



CRITICAL INCIDENTS **POLICY & PROCEDURE**

Issue	Date of Issue	Amended by	Notes
1	2.2.12	GB	1 st issue
2	31.1.13	GB	Updated
3	24.3.16	H&S C'ttee	Updated
4	9.3.17	H&S C'ttee	Updated personnel
5	3.12.20	H&S C'ttee & Govs	Updated in line with new statutory guidance
6	9.3.23	GB	Updated personnel

INTRODUCTION

A critical incident describes any unexpected occurrence which may suddenly have a major impact upon the school.

It may involve:

- The death of, or serious injury to, a child, staff member or any person closely connected with the school (through suicide, sudden accident, murder or terminal illness).
- Fire, flood, storm, vandalism or building collapse.
- Environmental or extreme weather conditions
- Disruption to water, gas or electricity supply
- The release of hazardous substances near or on the school site
- A violent attack (for example involving an armed intruder or a bomb alert).
- Public Health threat
- Abduction/disappearance of a child
- Coach crash
- Terrorism Event
- Serious assault to pupil or staff member in school

Everyone in the school community is likely to be affected by such incidents.
Preparedness in thinking through what might need to be done in such circumstances

and having helpful information in an accessible place could make all the difference in successfully managing the situation.

PREVENTATIVE AND PRECAUTIONARY MEASURES

Whilst no amount of planning can totally prevent accidents and problems occurring, some can certainly be prevented and the effects of others minimised by sensible precautionary measures. These include:

- ensuring all staff are familiar with the school's fire and emergency routine – including evacuation or containment procedures
- weekly alarms tests carried out by the Caretaker
- ensuring staff are familiar with the school's security arrangements, in particular that visitors sign in and wear a badge and that the doors are secured where possible during teaching sessions
- ensuring that correct procedures are followed regarding school trips
- ensuring registers are completed accurately and returned to the office promptly
- ensuring that a pupil goes to the school office to register his/her presence if he/she is late.
- ensuring that staff are aware of pupils in their class or group with health or custodial problems and the way in which these should be treated
- ensuring that staff never leave the school site alone to deal with a potentially violent situation.
- ensuring that staff never deal with a potentially intense situation in school on their own.
- ensuring all necessary risk assessments are completed
- ensuring staff are aware of on site alone procedures
- ensuring all first aid and medical procedures are followed
- staff signing in/out book

In the event of an intruder damaging property or making threats towards teachers, pupils, parents or staff, or if someone is behaving in a violent manner, the police should be called immediately using 999. They will decide upon the course of action.

Included in the Policy is a list of useful telephone numbers to be used to access LA and other external support and advice in the event of a critical incident (See Page 11)

CRITICAL MANAGEMENT PLAN

The following information is given as a guideline only. Each emergency will need to have planning individually tailored.

a) Decisions and Implementing the Plan

(i) Decisions - Personnel Involved:

The Head is in overall charge in an emergency and will contact the Local Education Adviser in the first instance. In the absence of the Head, an Assistant Head assumes the role of person in charge. In the absence of the Assistant Heads the remaining members of staff will elect one of their number to fulfill the role.

Critical Incident Response Team (CIRT)

Head – Leader/Manager of the whole process. Point of contact for Local Authority & Chair of Governors.

Assistant Head – To stand in for Head in his absence. Maintain the normal running of the school as far as possible, arranging for pastoral/first aid support as necessary.

Business Manager – Key Information Point and Responsibility to log calls, visitors and significant actions as they happen. Phone line 01353 612782 to be used for outgoing calls leaving main phone line free for incoming calls.

Admin Staff – Managing incoming phone calls and visitors coming into school; contacting parents and updating website as necessary; monitoring social media, if appropriate; SchoolComms.

Caretaker - mechanical/electrical support & site security, as appropriate

Team to be called if deemed appropriate by the person in charge.

There will be briefings/meetings, as appropriate (see (f) below)

(ii) Implementing the Plan:

Follow the **S A F E R** principle

Stop – gather information, gather together CIRT, start recording decisions and actions in red Critical Incidents Log Reports folder kept in the office

- Bring together the CIRT
- Assign tasks and ensure each individual knows what is expected and logs their actions centrally
- Consider whether to close the school
- Identify a member of the CIRT as the person to co-ordinate information and complete log
- Consider communication to school staff/pupils/community

Assess – what has happened, what did we hear/see, what are people saying, are there any known casualties, is first aid or an ambulance required? Who requires assistance?

Complete log to include some/all of the following:-

- What happened/where/when
- How many involved; who are they?
- Name and contact numbers of adults at location of incident
- Details and location of injured (severity, name of injured and supervising adults/contact numbers)
- Details and locations of non-injured names and supervising adults/contact numbers

Formulate – a plan for the next 5 minutes, for example this might include

- Bringing people in to help
- Working out where you will be based and establish that base to operate with a dedicated phone line
- What has been done already and what needs to be done next?
- Has anyone else been informed, eg Emergency Services?
- Ensure LA Adviser and Chair of Governors are informed

Execute the plan and delegate the tasks

- Identify actions for CIRT members and identify if more members are required
- CIRT to agree a statement for incoming calls, which can be managed by properly briefed staff or via informative answerphone messages
- Route all press enquires to the LA
- Establish a press release in conjunction with the Communications Team
- Communicate with families whose relatives (children and adults) are or may be involved – quickly and sensitively – by a member of the CIRT team.
- **It is the responsibility of the police to notify next of kin in the event of a death**
- Consistency of information is essential, therefore use the agreed statement and most up-to-date information
- Try not to leave messages or use extended chains of communication
- Establish a reception base for concerned relatives coming into school and think carefully about siting this base. Identify appropriate people to manage this base and maintain contact with them.
- Prepare general information for all parents/staff/governors; this should be simple, factual, express sympathy and concern and indicate when further information may be available
- Regularly brief staff and governors and ensure that they are discouraged from speaking to the media (See (c)(vi) below)
- Brief pupils. Best done in class and be age appropriate (See (c)(vi) below)

Re-assess – is the plan working? Do we need to do anything differently?

- How long is the incident likely to continue for?
- Do staff need to be rotated into jobs and tasks?
- What continuing support is required for pupils, staff and relatives of those involved? A member of the CIMT should have been identified as having responsibility for ensuring continuing support. The LA Adviser will have mobilised support from a number of agencies able to offer support and counselling.

The Recovery Phase

Acknowledge the consequences of the event on the school's community. Provide opportunities for pupils and staff to express personal reactions and feelings.

Give staff information on what has happened and give advice on how to talk to and support children. Parents may also need information and advice on this.

The CIRT may also need to consider the overall response of the school after the conclusion of the incident.

- Attendance at a funeral; expressions of sympathy
- Visit(s) of staff/children to hospital
- An assembly or service to mark the event
- A memorial, to be agreed in full consultation with all parties involved

b) GUIDANCE ON SPECIFIC SITUATIONS/INCIDENTS/ISSUES

(i) Evacuation

Staff should use the Fire Alarm in order to evacuate staff and pupils. Lining up and registration should follow fire drill procedures unless the person in charge instructs otherwise. The person in charge must be informed if there is a child unaccounted for. Arrangements must be made by the person in charge to find the missing child as far as it is safe to do so.

If the person in charge is responsible for a class they will designate a member of staff without a class to take charge of their class. The school administrator should check the visitors' book and Hazard Register for other people who may be on the premises.

There could be situations where evacuating pupils could make the situation worse. In this case staff will be told to keep their class in the classroom until instructed otherwise.

See Fire Drill procedures for further details

(ii) Containment/Invacuation

INDOORS

The office will alert staff in the main school building by cascading the words Code 100. Two-way radios will be used to alert staff to Code 100 in the mobile classrooms. The kitchen will be alerted to Code 100 by phone. The code is a sign for staff to begin containment procedures. No other information will be given at this time. Any Catering or Cleaning staff on the premises will congregate in the Gallery. A telephone call will be made to the Community Room to alert staff there.

OUTDOORS

The office will alert staff who are outdoors by siren. On hearing the siren outdoor staff should blow the whistle then escort the children quickly and quietly into school using nearest entrances – either the school hall doors or cloakroom doors, depending on the nature of the incident. The pupils whose classroom is in the mobile will come into the main school building and congregate in the Gallery.

In the event of lockdown, all blinds should be closed and children told to stay away from windows and doors. Class based staff are to check all cloakroom doors are closed. Senior staff and floating TAs will check other outside doors. If lunchtime, midday supervisors will lock cloakroom doors and close windows as they first come in. Pupils will not be released during lockdown and no visitors allowed entry.

Following the initial containment alert, office staff/head or assistant head will bring round registers. Class teachers are to take registers and alert the office if anyone is missing. If lunchtime, midday supervisors escort the children back to their classrooms and take the registers in the classrooms if the teacher is not present. Any Catering or Cleaning staff on the premises will congregate in the Gallery. Staff out on

school trips will be notified not to return to school and to arrange to return to another location.

The Head/Assistant Head, will contact the Education Advisor and the Office will contact the emergency services, if appropriate.

(iii) Bomb and Hoax Threats

Where a bomb threat is received the person taking the call will follow the guidance on the Bomb Threat checklist, kept by the phones in the office, and raise the Red Bomb Threat card to another member of staff alerting him/her to contact the police on another telephone line whilst the caller remains on the phone. Police advice will then be taken. The school has two model letters to use to communicate with parents about such incidents. See Appendices A & B. Any such threats will be reported to the Local Education Adviser.

(iv) Casualties

Where a disaster involves casualties on site the person in charge should delegate a member of staff to take the names of those injured and the hospital to which they are taken. One of the CIRT should inform parents as soon as possible. The police may undertake this task.

Where parents arrive at the school after a disaster which has taken place during the school day, the person in charge will decide whether pupils not directly affected be allowed to accompany their parents home before the end of the school day. Pupils affected in some way by the incident will generally be allowed home if accompanied. Any pupil going home must be signed out. If appropriate the school hall may be used for briefing and counseling parents. Where pupils or staff are injured, the appropriate paperwork must be completed.

(v) Sending Pupils Home

No child may be sent home unaccompanied during the school day. With parental permission another parent, relative or adult friend may take a child home.

(vi) Briefing Sessions for Staff and Pupils

A formal staff briefing will take place as soon as possible after the circumstances of the incident are known with a time set for formal debriefing at the end of the school day. Absent teachers should also be briefed on the situation.

The initial briefing will:

- give a brief statement of factual information;
- outline the school's response and proposed plan of action;
- allow staff to ask questions and to get a response;
- outline staff responsibility for monitoring pupil and staff welfare;
- identify vulnerable staff and pupils who may be at risk;
- clarify specific responsibilities for staff;
- advise staff on procedure for dealing with media enquiries;
- advise staff on procedure for informing pupils and parents;
- inform staff of the support services that are available;

- reassure staff and pupils that they will be supported; and
- advise staff of time/place of next briefing and debriefing session

It may be appropriate to hold daily staff briefings with staff being told what, if anything, to tell pupils. The best person to communicate difficult news will normally be the Class Teacher and detailed attention needs to be given to what the pupils are to be told as well as how they are to be told. Teachers will be given a carefully worded announcement to read aloud in classrooms, which will be suitably worded depending on the ages of the children. Staff can decline this task if they feel unable to do it.

Where an incident occurs during a school holiday the person in charge must decide which pupils/parents are to be briefed and by whom. The school will be the meeting point in all cases.

(vii) Parents and Governors

The Chair of Governors will be informed as soon as possible. The person in charge should ensure that parents and Governors are kept informed where applicable. Parents should be engaged with as quickly as possible following an incident their child is involved in. In the event that all parents need to be contacted, we will use Schoolcomms. The school will ensure that the level of text credits in SchoolComms is always sufficient to contact all parents at least once without the need to top-up.

(viii) Sources of Help

Staff, pupils and parents may need help in coping with problems. Information should be given to parents of sources of help that are available. Contact numbers and addresses should be given where possible. Parents should decide which agency is the most appropriate for their children. See Page 11.

(ix) The Media

The school will use the services of the Local Authority Communications Team for all media issues. The person in charge will be responsible for any media contact.

(x) The Police/Emergency Services

The Police or emergency services will take charge of many aspects of dealing with a critical incident. The person in charge will liaise with them as appropriate.

(xi) Health and Safety Issues

Where necessary prime considerations should be given to health and safety issues. These include:

- electrical, gas and water systems to be isolated in the event of damage to a building
- First aiders to attend to any medical issues or injuries appropriate to the nature of the incident. Office 'grab bag' to be taken outside if appropriate.
- First aid station to be set up if needed and if sufficient staff available.

(c) EXCURSIONS AND TRIPS

The Headteacher must approve all excursions and trips. Preliminary approval for the trip and for the text of the letter home to parents should be sought before letters are sent home. All requests for trips and excursions should be made well in advance. Coaches are booked by the office staff, who will only use approved coach companies. Appropriate insurance will be sought.

Parents should be given written details of the trip. This must include details of its purpose, dates and times, destination, special clothing and refreshments required.

Parents must give their consent in writing or electronically via Schoolcomms.

Risk assessments must be written and agreed by the head prior to the trips and insurances must be checked thoroughly. All school visits are logged on the EVOLVE website in line with LA procedures. If two coaches are used a list of which pupils are on each coach should be handed to the office before departure along with Reg No of the coaches.

At least one mobile phone must be assigned as the emergency contact number. Contact numbers for parents/carers must be gathered for residential trips. Staff should not use mobile phones to contact parents except in exceptional circumstances.

A First Aider should be one of the accompanying members of staff unless provided by the place visited.

(i) Standards of Behaviour

Children should be briefed on acceptable behaviour, in line with the EJ Way. This will include among other things:

- the importance of sitting down on coaches and wearing seat belts
- behaving quietly and sensibly at all times
- listening to and obeying the teacher and attending adults
- responsibility for their own property and respect for the places visited

(ii) First Aid

A first aid kit should be taken in each coach. Staff should ensure it is fully equipped before leaving. In event of an injury requiring hospital treatment the member of staff in charge of the trip will contact the emergency services and the school. The school will contact parents.

(iii) Supervision

The supervision for trips is at least one adult to 6 children for Reception, one adult to 10 children for Year 1 and 2, and one adult to 15 children for Years 3, 4, 5 and 6.

Children should never be allowed to go off on their own. All activities must be supervised. Parents responsible for taking groups off alone, must have been DBS checked, including those attending any residential trip. Parents merely accompanying the staff member as an extra helper must have been ID checked.

(iv) In the Event of a Disaster on an excursion or a school trip

The member of staff in charge, after establishing the nature and extent of the emergency, must ensure that all members of the party are accounted for and safe.

They must inform the school at the first possible opportunity.

If there are injuries beyond the scope of simple first aid the emergency services must be called.

(vi) Trip Leader Action Plan:

- Ensure that an adult accompanies any casualties to hospital.
- Contact the school. (The person in charge will assemble the Critical Incident team if appropriate and follow the Critical Incident Plan)
- Ensure that the remaining pupils are supervised and returned to school as soon as possible.
- If the incident is serious, the member of staff in charge should consider whether to leave an adult at the scene to liaise with the emergency services until the incident is over and all the children accounted for.
- Do not talk about the incident to the media without prior approval from the school.
- Do not discuss liability.
- The Head/Person in Charge in school, will inform Governors and parents as appropriate.

(vii) Emergency phone contact details

The Head will carry emergency phone numbers and keys at all times and delegate this to the person in charge if unavailable at any time (e.g. away on holiday)

d) REVIEW

Following any critical incident a formal review of the Plan will be carried out to give the opportunity to identify alterations and improvements as well as lessons learned. Consideration will be given as to how these changes are made.

USEFUL TELEPHONE NUMBERS

LA Services

Education Officer: Belinda Harvey	07585 881934 01223 507115
The Communications Team Communications@cambridgeshire.gov.uk	01223 699281
Child Protection Services: Sara Rogers	01223 729045
Educational Visits Adviser: Stephen Brown	01480 379677
Emergency Planning Manager: Stewart Thomas	01223 727944
CHUMS: Mental Health & Emotional Well-Being	0330 0581 659

Police

Ely Police Station	101
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Social Services

East Cambs Team (Public No)	0345 045 5203
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Health Authorities

Cambridge Health Authority	01480 398500
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CRUSE (Provides help through counselling, information and social support)

National Helpline	0808 808 1677
Cambridge Helpline	01223 633536

The Compassionate Friends(Provides help for anyone who has lost a child)

National Helpline	0345 123 2304
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The Samaritans

Cambridge	01223 364455
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The Child Death Helpline

Tel: 0800 282 986 or 0808 800 6019 (if using a mobile)

APPENDIX A

Hoax Threat model letter A

Letter to be used if the school has not received a threat

Dear Parent/Carer

You may have been made aware, through the press or social media, that some schools in Cambridgeshire have received a hoax email threat today. I am writing to inform you that (enter name of school here) has not received a threat, but has followed the guidance given by the police and the Local Authority.

The police always assess such threats and give specific advice to schools based on the intelligence available.

In this case the school were told to be vigilant and to report any concerns they had immediately to the police. In addition the school will have activated their critical incident procedures.

We understand the potential distress and alarm such threats cause parents who understandably are worried about their children. Such threats are designed to cause disruption and worry. However, I can assure you that the police and other authorities have given schools the best possible advice and (enter name of school here) has acted professionally, followed their critical incident plan and followed police advice in the best interests of your child and all members of the school community.

Yours faithfully

APPENDIX B

Hoax Threat model letter B

Letter to be used if the school has received a threat

Dear Parent/Carer

You may have been made aware, through the press or social media, that some schools in Cambridgeshire have received a hoax email threat today. The email informed the school that a bomb had been placed on the school site.

The school followed its critical incident plan and immediately phoned the police and followed their advice. The school also informed the Local Authority who were in contact with the police control room.

The police always take such threats extremely seriously and have well-rehearsed procedures to assess such threats based on all of the intelligence they have available.

As you would expect, the school leadership has acted professionally and followed police advice. For your information, the advice was that the threat was assessed as a hoax and the school were told to continue as normal. The police assessment was that there was no need to evacuate the school on this occasion. The Headteacher was told to ensure that there was a sweep of the school to check there was nothing unusual. If anything unusual was spotted then they were told to immediately request police support and to follow their advice about evacuation.

We understand the potential distress and alarm such threats cause parents, who understandably are worried about their children. Such threats are designed to cause disruption and worry. However, I can assure you that the police and other authorities have given schools the best possible advice and (enter name of school here) has acted professionally, followed their critical incident plan and followed police advice in the best interests of your child and all members of the school community.

I would also like to reassure you that as you are probably aware, schools have very secure visitor access control and it is highly unlikely that an unexpected visitor would be allowed to access the school unchallenged. Local Authority staff regularly visit schools and are aware of the security that schools have in place. It is also an aspect of our safeguarding reviews of schools.

Yours faithfully