

CRITICAL INCIDENT POLICY

The Emscote School

The Emscote School aims to protect the well being of its students and staff by providing a safe and nurturing environment at all times. This Critical Incident Management Plan (CIMP) has been drawn up with the approval of the Board of Management as one element of the school's policies and plans.

The staff and management of **The Emscote School** have formulated a number of policies and procedures to be followed with a view to ensuring the physical and psychological safety of both staff and students, and the creation of a supportive and caring ethos in the school, in ordinary time as well as in the event of a critical incident. Such policies include the school's Admissions Policy; the Special Education Needs Policy; the school's Child Protection Policy; the Anti-Bullying Policy; the Health and Safety Policy and the school's Code of Behaviour. Our aim is to establish a Critical Incident Management Team (CIMT) to steer the development and implementation of the plan.

Context for development of the Policy and Plan

In drawing up this policy and plan the CIMT has consulted the following resource documents provided to schools:

- *Responding to a Critical Incident:*
- *Responding to Critical Incidents.*
- *Template for the development of a Critical Incident Policy and Plan*
- *Suicide Prevention in Schools:*

Definition of a 'critical incident'

The staff and management of The Emscote School recognise a critical incident to be "an incident or sequence of events that overwhelms the normal coping mechanism of the school".¹ Critical incidents may involve one or more students or staff members, or members of our local community. Types of incidents might include but are not limited to:

- *The death of a member of the school community through accident, violence, suicide or suspected suicide or other unexpected death*
- *An intrusion into the school*
- *An accident involving members of the school community*

- *An accident/tragedy in the wider school community*
- *Serious damage to the school building through fire, flood, vandalism, etc*
- *The disappearance of a member of the school community*

Aim

The aim of the CIMP 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 students and staff. Having a good plan should also help ensure that the effects on the students and staff will be limited. It should enable us to affect a return to normality as soon as possible.

Creation of a coping supportive and caring ethos in the school

We have put systems in place to help to build resilience in both staff and students, thus preparing them to cope with a range of life events. These include measures to address both the physical and psychological safety of the school community.

1. Physical safety:

Some of the measures taken by the school to ensure the physical safety of the students include:

- Evacuation plan formulated and clearly visible in each room
- Bi-annual fire drills occur
- Fully functional and regularly serviced Fire Alarm System
- Fire exits and extinguishers are regularly checked
- No student is left unsupervised in the school before and after school and during all breaks
- Scheduled First Aid providers
- Code of Behaviour (with behavioural expectations for the creation of a safe environment) is signed by all parents/guardians on behalf of students / by students
- Induction for all new students and staff

2. Psychological safety

The management and staff of The Emscote School aim to use available programmes and resources to address the personal and social development of students, to enhance a sense of safety and security in the school and issues and to provide opportunities for reflection and discussion.

Some of the measures taken by the school to ensure the psychological wellbeing of the students include:

- Personal, social, health and economic (PSHE) is integrated into the work of the school. It is addressed in the curriculum by addressing issues such as grief and loss; communication skills; stress and anger management;

resilience; conflict management; problem solving; help-seeking; bullying; decision making and alcohol and drug prevention. Promotion of mental health is included in this provision.

- Staff have access to training for their role in PSHE.
- Staff are familiar with the Child Protection Guidelines and Procedures and details of how to proceed with suspicions or disclosures are familiar to all staff

- Staff are advised to read about suicide awareness and interventions for suicidal students:
- Inputs to students by external providers are carefully considered in the light of criteria about student safety, the appropriateness of the content, and the expertise of the providers.
- The school has a clear policy on bullying and deals with bullying in accordance with this policy.
- Our school is, first and foremost, a caring place, where teachers monitor and take note of children's welfare on an ongoing daily basis. Following a critical incident the SLT will meet each week to review provision of pastoral care and to address specific cases.
- Students who are identified as being at risk are referred to a designated staff member, concerns are explored and the appropriate level of assistance and support is provided. Parents are informed, and where appropriate, a referral is made to an appropriate agency.

Critical Incident Management Team (CIMT)

A CIMT has been established in line with best practice. The members of the team were selected on a voluntary basis and will retain their roles for at least one school year. The members of the team will meet annually to review and update the policy and plan. Each member of the team has a dedicated critical incident folder. This contains a copy of the policy and plan and materials particular to their role, to be used in the event of an incident. Each member of the team has been assigned a key role in line with best practice.

The key roles are as follows:

- Team leader
- Police liaison
- Staff liaison.
- Student liaison
- Agency liaison
- Parent liaison
- Community liaison
- Communications Officer
- Attendance Tracker
- Administrator

Outlined below are some of the key responsibilities of each role

Team leader – Principal: Panreet Kang

- Alerts the team members to the crisis and convenes a meeting
 - Coordinates the tasks of the team
 - Liaises with the Board of Management;
 - Liaises with the bereaved family
- In the absence of the Parneet, Charlene will take the lead.

Police liaison - Principal: Parneet Kang

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

Staff liaison – Charlene Ogden

- 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 students
- Provides materials for staff (from their critical incident folder)
- Keeps staff updated as day progresses
- Is alert to vulnerable staff members and makes contact with them individually.

Student liaison – Alex Royle

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

Parent liaison – Charlene Ogden

- Visits the bereaved family with the team leader
- Arranges parent meetings, if held
- May facilitate such meetings, and manage 'questions and answers'
- Manages the 'consent' issues in accordance with agreed school policy
- 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)

Community Liaison – Parneet Kang

- Maintains an up to date list of contact names and numbers for local community organisations.
- Ensures that accurate information is provided to local community groups who are linked in with the school.
- Liaises with organisations in the community for support.
- Provides information on an on-going basis where appropriate.

Agency liaison – Parneet Kang

- Maintains up to date lists of contact numbers of
- Liaises with agencies in the community for support and onward referral
- Is alert to the need to check credentials of individuals offering support
- Coordinates the involvement of these agencies
- Reminds agency staff to wear name badges
- Updates team members on the involvement of external agencies

Communications / Media Liaison – Parneet Kang

- In advance of an incident, will consider issues that may arise and how they might be responded to (e.g. students being interviewed, photographers on the premises, etc)
- Will draw up press statement, give media briefings and interviews (as agreed by school management)
- Will coordinate the monitoring of communications relating to the incident.

Administrator - Alex Royle

- Maintenance of up to date telephone numbers of
 - ❑ Parents or guardians
 - ❑ Teachers
 - ❑ Emergency support 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
- Maintains records

Attendance Tracking – Charlene Ogden

- In the immediate aftermath of the critical incident special

- care will be paid to attendance of students.
- All absences will be carefully monitored.

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.

The Behaviour Lead will have a key role in receiving and logging telephone calls, sending letters.

Confidentiality and good name considerations

The management and staff of **The Emscote School** 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. The members of the school staff will bear this in mind and will seek to ensure that students do so also. For instance, the term 'suicide' will not be used unless there is solid information that death was due to suicide, *and* that the family involved consents to its use. The phrases 'tragic death' or 'sudden death' may be used instead. Similarly, the word 'murder' should not be used until it is legally established that a murder was committed. The term 'violent death' may be used instead.

Critical incident rooms

In the event of a critical incident:

- *Chillout* room will be used to meet the staff
- *Year 11a* will be used for meetings with students
- *Principal's office* for parents
- *SLT office* for press
- *The Hub* will be used for individual sessions with students
- *Principal's office* for other visitors

Consultation and communication regarding the plan

The relevant staff were consulted, and their views canvassed in the preparation of this policy and plan. Our school's final policy and plan in relation to responding to critical incidents has been presented to all staff for review and agreement. Each member of the critical incident team has a personal copy.

All new and temporary staff will be informed of the details of the plan by the principal, Parneet Kang and it will form part of the Welcome Pack they will all receive.

The plan will be updated annually.

This policy was reviewed and ratified by: The Emscote School Board of Management in September 2022.

Signed: _____
Chairperson: Board of Management

Signed: _____
Parneet Kang, Principal

Date: _____

Date: _____