

Crisis Support Policy

Spring 2017

Summary

This policy outlines the Crisis Support policy for Fieldhead Carr Primary School.

The school must be prepared, at all times, for the possibility that pupils and/or teachers may be affected by crises, either in or out of school.

Job title	Headteacher
Date	Spring 2017
Internal Review Date	Spring 2018
Review date	As changes

FIELDHEAD CARR PRIMARY SCHOOL CRISIS SUPPORT POLICY

The school must be prepared, at all times, for the possibility that pupils and/or teachers may be affected by crises, either in or out of school. For example:-

IN SCHOOL

- the death of a pupil or member of staff through natural causes, such as illness
- a traffic accident involving a pupil or members of staff
- a deliberate act of violence, such as a knifing or the use of firearms
- a school fire

OUT OF SCHOOL

- deaths or injuries on school journeys
- tragedies involving children from many schools eg the Hillsborough football ground disaster
- civil disturbances involving bombs
- refugee children joining a school, uprooted from their countries and perhaps shocked by wars or atrocities

In the event of a crisis, such as those described above, various actions may need to be taken according to the severity of the event and the numbers of staff and/or pupils involved.

Some or all of the following points may need to be put into action.

IMMEDIATE TASKS

- ensure that accurate information can get into and out of the school
- ensure that appropriate staff are trained in using the 'School to Parent' text messaging service
- ensure that several staff have access to next-of-kin lists
- set up strategies for dealing with enquiries
- inform (with care and sensitivity) parents
- choose a member of staff to deal with the media
- inform staff and pupils in an appropriate and careful way
- attempt to stick to normal school routines
- inform the governors and appropriate authority
- make plans for attendance at funerals

SHORT-TERM ACTION

- organize reunion of children with parents
- arrange debriefing meeting for directly affected staff
- arrange briefing meeting for staff
- check that procedure for monitoring pupils and staff are in place activate strategies for allowing young people to express their feelings about the situation, if they wish
- contact families of those hurt or bereaved and express sympathy

MEDIUM-TERM ACTION

- ensure a member of staff makes contact with children at home or at hospital
- make sensitive arrangements for the return to school
- arrange alternative teaching if necessary
- arrange support for affected staff
- arrange consultation so staff can better support children
- ensure clear understanding of consultation, especially its confidentiality
- clarify procedures for referring children for individual help
- liaise with parents, to include the sending of bulletins (electronic or paper)
- decide about attendance at funerals
- share the planning of the special assembly or memorial service
- check that monitoring procedures are in place and followed

LONGER-TERM PLANNING

- introduce strategies to continue monitoring vulnerable pupils and staff
- consult and decide on whether and how to mark anniversaries
- ensure that new staff are aware of which pupils were affected, and in what way, and that they know how to obtain further help if necessary
- remember that legal processes, enquiries and even news stories may bring back distressing memories and cause temporary upset within the school

The above lists will only be needed in their entirety in the event that a major tragedy occurs to pupils and/or staff. The following appendices elaborate some of the more immediate and vital areas.

APPENDIX 1

When a crisis has happened to a school party away from school –

Task 1 is to obtain accurate information to be given, in the first instance, to senior members of staff.

If the incident is significant, in terms of fire or accident damage, coupled with injury and/or loss of life, effective communication will be essential.

The school telephone line will be jammed with calls from anxious parents and, probably, the media.

Access to a separate telephone line to enable the school to maintain contact with the teacher in charge of the affected group and to contact appropriate authority may, therefore, be needed.

Members of staff taking children by coach on Educational Visits should note the following alternative telephone numbers to be used in an emergency in the event that the school telephone line is jammed as described above.

The numbers available so far are:-

Miss Vargassoff - 07876 638796 Mrs Hillerby - 07834 583637 Miss Stevens – 07903 912461

Those staff answering phones should keep notes so that there is certainty about who has phoned in and who should still be contacted.

Parents need to be made contact with promptly, but the speed will depend on the nature and scale of the disaster. This may be done in person or may have to be undertaken by phone. Wherever possible, parents of other children in the school should be warned that the school has experienced a crisis and that their child might be upset.

In order to ensure that information is passed on effectively and sensitively some or all of the following might be applicable;

- A brief the member of staff making the contact, perhaps rehearsing the message first
- B take careful note of those parents who still need to be informed so that those who already know are not made contact with unnecessarily
- C offer help with the arrangement of transport
- D check that the parents are not left alone in distress, perhaps making suggestions for making contact with relative or neighbours
- E offer useful phone numbers, either for support or more information. For example, the emergency disaster number or the hospital number
- F where appropriate, give the contact numbers of other families involved in the crisis

DEALING WITH THE MEDIA

The school must protect children, parents and staff from the glare of publicity. Whilst the media can help inform the public responsibly, it can also be harmfully intrusive at times of personal grief and stress.

A senior member of staff, or a Governor, as felt to be appropriate at the time, will be asked to take on the role of Press Officer.

APPENDIX 2

POST TRAUMATIC STRESS DISORDER

Post Traumatic Stress Disorder (PTSD) is defined by the World Health Organisation as, 'a reaction that may follow an event that is outside the range of usual human experience and which would be very distressing to almost anyone.'

PTSD is now, therefore, recognized as a normal reaction to an abnormal situation. Along with that recognition has come improved ways of successfully helping those affected. It is important to note that, though distressing, the symptoms of PTSD can be treated successfully.

The three main groups of symptoms or reactions are:-

- (1) The traumatic event is persistently re-experienced in thoughts, dreams or flashbacks where the individual thinks it is all happening again
- (2) There is persistent avoidance of stimuli associated with the trauma, or there is numbing of general responsiveness
- (3) There are signs of increased physiological arousal such as disturbed sleep and poor concentration.

Effects observed on children who have been affected by a major crisis are listed below:-

- i Re-experiencing the trauma
- ii Avoiding thinking about the experience:-
 - not talking with parents
 - not talking with peers
 - foreshortened future and change of priorities
 - guilt ('survivor guilt')
- iii Heightened anxiety and arousal:-
 - concentration difficulties
 - sleep disturbance
 - separation difficulties
 - memory problems
 - heightened alertness to dangers
 - fears
 - irritability
 - depression
 - bereavement reactions
 - anxiety and panic

APPENDIX 3

Emergency evacuation of school children

In event that children need to leave the building for a session or sessions because of an emergency, the following procedure must be carried out.

Each teacher to keep children in their class areas if at all possible.

- 1) The office staff, teaching assistants or appropriate members of staff to take emergency evacuation class lists. They will telephone named contacts using the fax and normal phones in the school office and the grey phone in the Out of School Hours Club. Mobile phones may also be used. The text service may be used if appropriate and necessary to quickly contact whole school community.
- 2) Any parent/carer not contactable by text will be contacted using the data collection sheets. These are kept in the school office.
- 3) As parents come to collect children; pupils should be brought by teaching assistants or appropriate adults who hold the emergency evacuation list to the entrance hall area and handed over to contacts. Parents/Carers will sign their child out of school.
- 4) Any children not collected or contacted to be kept together in a safe area of the school until the end of the school day, if necessary, if contacts do not reply.
- 5) At the end of the school day, any children still in school will leave the school as normal.

Evacuation of the building

If the building has to be evacuated and cannot be returned to, children can be taken class by class to Whitelaithe Primary School (0113 2930280). If class lists can be accessed, then telephoning/text messaging can take place from Whitelaithe. The same procedure as from section 3 above should be adhered to.

As with fire evacuation, Head teacher and Business Manager will be in contact with school superintendent.

APPENDIX 4

Key staff to contact in crisis

Miss Vargassoff	Headteacher	07876 638796
Mrs Hillerby	Business Manager	07834 583637
Miss Stevens	Pastoral Lead	07903 912461
Clr Gruen	Chair of Governors	07787 525520

Crisis in School Emergency Support from Leeds 0113 2475625