

# ALFRED STREET JUNIOR SCHOOL

## A CRITICAL INCIDENTS POLICY

### Definition of a Critical Incident

A critical incident can be defined as a serious disruption arising with little or no warning, which causes one or more of the following effects:

- injury
- extensive damage to property
- death
- distress

on a scale beyond the capacity of the organisation operating under normal conditions, and requiring assistance from the Emergency Services, the County Council and others.

Examples of critical incidents include serious accidents, major fire, building collapse, riot and serious acts of violence. They might occur on the school site during school hours, on school transport, whilst pupils are taking part in activities away from the school site, or on school premises during after school activities.

### Introduction

In recent years there have been a number of traumatic incidents involving pupils and staff both on and off school premises. These have raised major concerns within education circles. Events of this nature can have an impact upon the whole school and upon the wider community, not just those directly involved, and the impact can last for a considerable time.

When an emergency arises, those in charge should be able to turn to some form of clear guidance to reduce the possibility of overlooking essential actions. All eventualities cannot be covered, and the guidelines should be applied in accordance with the circumstances.

### Aims

The aims of this document are to:

- a) Outline practices and procedures, which might be useful in the event of a critical incident.
- b) Inform staff about the relevant support networks offered.

## Effects of Critical Incidents on the School Community

The consequences of any major event upon all those connected with it cannot be precisely defined. However, the support necessary will be needed as quickly as possible.

Staff and governors who have experienced such events comment about a number of important factors including:

- the suddenness of the occurrence
- the effect of shock
- the need for rapid support
- the need to communicate with large numbers of people quickly
- the publicity and attention which can follow.

### Children

Pupils' reactions to critical events will depend partly upon developmental stage. Potential effects are significant and can include anxiety at separation in the very young, disturbed sleep, difficulties in concentration, guilt, avoidance of activities that are related to the event and exaggerated responses to certain events.

Where the level of support necessary is considered to be over and above that which Inclusion and Pupil Support (IPS) can offer, the Senior Management Team should ensure that all support is co-ordinated.

### Staff

Staff have to relate to all pupils, including those not involved in the incident. In addition they have to relate to a wider audience of colleagues and parents, as well as their own family and friends. They may have difficulty knowing when to talk about the incident and what to say. If they have been directly involved in the incident they may experience similar effects to those described for children. They may choose to discuss their difficulties with children who were involved, rather than with colleagues. Other staff need to be aware of these issues, and ensure that appropriate support is available for staff who have been involved in major incidents. If appropriate, trained facilitators will be called upon to carry out a de-brief as soon as possible after the event.

### School community

The consequences of a major incident upon a school community can be profound and long lasting. Immediate shock can be anticipated; long term shock can also occur. Often a school suffers from a temporary disruption to its normal routine, the effects of which can be felt for some time afterwards. Attention should be given to supporting pupils and their families through this period.

**To summarise:** consequences of critical incidents will involve pupils, staff, governors and families, as well as impacting strongly on the local community.

**ALFRED STREET JUNIOR SCHOOL**  
**CRITICAL INCIDENTS~A PLANNED SCHOOL RESPONSE**

**Principles**

Key lessons have been learned from critical incidents in the past. These include:

- Rapid action to provide pupils, staff, governors and parents with accurate information is vital; the Cullen Report found parents were critical of the time lapse between the event and the provision of information.
- It is important to clarify facts, as quickly as possible, as inaccurate or conflicting information can be distressing for children, families and the school. There will be a managed briefing (in liaison with emergency services) for parents and other interested parties at a time and venue to be confirmed.
- The media may have heard the names of those involved. Names should not be released or confirmed by the school until the authorities have confirmed identification and parents have been informed.
- Outside agencies should be used to enhance but not to replace staff efforts.
- Pupils should be told about the incident in small groups, sensitively, and with factual answers.
- Staff should be prepared to listen to children and to encourage them to talk through the experience. Mime, dance, art and other means can be used to express feelings.
- In supporting school staff, opportunities should be given for them to express their reactions, which will be recorded if appropriate.
- The Head Teacher should be actively involved as a strategic co-ordinator of information.
- There should be a team of senior staff to support and monitor the needs of staff and pupils, and these staff should have access to support and counselling themselves.
- Pupils should not be sent home without the knowledge of their parent/guardian.
- School closure should be avoided unless absolutely necessary.

## Practical Measures

- A list of all pupils and staff, together with next of kin contact details are held centrally on the school computer and on paper.
- Back up discs of this information will also be kept securely off site by the School Business Manager.
- Registers should be completed promptly at the beginning of both morning and afternoon sessions. Where reasonably practicable, registers should be taken out whenever there is an evacuation.
- Late-comers and children who leave school early **must always** be signed in and out.
- Visitors to the school **must always** sign in and out.
- Visitors should be briefed as to appropriate emergency procedures.
- An evacuation procedure notice will be posted in every room, as near to the door as practicable, and in all public areas.
- Telephone numbers of emergency services, Local Education Authority officers, and support agencies should be readily accessible.
- Consideration should be given by the school for training of administrative staff to help them respond quickly and efficiently to the crisis and to queries from distressed families.
- Consideration should be given by the school for training of all staff on topics such as bereavement and general listening skills.
- Report accidents resulting in fatalities, major injuries and hospitalisation in accordance with the procedures.
- The Head Teacher or Assistant Head should work through the Head of Public Relations.

## Out of school visits

- A list of staff, pupils and volunteers on a school visit should be held in school office.
- Staff leading pupils on any visit should carry mobile phones and the school telephone number as well as a copy of the list of all on the visit.
- In the event of a serious incident the procedures stated in the Educational Visits Policy (relevant section attached - Page 8) must be followed.

- The Head Teacher/Assistant Head Teacher and Senior Management Team will be responsible for contacting parents, etc. Please see '**Suggested timescales for operational plans during school hours**' attached.

### **Critical incidents at school (eg fire, bomb threat,)**

In the case of a need for immediate evacuation of the school these procedures should be followed:

The first member of staff to be aware of the incident should activate the nearest fire alarm.

All children and adults should leave premises immediately through nearest outside door.

All staff should ensure that pupils taking part in PE have shoes available in the hall if they are not wearing PE shoes.

Teachers should assemble children in an orderly fashion in the appropriate area of the playground and await instruction from the "responsible person", following a risk assessment. If necessary the school will move to the secondary assembly point. This will be either The Salvation Army Hall or The Wesleyan Church in the High Street.

The School Business Manager (or nearest person to the office) should phone the emergency services and leave the building with the registers, visitors book and emergency box.

Teachers should take a register to check all children are accounted for.

No adult or child should return to the premises without authorisation of the emergency services' personnel.

The following procedures will be under the direction of the senior person in charge and in consultation with the Emergency Services.

Head/Assistant/School Business Manager to contact:  
All Staff on site plus any parents

Office Staff to contact:  
County emergency planning  
Site Supervisor  
Chair of Governors (Chair of Governors to contact other governors)

Any appropriate NCC departments i.e. Property Services  
Health & Safety  
Social Services

EWO  
Welfare  
Personnel  
LA Press Officer

Staff not on site i.e.

Lunchtime supervisors  
Learning Support Assistants

Communications/Radio, papers etc (no comment to be made except from Official Spokesperson i.e. person in charge or LA Press Officer)

In the event of a serious incident the procedures in '**Incident Management Plan - First Response**' (attached) must be followed.

#### DINNER TIME PROCEDURE

Head /Assistant Head/School Business Manager to contact Emergency Services.

Head/Assistant Head/School Business Manager to contact personnel on site i.e. Lunchtime Supervisors.

Senior Person on Duty to either directly or delegate contact with:

NCC departments ie. County Emergency Planning  
Property Services, H & S, SS, EWO, LA Press Officer  
Site Supervisor  
Relevant Parents  
Chair of Governors  
Staff off site

Communications/Radio, Papers etc. No un-official statements.

#### SCHOOL NOT IN SESSION

Keyholders ie. Fusion/Site Supervisor/Head/Other Keyholder

Senior person present to contact:

Emergency Service  
NCC departments ie. Emergency Planning  
Chair of Governors  
Staff

Communication Services, no unofficial statements

Out-of-hours users should be briefed as to contact numbers/persons and evacuation procedures

**Alfred Street Junior School**  
**Suggested timescales for operational plans during school hours**

TASK	PERSON(S) RESPONSIBLE	TIMESCALE
Emergency procedures	Most senior member of staff available	Immediately
Contact LA and Governors	HT/AHT	Within hours
Obtain factual information	As above	Within hours
Contact families of those directly affected	HT/AHT	Within hours
Inform other families	HT/AHT possibly by letter	Same day
Call staff and governors meeting	HT/AHT	Same day
Inform children in classes or groups	Class teacher	Same day
Liaise with the Head of Public Relations	HT/AHT	Same day
Deal with enquiries	School Business Manager	From same day
Arrange with relevant agencies a debriefing meeting for those staff involved in the crisis	HT/AHT	Same day (if possible)
Debriefing for children involved-with other support agencies if appropriate	HT/AHT	Asap (Same day if possible)
Identify adults and children at risk	HT/AHT	Next few days
Promote discussion in classes	All teachers	Following days/weeks
Closely monitor need for group/individual care	All adults	Following days/weeks

John Kidney

Reviewed July 2014

To be reviewed annually

Critical Incident Policy (July 2014)

## **Emergency procedures during a visit.**

If an emergency occurs the group leader should:

- Establish the nature and extent of the emergency.
- Ensure that the group are safe and looked after.
- Establish the names of any casualties and get immediate medical attention for them.
- Ensure that all group members who need to know are aware of the incident and that all group members are following the emergency procedures.
- Ensure that a teacher, or responsible nominated adult, accompanies casualties to hospital and that the rest of the group are adequately supervised and are kept together.
- Notify the police if necessary.
- Inform the school contact - nature, date and time of incident, location, names of casualties and their injuries, action taken so far and action to be taken.
- Notify insurers if necessary or ask school contact to do so.
- Write an accurate report and preserve any vital evidence.
- Complete an accident report as soon as possible.
- Contact HSE or LA if necessary.
- Ensure that no-one speaks to the media. Names of those involved should not be given to the media. Media enquiries should be directed to the LA designated contact.
- Ensure that no-one discusses legal liability with other parties.

## **Emergency procedures for school base.**

The group leader should ensure that there is a designated school contact

The school contact should:

- Ensure that the group leader is in control of the emergency.
- Establish if any assistance is required from the school base.
- Contact parents and keep them informed.
- Contact the LA and chair of governors if necessary.
- In the event of a serious incident, liaise with the LA designated media contact.
- Report the incident using appropriate forms if necessary.
- After a serious incident, consider counselling for pupils and adults who have been traumatised.

**ALFRED STREET SCHOOL RUSHDEN  
CRITICAL INCIDENTS POLICY  
and  
INCIDENT MANAGEMENT PLAN**

**Acknowledgement of Receipt- July 2014 Edition**

**NAME:**

**JOB TITLE:**

I hereby acknowledge that I have received a copy of the Critical Incidents Policy and Incident Management Plan. I will ensure that I understand the contents and agree to abide by the rules laid down.

**SIGNATURE:**

**DATE:**

*Please complete and return to the Headteacher.*