



Critical Incident Policy

INTRODUCTION

This plan has been prepared and agreed by the staff of Ballybrack Killiney Montessori & Afterschool to assist in dealing with an emergency situation that affects the school community. At Ballybrack Killiney Montessori & Afterschool we understand we need to plan for all eventualities to ensure the health, safety and welfare of all the children we care for. With this in mind, we have a critical incident policy in place to ensure our setting is able to operate effectively in the case of a critical incident.

This plan relates to an event which may involve:

- The school premises (Flood, fire, burglary).
- Abduction or threatened abduction of a child.
- the safety of children and/or staff.
- a serious accident involving children and/or school personnel on or off the premises.
- the death of a child or staff member.
- a violent intrusion onto school premises (e.g. an armed intruder or a bomb alert).
- extensive damage to school premises.
- the release of hazardous substances near or on the school site.
- a crisis which might affect the public reputation of the school.

It also considers where the Manager believes that the school will benefit from receiving additional support or, where the community in which the school is based is affected by an emergency.

The school emergency plan aims to:

- provide support to all children and staff affected by an incident.
- maintain the normal running of any parts of the school not affected the whole school to normal as soon as possible.
- The plan provides generic guides to actions that should be considered by the Manager, nominated deputy, and the critical incident management team (CIMT) in case of an emergency in school or the local community, or on an educational visit.
- The plan covers procedures for an incident occurring in school time and out of school hours, weekends and during school holidays.

Important Action Points

- Review the plan and its content at least once each year.
- Keep the plan up-to-date regarding personnel.



- Ensure staff know their roles.
- Keep the school's contact list near to the phone in case it becomes necessary to
- activate the plan.

In the event of an emergency parents would be contacted immediately. All reasonable steps are taken to prevent critical incidents however there will always be a degree of risk.

Flood

There is always a danger of flooding from adverse weather conditions or through the water/central heating systems. We cannot anticipate adverse weather, however, we can ensure that we take care of all our water and heating systems through regular maintenance and checks to reduce the chance of flooding in this way.

If flooding occurs during our open times, the manager will make a decision based on the severity and location of this flooding, and it may be deemed necessary to follow the fire evacuation procedure.

Fire

In order to ensure the safety of the children and staff we run monthly fire drills and ensure all fire safety equipment and smoke alarms are tested regularly and maintained annually and that staff are trained in fire safety and the fire safety procedures and policies. Please refer to our Fire Safety Policy.

Burglary

The management of the setting follow a lock up procedure which ensures all doors and windows are closed and locked before vacating the premises. The doors are also locked when children are in class for child safety purposes.

The manager/deputy manager will always check the premises as they arrive in the morning. Should they discover that the setting has been broken into they will follow the procedure below.

- Dial 999 with as many details as possible, i.e. name and location, details of what you have found and emphasise this is a pre-school and children will be arriving soon.
- Contain the area to ensure no-one enters until the police arrive. The staff will direct parents and children to a separate area as they arrive. If all areas have been disturbed staff will follow police advice to ensure the safety of the children.
- The manager will help the police with the enquiries, e.g. by identifying items missing, areas of entry etc.
- The manager will be available at all times during this time to speak to parents, reassure children and direct enquires.



- The manager will assess the situation following a theft and ensure parents are kept up-to-date with developments relating to the operation of Ballybrack/Killiney Montessori & Afterschool.

Abduction or threatened abduction of a child

At Ballybrack/Killiney Montessori & Afterschool we take the safety and welfare of the children in our care extremely seriously. As such we have secure safety procedures in place to ensure children are safe whilst within our care, this includes safety from abduction. Staff must be vigilant at all times and report any persons lingering on the property immediately. Frequent head counts are carried out e.g. before and after garden time/on outings, etc. All doors to the setting are locked and unable to be accessed unless staff members allow individuals in. Parents are reminded on a regular basis not to allow anyone into the building whether they are known to them or not.

Children will only be released into care of a designated/authorised to collect adult. Parents are requested to inform the setting of any potential custody battles or family concerns as soon as they arise so that we are able to support the child. We will not take sides in relation to any custody battle and will remain neutral for the child. If any parent arrives to collect their child, we will not restrict access unless a court order is in place. We will consult solicitors with regards to any concerns over custody and relay any information back to the parties involved.

If a member of staff witnesses an actual or potential abduction the following procedure will be followed:

- The police must be called immediately.
- The staff member will notify the manager immediately and the manager will take control.
- The parent (s) will be contacted.
- All other children will be kept safe and secure and calmed down where necessary.
- The police will be given as many details as possible including details of the child, description of the abductor, car registration number if used, time and direction of travel if seen and any family situations that may impact on this abduction.

Bomb threat/terrorism attack

- If a bomb threat is received, the person taking the call will record all details given over the phone as soon as possible and raise the alarm as soon as the phone call is terminated.
- The staff will follow the fire evacuation procedure to ensure the safety of all on the premises and will provide as much detail to the emergency services as possible.
- A lockdown should be initiated when a situation arises that requires the isolation (rather than evacuation) of staff and students from an identified threat. Threats



to the safety of individuals on this site include; aggressive or violent intruder, siege/hostage incident, dangerous animals, armed robbery and lightning/severe storms.

Other incidents

All incidents will be managed by manager and all the staff will co-operate with any emergency services on the scene. Any other incident that requires evacuation will follow the fire procedure. Other incidents will be dealt with on an individual basis taking into account the effect on the safety, health and welfare of the children and staff in the setting.



ACTIVATION

Information about an incident may come from a staff member, pupil, parent, the emergency services or the local authority. Whoever receives the alert should ask for, and record, as much information as possible:

Name of the person informing of the incident:	
Details of the incident	
Who else has been informed (e.g. emergency services etc):	
Exact location of the incident:	
Details of any casualties:	
Any action taken so far:	
Name of contact at the scene:	
Number of contact at the scene:	
What assistance is needed:	

Immediately inform the Manager or Nominee (Deputy).



Responsibilities/Checklist of Initial Action by Manager or Nominee (Deputy):

RESPONSIBILITIES

- Take charge of events.
- Draw up an action plan for the specific incident.
- Delegate responsibilities and give task sheets to the chosen person.
- Consult with the Police and the person responsible for liaison with the media about the release of information to students, staff, parents, general enquiries and the media.
- Establish a crisis team meeting place, close to the incident control point.

Action to be taken:	√ When complete
Ascertain details of incident	
Take immediate action to safeguard pupils and staff where necessary	
Alert relevant emergency services (Police, Fire, Ambulance) via 999 system. Be prepared to give the following information: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Emergency Service(s) required • Exact location of the incident • Number of casualties • Nature of injuries • Location and telephone number where call is being made from • Hazards which may be encountered by the Emergency Services at the site 	
Log all communications and actions	
Where possible, avoid closing the school and try to maintain normal routines	

Critical Incident Management Team (CIMT)

The CIMT will comprise:

- Eve Berea, Manager
- Deputy Manager(s)
- All other Teachers present

Implementation



(Manager or Nominee)

Action to be taken	√ When complete
Ensure that accurate, factual information is available for those arriving at the scene.	
Liaise with the local authority, police, fire and ambulance services, and other agencies who may become involved.	
Act as the main contact to co-ordinate the response Inform the chair of governors Inform all staff, and parents of injured pupils.	
Decide how to inform other parents of injured pupils.	
Ensure all staff maintain a log of actions and decisions.	
Allocate tasks to members of the CIMT as appropriate.	
Provide regular briefings for staff.	
Continue to liaise with the local authority and the emergency services.	
Try to maintain normal routines as far as possible.	
Inform staff involved to prepare a written report of their involvement, noting events and times.	
Inform the Tusla Duty Social Worker who will advise on reporting procedures.	
In the event of serious injuries or a fatality, the Tusla Duty Social Worker should be informed within 24 hours.	
Continue to allocate tasks to members of the CIMT as appropriate.	



Welfare:

Action to be taken	√ When complete
Secure the immediate safety of pupils and staff - this may include evacuation or keeping pupils and staff inside the building (sheltering).	
Establish the location of all pupils, staff, and visitors using timetables, registers and the visitor's book, and make a list of those unaccounted for.	
Establish a staff rota and ensure that staff take regular rest periods.	
Identify those pupils and/or staff who are badly affected, and who need extra support.	
Make arrangements for reuniting pupils with their parents.	
Take account of religious and cultural factors and consider contact with leaders of local faith communities.	



Communications:

Action to be taken	√ When complete
Consider emergency communications needs.	
Dedicate lines for incoming and outgoing calls and arrange extra support for reception.	
Line to be used for incoming calls only:	
Line to be used for outgoing calls only:	
Inform pupils, in groups as small as practicable, considering the best way to impart tragic news (advice may be available from the Tusla Duty Social Worker).	
Inform parents of children not directly involved in the incident, as decided by the Manager or nominee - use any existing arrangements for contacting parents quickly and efficiently.	
Receive visitors to the school, ensuring they sign in and out and of the school.	
Ensure that staff are fully briefed on facts and are aware of what information can be released.	



Media:

Action to be taken	√ When complete
Ensure that any media access to the site, staff and pupils is controlled.	
In a major emergency, the police will deal with the press and prevent access to the school.	
Liaise with and co-operate with the media and to answer their queries, as appropriate.	
Liaise with Manager?Deputy to prepare a press statement and to decide the ongoing strategy for dealing with the press.	
Be aware of the potential problems caused by the spread of misinformation through pupil and/or staff use of mobile phones.	
Provide basic information about the school.	
Be prepared to be interviewed by the press if necessary and agreed.	
Liaise between the press and those affected about interviews - seeking permission from parents/guardians of any students involved in interviews.	
Any students involved in interviews should be supported.	

Advice for Official Spokesperson(s)

- DO NOT speculate - your interpretation or understanding can and probably will be exaggerated or quoted as hard fact.
- DO NOT give any fact unless you are certain it is correct.
- DO NOT say "NO COMMENT" - it can be taken as a negative answer which could be inaccurate and lead to difficulties later.
- DO NOT be afraid to say "I DO NOT KNOW".
- DO have the confidence in yourself and your command of the situation to take a positive attitude towards the media.
- DO inform the Management and staff of any development which may assist them and of any journalist you suspect of acting inappropriately.
- If you know that everyone is safe and well, or those parents of injured children have been told - say so as soon as possible - it stops other panicking.



- NB: PUPILS SHOULD NOT TALK TO THE MEDIA UNLESS ARRANGED BY STAFF/PARENTS AND THEN ONLY WITH WRITTEN PERMISSION FROM PARENTS/GUARDIANS.



Resources:

Action to be taken	√ When complete
Ensure access to site for emergency services.	
Open/close parts of school as required, and turn off water, gas and electricity supplies if necessary.	
Ensure the security of the school premises.	
Establish a safe and secure base for the CIMT.	
Check that all available communications and office equipment are working.	
Arrange a place to receive parents and children involved.	
If necessary, evacuate the building in accordance with the School Fire Procedures.	
Ensure that parents do not take students away, unless directed to do so.	
Consider relocation to other premises.	



EMERGENCIES DURING EDUCATIONAL VISITS/OUTINGS:

The Manager or his/her pre-agreed nominee should be immediately informed of any incident by the group leader.

Initial Action by Manager or Nominee:

- Maintain a written record of your actions using this check list and attached log sheet.
- Offer reassurance and support.
- Be aware that all involved in the incident, those at the school and you, may be suffering from shock or may panic.
- Find out what has happened. Obtain as clear a picture as you can - who informed you of the incident? (Usually the group leader).
- Remind the group leader to follow the checklist for group leaders on educational visits.
- Record the details of the off-site activity/visit during which incident occurred.

Location and nature of activity/visit:	
Name of person in charge of visit:	
Telephone number(s):	
Number of people on the visit:	Pupils Teachers Other Adults
Date and Time of Incident:	
Location:	
What has happened?	
People affected:	Name: Injury: Where they are or will be taken:



Emergency Services involved and advice they have given:	
Names and locations of hospitals involved:	
Arrangements for pupils not directly involved in the incident:	
Name of person in charge of your group at the incident:	
Telephone Number(s):	

Depending on the scale of the incident, consider assembling a CIMT to assist with the response.



Initial Action List for CIMT

- Inform school staff as appropriate, depending on the time and scale of the incident.
- Consider emergency communications needs. Dedicate lines for incoming and outgoing calls.
- Immediately inform parents of any injured pupils of what has happened and where their son/daughter is, recording what their plans are, e.g. to travel to their son/daughter, any assistance they need and any means of communications with them (e.g. mobile phone number).
- In event of a major incident the police may give advice regarding naming badly injured people or fatalities. You may also need to inform next-of-kin of any staff who have been involved.
- Inform parents of any other pupils on the visit but not directly involved in the incident.
- Parents should first hear of the incident from the school (or from the party leader), not from hearsay or from the media.
- Information given must be limited until the facts are clear and all involved parents/next of kin are informed.
- Ensure that staff are fully briefed on facts and are aware of what information can be released.

An Garda Siochana will liaise with the relevant division of the Office of Emergency Planning and advise on next course of action.

Support available from the Emergency Planning Division could include:

- Assistance at school or at the site of the incident by local authority officers, and/or others communications support.
- Help with arranging travel and transport between the incident, parents and the school.
- Help with media management, including press statements and interview briefing.
- If necessary, introduce controls on school entrances and telephones.
- At least initially, the school is advised to avoid responding to media enquiries and direct these to the public relations division.
- Liaise with the public relations division as early as possible, and work with them to prepare a press statement.
- Arrange a quiet space to receive parents of the children involved as they arrive at the school.



Medium term actions/considerations:

Ensure you contact your Tusla Duty Social Worker as soon as possible the next working day to inform them of the situation.

- Inform pupils and staff at school and their parents. Decide what information you should give. Remember that information given must be limited until the facts are clear and all involved parents/next of kin are informed.
- In the event of a tragic incident, consider seeking support from the educational psychology service about the best way to inform pupils and to support them afterwards.
- Staff and pupils should be told to avoid talking to the media or spreading the story unnecessarily (particularly via use of mobile phones).
- Inform all staff involved to prepare a written report noting events and times.
- In the event of serious injuries or a fatality, the Tusla Duty Social Worker should be informed within 24 hours.



POST INCIDENT CARE AND SUPPORT

Post-incident care is aimed at helping individuals to understand their feelings following an emergency and to identify sources of future support. The overall aim of the support is to help people in a way that will reduce the possibility of them developing post-traumatic stress disorder.

It is worth giving some thought to how the topics of loss, bereavement, risks/safety and change are covered in the curriculum. Schools where these topics are discussed openly, and treated as normal life events, are likely to find it easier to cope when a difficult or tragic incident occurs.

Remember to consult with parents following an incident. It is important to communicate with parents of pupils who have been involved, and to ensure that their needs and wishes are taken into account.

The Duty Social Worker will provide appropriate care and support to those affected by a major incident in the school community.



STAND-DOWN AND RECOVERY:

Recovery Plan Checklist

As soon as possible after the emergency:

- Liaise with parents regarding plans for attendance at funerals.
- Liaise with parents regarding plans for attendance/representation at memorial services.
- Arrange debriefing meetings for staff and pupils.
- Arrange debriefing meetings for the Manager and CIMT.
- Identify and support high-risk pupils and staff.
- Promote discussion of the emergency in class.
- Consider the need for individual or group support.
- Help affected pupils and staff to come back into school.

Initiate a review of the school emergency plan, evaluating the school's response and feeding in any lessons learnt in the longer term:

- Consult and decide on whether and how to mark anniversaries.
- The impact of some incidents can continue for years, so thought may need to be given to ongoing identification and support measures for both pupils and staff who are affected.
- Remember that legal processes, enquiries and news stories may bring back distressing memories and cause upset within the school.
- Remember to make any new staff aware of which pupils were involved and how they were affected.

Review:

Management, in consultation with staff, monitors and reviews the effectiveness of this policy yearly or as required.