



Managing a critical incident policy

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The aim of this policy is to define what a critical incident is; identify the critical incident Management Team and explain their role; explain our Critical Incident Strategy and detail the key tasks in our Critical Incident Plan including responses to different types of critical incidents. In doing so, we will minimise the impact that Critical Incidents have on our school and community.

Our First Aid, Health and Safety policy, Educational visits policy, risk assessment procedures and health care plans are in place and reviewed in order to reduce the risk of a critical incident occurring.

This policy was developed with senior leadership, governors and parents and will be reviewed annually or sooner if a critical incident occurs at another school (high profile case or locally).

What is a critical Incident?

A critical incident is a sudden or unexplained incident or a sequence of events, which cause trauma within a school community and which over whelms the normal coping mechanisms of the school.

Types of critical incidents include:

- Death of a member of the school community
- Serious incident, accident or unwanted event involving pupils or staff on or off the school premises
- An accident or tragedy in the wider community in the direct vicinity of the school, even if it does not affect the school
- A physical attack on staff members or pupils or intrusion into the school
- Bomb threats
- Serious damage to the school building caused by fire, flood or vandalism.
- Disappearance of a member of the school community
- An incident which requires the school to call the police
- Outbreak of an infectious disease (list in school office)
- The need to close the whole or part of the school

Critical Incident Strategy

Our strategy is to identify a Critical Incident Management team, provide on-going professional development for staff to deal with these incidents effectively and write a detailed Critical Incident Plan with key tasks identified at various stages, if such an incident occurred, both during and after the event. This includes, telling staff, parents and pupils as well as dealing with the media and liaising with external agencies.

Critical Incident Management Team

Helen Ballam – Head Teacher, Safeguard lead and Team leader

Cath Jeffery – Assistant Head Teacher/safeguard team

Jenny Winsor/Charlotte Sanders – school office/safeguard team

Gill Marchant – Chair of governors

Church link- Rev Sharon Grenham-Thompson

Phil McKay- CEO

Claire Firth- learning mentor/safeguard team

Critical Incident Management Plan

The Critical Incident Management Plan details the school's response to the nature of the incident; identifies essential tasks, including staff deployment; identifies a central information point; identifies how to deal with media; explains how to communicate with staff, pupils and parents; identifies a list of contacts; makes plans for on-going support and for memorials and commemorations.

Before the Incident

- CIM team identified
- CIM plan written
- Be prepared for offers of help from the community and decide how to deal with these, ensuring safeguarding policy and procedures are followed.
- Termly meetings with CIM Team to check the plan is fit for purpose.
- Identify staff training needs/CPD

During the Incident

- Follow CIM plan- a running record and logs of all phone calls and actions must be made throughout the incident.
- It is advisable to tick off key tasks as they are carried out.
- Normal timetables may need to be suspended for an appropriate response and in exceptional cases, e.g. death on school premises, extensive damage to the school building, it may be necessary to close the school.

Communicating to staff

- This should be done as soon as conveniently possible and consideration given to members of staff who are not in school. These members of staff should be contacted via a phone call, WhatsApps, Pupil Asset or email, whichever is quickest and most appropriate. It could be possible that

they are a friend or relative of the person involved and special consideration must be given to this.

- They should be given the facts, including how the incident is being dealt with and their role in monitoring and supporting pupils and staff welfare (especially vulnerable ones), how to deal with media, when the next briefing will be and how they will receive updates (via staff board/ email/Pupil Asset/whatsapp). Allow them to ask questions.

Communicating to Pupils and Parents

- When communicating to pupils, consideration to how this is done must be made. It may be better in small class groups in their classrooms rather than altogether. All pupils must be informed at the same time, whether together or apart. Communication methods to the most vulnerable pupils, including SEN, the very young, a close friend or relative, someone who has had a recent bereavement or separation, has health issues, has child protection issues, has communication difficulties or has mental health problems, must be considered before sharing the information.
- Time should be given to pupils to ask questions.
- Be aware that it may or may not be appropriate to name the child to other parents.
- A child's understanding of death may be very different to that of an adult's. Please refer to appendices for more information.
- Pupils and parents must be made aware that if the incident involves death, about the importance of the privacy of the family being respected and guidance given about the sensitivity of communicating online using social media.
- Parents must be asked not to talk to the media and direct all media to the CIM team leader.
- Ensure all parents, including EAL have access to all the facts.

Media

- We are not obliged to talk to the media but it helps to share accurate information. They should not be on school property unless pre-arranged. The CIM team leader or CEO will be the designated spokesperson with the support from the CIM team. No other member of staff should talk to the media, they should be directed to the spokesperson.
- Up to date information should be sought from the emergency services and a factual report should be written before hand. The report must not imply any blame or fault.
- Focus on support being given to school community and restoring a normal routine as soon as possible.
- When talking to the press, time should be given to respond to questions.
- Update media when new accurate new information becomes available.

Out of Hours Incident

If a critical incident occurs out of school hours, CIM plan to be followed with consideration of when and how to inform staff, pupils and parents and arrangements made for the next school day.

If the critical incident occurs on a school trip, CIM leader and if not available alternative emergency member of staff is contacted. Procedures outlined in the EVC policy are followed off site and CIM team to follow CIM plan.

If a member of staff on a school trip is injured, procedures as for pupils are followed and next of kin is contacted.

In all cases, another member of staff will replace a member of staff on school trip to cover absence.

After the Incident

- Follow CIM plan.
- Review CIM plan within 6 weeks and evaluate its effectiveness (What went well? What was most/least helpful? Were there any gaps?). Make any modifications that are needed.
- CIM team to check there is no unfinished business, all records are secured, identify any training needs and make any changes and updates to the CIM plan if necessary.
- The school must anticipate being asked to contribute to a review or enquiry regarding the incident.
- Before a member of staff or pupil attends a funeral, we must seek permission from the family.
- If appropriate, and with the families wishes, organise memorials and commemoration events, for example services, artwork, benches or tree planting.
- For members of staff returning to work after a long period of absence, a back to work interview and occupational health assessment must be carried out to ensure a smooth transition.
- For a pupils returning to school after a significant absence, a support plan should be put in place with liaison with medical professionals if involved. On-going monitoring of their emotional well-being will be needed and advice sought if necessary.
- After the school has had to deal with a critical incident, it must be reported to the LA (see appendix 2 for contact details) as soon as it is practical to do so via an incident report form (Suffolk Learning Incident Reporting page) using a secure email.