrea Sawyers (after school hours)

(For key Responsibilities of each role see Appendix 1)

6.0 Record Keeping
In the event of an incident each member of the team will keep records of phone calls made and received, letters sent and received, meetings held, persons met, interventions used, material used etc.
Mrs Sawyers and Mrs Allen will have a key role in receiving and logging telephone calls, sending letters, photocopying materials etc.

7.0 Confidentiality

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

8.0 Critical Incident Rooms

In the event of a critical incident the following rooms will be used:
- the Staff Room - to meet the staff
- the main hall- for meetings with pupils
- the main hall (if required: after school hours) - for parents
- the Principal's office for media (if required)
- the P1/2 Room for other visitors

9.0 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 needs of the school community.

9.1 Physical Needs
• Evacuation plan formulated
• Regular fire drills occur
• Fire exits and extinguishers are regularly checked
• School access gates are closed during school hours (9.15-3.00)
• School door is closed & a code is required for entry

9.2. Emotional Needs
The Governors and staff of Augher CPS 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.

10.0 Consultation and Communication

The CIMT has consulted resource documents provided to schools as well as publications listed in the resources section of this book.
These include:
- 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)
- A national charity committed to improving the mental health of all children and young people. www.youngminds.org.uk
- The Childhood Bereavement Network (CBN) is a multi-professional federation of organisations and individuals working with bereaved children and young people. 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

Appendix 1
Key responsibilities of Critical Incident Team Members

Team leader
- Usually the Principal
- Alerts the team members to the crisis and convenes a meeting
- Coordinates the tasks of the team
- Liaises with the Board of Governors
- Liaises with the bereaved family

In the absence of the team leader, DDT Mrs Spence will assume the lead.

PSNI liaison

- Liaises with the PSNI
- Ensures that information about deaths or other developments is checked out for accuracy before being shared

Staff liaison
- Leads briefing meetings for staff on the facts as known, gives staff members an opportunity to express their feelings and ask questions, outlines the routine for the day
- Advises staff on the procedures for identification of vulnerable pupils
- Refers staff to materials from their critical incident folders
- Keeps staff updated as the day progresses
- Is alert to vulnerable staff members and makes contact with them individually
- Advises them of the availability of Staff Care Services and gives them the contact number.

Pupil liaison
- Alerts other staff to vulnerable pupils (appropriately)
- Provides materials for pupils (from their critical incident folder)
- Keeps records of pupils seen by external agency staff
- Looks after setting up and supervision of 'quiet' room where agreed

Community/agency liaison
- Maintains up to date lists of relevant contact numbers such as emergency support services and other external contacts and resources
- Liaises with agencies in the community for support and onward referral
- Coordinates the involvement of agencies
- Reminds agency staff to wear name/visitor badges
- Updates team members on the involvement of external agencies

Parent liaison
- Arranges parent meetings, if held
- May facilitate such meetings, and manage 'questions and answers'
- Ensures that sample letters are typed up, on the school's system and ready for adaptation
- Sets up room for meetings with parents
- Maintains a record of parents seen
- Meets with individual parents
- Provides appropriate materials for parents (from their critical incident folder)

Media liaison
- Will draw up a press statement, give media briefings and interviews (as agreed by school management). Will consult Communications Officer EA.
- Where appropriate, may liaise with the EA Legal Services and relevant teacher unions.

Administrator
Maintains up to date telephone numbers of
- Parents or guardians
- Teachers
- Emergency services
- Takes telephone calls and notes those that need to be responded to
- Ensures that templates are on the school's system in advance and ready for adaptation
- Prepares and sends out letters, emails and faxes Photocopies materials needed
- Maintains records of all correspondence

Appendix 2
Immediate Actions for schools Following a Critical Incident

1. Assess the risk and take necessary action (e.g. school evacuation/first aid/contact emergency services
2. Gather factual information regarding the incident
   - Details of person/people involved
   - Conformation of facts from the source-family, Police, hospital
3. Initiate the use of the DE Critical Incident Management Guide Records
4. Mobilise the school's Critical Incident management team
5. Allocate tasks to schools Critical Management Team
   - Identify a school Critical Incident Coordinator
   - Contact the parents of pupils directly involved in the incident
   - Inform relevant key people and seek support as appropriate e.g. staff, BOG, EA Critical Incident Team, CCMS, Local Clergy etc
   - Establish a central information point
   - Set up dedicated phone line
   - Calls and enquiries logged (see example of telephone log below)
   - School visitors logged (see example of visitor log below)
   - Contact impacted family/s to determine their wishes regarding public announcements and staff/pupil briefings
   - Contact with the media (support available from ELB Communications Officer)
6. Arrange staff briefing (when incident is confirmed)
   - Provide clear factual information and agree pupil briefing content
   - Advise staff on how to inform and support pupils (in form groups/classes/small groups)
   - Team working and practical arrangements e.g. cover, flexible timetabling, recovery rooms etc.
   - Identify vulnerable staff
   - Remind staff regarding confidentiality - media contact and guidelines
   - Critical Incident Staff Leaflet:
7. Inform pupils (when incident is confirmed) with accurate and agreed statement;
   - Use clear language
   - Provide age appropriate factual information
   - dispel rumours
   - offer support
   - identify vulnerable pupils
   - Critical Incident pupil leaflet

8. Maintain normal structures and routines with flexibility
9. Set up a warm, quiet and equipped recovery rooms with drinks, tissues, comfortable chairs etc.

Appendix 3a
Initial Report

INITIAL REPORT

(CONFIDENTIAL)

Date:		**Time:**	
(When report completed)			

Information received from:	
Contact details:	

Name of person informed:	
Information passed to: *(Name of person with overall responsibility)*	

Date:		**Time:**	
(When incident occurred)			

Facts of incident received so far: **Brief Description of the Incident on (Date)**

Unconfirmed reports:

Details of individuals known to be involved:				
Name	**Pupil/Member of Staff or Local Community**	**Involvement**	**Known/Suspected**	**Contact Details**

IMMEDIATE ACTION:				
Critical Incident Management Team Informed:		*(Time)*		*(Date)*

Name of Person:	

Arrange Meeting of Critical Incident Management Team:		*(Time)*		*(Date)*

Name of Person:	

Appendix 3b

RECORD OF CONSULTATION

DATE	NAME OF PERSON	CONTENT OF DISCUSSION	RECOMMENDATIONS

Appendix 3c

<u>TELEPHONE LOG</u>

Date and Time of Call	Name of Caller	Query	Response	Name of staff member to follow up query

Signed   Principal: ....

              Date...

Signed   Chair of Governors: ....

              Date ....