



Cricket Green School

Managing Critical Incidents Policy



Date reviewed: Autumn 2016

Review Date: Autumn 2017

CRICKET GREEN SCHOOL
MANAGING CRITICAL INCIDENTS:
Merton Policy with CGS Specific Additions

CRICKET GREEN SCHOOL
CRITICAL INCIDENT MANAGEMENT POLICY

Cricket Green School fully recognises its responsibility to ensure effective policy and practice to deal with a critical incident.

THE CRITICAL INCIDENT MANAGEMENT TEAM (CIMT)

Head Teacher: Celia Dawson

Deputy head: Louis Jhugroo

Assistant Headteachers - Paul Lansley, Robert Shrimpton, Bonnie Brown.

Admin Manager: Angela Dorris

Parent Support Worker: Jane Vickers

Chairs and vice Chair of Governors: Kevin Vickers, Nick Draper

Site Manager - Russell Hasleden

In the event of a critical incident the CIMT will endeavour to follow the guidelines from LA as closely as possible (attached). Action will depend on the nature of the incident and this policy cannot plan for every type of incident. This policy represents Cricket Green School's planning and preparation and indicates roles and responsibilities. However decisions will need to be made at the time depending on the situation. Members of the CIMT should note down their actions and decisions as far as they possibly can.

POSSIBLE SCENARIOS: Fire; bomb threat; accident on site or off site; child going missing; assault; terrorist attack; serious illness of child/member of staff; fatal road traffic accident; pupil suicide; meningitis death.

Every attempt will, and if possible should, be made to ensure that school routines are kept as normal as possible for pupils.

CONFIDENTIALITY:- ALL STAFF will be told not to comment to the press and will be expected to maintain confidentiality at all times.

BACKUP VENUE: The Chapel Orchard building will be used as a 'back-up' venue should it not be possible to enter the main school.

Worsfold House will be used if the school campus is not accessible.

SCHOOL EVACUATION: in the event of the school needing to be evacuated the fire alarm will ring and children can be taken to the field or Chapel Orchard out side area. Admin will collect any medication.

INCIDENT OFF SITE: When on a residential trip there will be a named member of staff on duty 24 hours per day with contact numbers and emergency contact numbers of staff and pupils concerned. TEACHER in charge at time of incident will telephone school immediately with the following information:

- Name of child/adult concerned
- Nature of injury / incident
- Well being of all children

The Head / Deputy head will make decision as to what actions to take.

The following roles have been identified:-

HEADTEACHER- will directly liaise with member of staff involved to offer support, advice etc. Head to co ordinate appropriate response depending on the incident.

Head will inform Chair of Govs

BRINGING CIMT TOGETHER - Angela will organise co-ordination of contacting the CIMT to ask them to come to school asap. The CIMT member to immediately attend the school and bring mobile phone - where he/she will be briefed. Head will note down decision made, action and times as much as possible.

BRIEFING CIMT:- Head to brief CIMT and ensure they are aware of their roles. Head to liaise with parents of child/children directly involved in incident. If necessary the Head will ensure there is a member of the CIMT (Site manager) on 'gate' duty to ensure appropriate staff/governors can enter the school.

CONTACTING LA: Angela to contact the LA emergency contact number 020 8540 0355 for HOD to seek advice. The LA through the Merton Safety and Emergency Planning Officer: Sarah Chittock (Room 509) will take decisions as to who should be contacted in the LA; eg police; press; legal; insurance department. 020 8540 0355

BRIEFING PEOPLE:- HOD will ensure CIMT inform staff as to the content of factual information which can be given to parents/families who may be ringing in.

INVOLVING POLICE: in the most difficult incidents police may be needed to manage/control the press - HOD in consultation with LA will decide on whether to contact police. Louis will inform the police if it is felt necessary.

STAFF Assistant heads will inform staff as necessary.

CIMT will bring mobiles with them to make calls as necessary as the main phone line may be busy with parents ringing in.

Angela & Jane will be available as first aiders if necessary.

PHONE LINES/PHONE MESSAGE: these may be very busy - so all CIMT members will bring mobiles so that necessary outgoing calls can also be made. If required, school phone will be turned to night service and a message for parents will be recorded - ensuring all receive the same message when they contact the school.

ADMIN TEAM will attend and support. Website message: Nadia / Sonia will focus on website / parent mail updates to inform parents when circumstances require its use, liaising with Head as to the message that should be uploaded - this is likely to be the agreed factual statement that will be given out to parents etc.

PARENT SUPPORT: Jane would be there to support parents alongside AH's: to set up facilities for children and parents - to ensure they have a comfortable and welcoming place to wait - this will include organising refreshments. If parents/children have witnessed a critical incident, every effort will be made to keep these people separate and to advise them that they should not discuss what they have seen until after they have made a statement to the police.

Angela & Admin Team will take any usual calls to the school and respond as appropriate. Head will supervise this process. They will answer incoming calls related to the incident. CIMT will identify an agreed factual statement along with reassurance of action being taken at the incident site. Update the Schools Website.

DEALING WITH THE PRESS

HT to contact Merton's Press Department to inform them - no member of school staff or governor is to speak to anyone from the media. Parents will be asked to do the same when CIMT member contacts them.

If police are involved - they may take charge of dealing with the press.

INFORMING PUPILS -leadership team members, seeking advice from Head, will action any process of information for pupils with particular care taken to protect and support children. Leadership Team members will liaise with all teaching staff and advise them on the management and information giving to pupils. The siblings of any pupils involved in the incident will need particular support.

LOOKING AFTER STAFF WELL-BEING: Working with children in the event of a critical incident is demanding and stressful - so it is essential that support is in place for the staff. AH will lead taking advice from the Head.

LONGER TERM ACTION ISSUES - The leadership team will follow up any children who need more support, involve outside agencies such as CAMHS if needed.

KEEPING AND UPDATING CRITICAL INCIDENT FILE

This file will contain emergency contacts of staff, children and emergency services. It will also contain this policy and the LA guidelines. We will ensure that there is a current list of emergency service contact numbers (including LA numbers). This will be displayed in the Heads office and be easily identified. This policy which includes contact telephone numbers will be kept securely off site by the Headteacher.

The GB will review this policy annually and the CIMT team will be updated regarding roles and responsibilities.

NB

This is Merton's Policy and recommended guidelines. We will follow our CGS specific guidance above and this policy will be used for additional support and guidance with the process - see below:-

**CRITICAL INCIDENTS:
RESPONSES IN MERTON SCHOOLS**

CONTENTS

- **Introduction**

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- **Section 7 Further information**
- This booklet has been produced for Merton schools and is based upon ideas developed by Cheshire County Council. We are grateful to Cheshire County Council for their support of our publication.

Introduction

Handling crises is a normal part of school life. Some incidents, however, are of a more critical and overwhelming character in which staff, pupils and parents may experience acute, even prolonged, distress. Nationally, schools have faced a wide range of crises including:

- the murder of a pupil by a stranger
- the murder of a pupil by a parent
- fatal road traffic accidents both in the UK and abroad
- serious injuries or death on out of school trips
- pupil suicide
- the consequence of terrorist or criminal activity
- major arson attacks
- meningitis death

The list is not extensive, it simply illustrates the variety of incidents that can occur. Some incidents will occur outside the school, in the child's home or perhaps on a school trip. However, regardless of where the incident takes place there will be an impact on schools. Schools will need to manage this impact and this guidance seeks to help schools do this.

The following guidance draws upon the book: 'Wise Before the Event' by W Yule and A Gold. (Published by Gulbenkian Foundation and distributed free to all schools in 1993.) It is not intended that this guidance be prescriptive or attempts to cover all possible events. A major fire at a weekend, a serious accident on a school trip or major community violence will require different types and scales of response, and they will involve different agencies in a flexible response.

This booklet is designed:

- To help schools develop plans or arrangements to respond to the effects of a critical incident;
- To provide practical guidance and reference during such an event;
- To provide contact list of appropriate agencies and personnel;
- To identify further information which schools may wish to follow up.

Section 1 - Thinking Ahead

It is self-evident that a school (or an LA or a Council) that has anticipated a major critical incident, and laid plans for managing a response, is likely to handle the actual event more effectively and confidently. If we know who will assume key roles, then our response to a crisis will be more assured than even the most intelligent improvisation. Those assuming key roles will need to have checklists and procedures in place, have up to date contact lists and a tested framework for communications. This guidance is designed to encourage and support pre-planning in schools.

Each critical incident is unique; the range and complexity of those faced across the United Kingdom are enormous. We cannot plan for every eventuality and we would be mistaken if we planned on the basis of the most recent or most publicised experiences. By their very nature and definition, critical incidents tend to disorientate and overwhelm those involved. Although the journey through this sort of crisis is always going to be difficult, planning ahead is a necessary precaution and can be crucial to the successful management of an incident.

Governing bodies should make themselves aware of their responsibilities for Health, Safety and Welfare, including their responsibilities for the health and safety of pupils on educational visits. See Section 7 for further information.

What can schools do to prepare?

Following experience of a critical incident, some schools adopted or adapted the following process:

- Establish a group of staff to study this guidance (and other literature and experience) and formulate an action plan to follow it through.
- Identify a Critical Incident Management Team (CIMT) who, collectively or individually, would take a lead in an emergency and commission key roles. In a small school, these may be allocated to people other than teaching staff.
- Ensure basic information, contact lists, communication details and procedures are in place, known to all key staff and kept up to date (including reference to changes in legislation, LA guidelines, etc).

- Carry out a simulation exercise to explore how a critical incident might unravel. Identify and pursue, as part of staff development, additional needs for planning, training, skill development and awareness raising. Advice on the types of simulations and how they might unfold is available from the Council's Health, Safety and Emergency Planning Section (see Section 5).
- Ensure that governors, all staff in the school and the school community are aware of the plans being developed.
- Ensure timescales for review and updating are in place.

The LA and the Safety Services Section have undertaken to maintain such a sequence and will assist schools, where possible, in their planning. Training needs will be met through the Safety Services Section's training service.

All schools must have active procedures in place for the inspection and care of all facilities including playgrounds. They must ensure that risk assessments have been carried out to cover school grounds, buildings and trees and out of school trips. Groups who hire or use school facilities should have adequate public liability insurance documentation and this should be checked.

The Role of the Critical Incident Management Team (CIMT)

- Whilst it might seem dramatic to have a Critical Incident Management Team (CIMT) prepared, it does ensure that action is effective and efficient. Key people then know what to do and can check that the necessary steps are taken. A major incident can be shocking and disorientating so prepared procedures are essential.
- A school might use the senior management team, perhaps supported by a governor and other appropriate adults not necessarily from the teaching staff or school community. Competence, reliability and availability should determine membership of the CIMT rather more than school structure or status. Heads might wish to include a trusted colleague from another school who could be available at short notice to help. This might be a reciprocal arrangement.
- Where there is need for continued supervision of children, adults other than teachers (e.g. governors, parents or trusted friends) are invaluable.
- It is suggested that the head teacher call a meeting of the CIMT at least annually to update names, contact numbers checklist and procedures. They could occasionally involve local newspaper editors to generate goodwill and secure a supportive media involvement in the event of an incident.

The role of the Council's Safety Services Section

The Safety Services Section consists of three health and safety officers, two civil contingencies officers and the section Manager who are well known to most schools in Merton. The section provides 24-hour all year response to emergencies with the Duty Emergency Planning Officer (DEPO) - able to provide an immediate response to a call normally via mobile phone. The DEPO is authorised to initiate any of the Council's major emergency response and management arrangements. The Section Manager may commit Council resources during that incident.

Council Major Emergency Plan.

Merton Council's emergency plan is designed to provide a flexible, needs-based response to an incident based on the effects arising from it rather than the cause of it. The plan contains arrangements for activating rest centres, management of the media, provision of counselling services, etc. The DEPO has access to out of hours emergency numbers for key Council officers (and other organisations) who can be called upon to provide support and assistance to schools during a critical incident.

Response and Management Services

The DEPO has a range of services upon which they can call including the following:

- Activation, setting up and running of rest centres for use by friends and relatives
- Emergency feeding arrangements
- Counselling services
- Management of the media
- Provision of transport
- Provision of additional communications such as mobile telephones
- Liaison with BT and other telecommunications providers
- Liaison with voluntary sector
- Provision of a mobile incident centre

This list is not exhaustive and it should be noted that it might take some time to activate all services required.

Where management of the media is involved you can and should call upon the skills and expertise of the Council's Press and Public Relations Office who, in turn, can call upon services from other authorities and the Government's Central Office of Information to assist in the management of the media. The level of national and international interest should not be under-estimated.

Section 2 - Immediate Action

Co-ordinated support is available from the LA.

Please note that the following numbers are to be used for activating support from the LEA.

Between 09:00hrs - 17:00hrs

- The LA can be contacted via the Safety Section (Tel: 020 8545 34763386) who in turn can activate the Emergency Management Team (EMT) and call on specialist LA officers who in turn can support the School.

Between 17:00hrs - 09:00hrs

- The LA can be contacted via Mascot (020 8274 5940) who will contact the Duty Emergency Planning Officer who in turn can activate the Emergency Management Team (EMT) and call on specialist LA officers who in turn can support the School.

You can contact the Emergency Planning Officer/Team whatever hour of day or night.

Action within Hours

Refer to:

- | | |
|---|---------|
| • Gather information | Note 1 |
| • Gather and brief the CIMT | Note 2 |
| • Trigger LA support through the Duty Emergency Planning Officer | Note 3 |
| • Put in place an incident management room and a dedicated telephone line | Note 4 |
| • Contact families directly affected | Note 5 |
| • Information for parents | Note 6 |
| • Information for teaching and support staff | Note 7 |
| • Information for pupils | Note 8 |
| • Encourage people to talk | Note 9 |
| • Dealing with the media | Note 10 |

The staged action plan above takes as an example a serious incident involving a number of children off school premises but it can be adapted readily to other circumstances. It requires the formation of a Critical Incident Management Team (CIMT) based on the senior management team of the school. The LA has a similar action plan which it follows in support of the school. (Appendix 1)

A school's critical incident action plan will need to be flexible and designed to address the possibility of an incident occurring during a holiday as well as during term time, including weekends. A school trip will have contact numbers but if an incident involves children not on a school activity, e.g. the abduction of a child, information might come first from the media or the police. Staff and governors need to be cautious in responding to 'on the record' questions asked by the press/media. It is essential both to avoid and discourage speculation.

Note 1

Gather Information

Information required by CIMT

- what has happened?
- where and when?
- name and contact number of an adult at the incident site
- extent of injuries, numbers and names
- location of injured, name and contact number of accompanying adult present
- is help required from the school?

CIMT also needs to know:

- Who has been informed?
- What has been said?

- Where an incident involves the police service they may take control of some management issues including the management of the media and provision of incident information.

Note 2

Gather and Brief CIMT

- Call together as many members of CIMT as possible. (These will be known and indicated on your CIMT contact sheet.) Don't worry if not all members can attend straight away, but they should be briefed as soon as possible.
- Brief CIMT on the facts of the situation - who - where - what. Review your action plan and plan initial actions/responses to the following:
 - parents
 - pupils
 - governors (if unable to attend the meeting)
 - the LA
 - Merton Council's Emergency Management Team
 - other agencies, i.e. police, social services
 - the press/media
 - other local schools

and, importantly, identify clearly who is to brief/work with whom.

Note 3

Trigger LA support through the Emergency Planning Officer

- The Emergency Planning Officer (EPO) is able to provide support to schools.
- They will help with physical resources such as providing mobile telephones or transport and can also alert Council officers as appropriate e.g. the Chief Executive's office, Press and Public Relations (for management of the media), occupational health, emergency planning, health and safety, personnel, etc.
- Establish clearly who is being contacted and by whom.

Note 4

Communications

- There is the possibility of the school telephone line being inundated with incoming calls from anxious parents. The person or team dealing with incoming calls should provide an agreed factual statement along with reassurance of action being taken at the incident site. It is important to avoid speculation and not to make statements about further information or developments unless confident that it will be available. A separate dedicated line is needed for outgoing calls. This might be a mobile phone or a line that cannot take incoming calls. In an extended incident the EPO may be able to provide alternative communications facilities.
- Governors can be kept informed through a previously agreed cascade initiated by the CIMT member.
- Parents of students who are on holiday often set up informal cascade communications for their own use. These can be very useful for disseminating information.

Note 5

Contact families directly affected

- This has to be implemented quickly and with sensitivity. (Names and contacts of any excursion party/trip must be centrally available.) Consistency of information is vital so it is best to avoid using a chain of communication. If a parent cannot be contacted by telephone it may be necessary to use either a reliable neighbour (or best another parent/grandparent) or a note through the door asking them to telephone a given number. Any message should relay known information and assurances of appropriate action being taken and should indicate if further information will be available.
- It may be appropriate for parents to come into school to be ready for further information. Some people may need immediate emotional support. (See Section 4.)
- If there is a possibility of legal liability, police action, or a health issue, the Council's legal, insurance and safety sections should be contacted before issuing information to parents in any form. Where health is potentially at risk, contact should be made via the EPO with the health authority.

Note 6

Information for parents

- It may be sufficient to inform parents by sending a letter with children. In some cases it will be appropriate to call a meeting at the school, especially if the incident is one that will generate concern about some aspect of the school's organisation (e.g. injury following violence at school). The CIMT needs to consider the logistical management of what could be large number of parents attending the school. The CIMT could provide additional information for parents to accompany a letter home in some situations, for example, leaflets on support/advice services.
- A prepared statement should give necessary facts, expression of sympathy/concern and

possibly a message for the community. It is important to remember that a letter is likely to be accessible to the media therefore seek guidance from the Council's Head of Communications where necessary. It is sometimes better to delay this statement by 2 or 3 days until all information is available. In other circumstances, it will be important that the statement goes out immediately.

- Heads are advised to contact the Director of Childrens Schools and Families and the Council's Press and Public Relations Office to check the contents of any such letters or statements (see Section 6).

Note 7

Information for teaching and support staff

- It is vital that all adults who are in contact with pupils are kept well informed and feel secure in handling questions and comments. A schedule for giving information updates needs to be arranged, e.g. during breaks, at the end of the day or first thing next morning. Such meetings ensure that knowledge is shared and questions are answered in an informed manner. Staff should be cautioned not to talk to the media or respond to questions from reporters.

Note 8

Information for pupils

- This is best done in classes or small groups with particular care being taken to protect and support children close to someone involved with the incident and any staff who are unable to handle the emotions or distress confidently. Children should receive a consistent account of the incident while allowing for differences in their ability to understand.
- It may be appropriate to hold an assembly to ensure all pupils hear the same message.

Note 9

Allow people to talk

- In some instances people involved (both children and staff) should be able to talk about the incident and its effects before going home.

Note 10

Dealing with the media

- Schools should seek advice from the Council's Press and Public Relations Office on **020 8545 3181 /out of hours number 07983624691** about handling the incident and particularly before agreeing to be interviewed or releasing names of children and staff involved in the incident.
- Dealing with the range of media contacts at crisis times can be difficult and personally challenging. Let the Council's Press and Public Relations Office deal with as much of it as you are comfortable with.
- Individuals in the school's community may still have a need to deal with the attentions of the media. Pupils, parents, governors, teaching and support staff may be approached directly by

press, radio or television reporters during the earliest stages of an incident. In an out-of-school incident the media might learn of it before the school and therefore have information which is different to that of the school. In the most difficult circumstances the Police could be asked to provide some protection against media intrusion.

- In some instances media interest might persist over a period of days and be re-triggered by a funeral, court action or anniversary.
- **Guidance points**
 - Prepare (with Press and Public Relations Office help if possible) an agreed text for release to the media and/or as a script from which anyone confronted by the media can speak. If possible ensure that a designated spokesperson, briefed and prepared, makes the direct response for the school.
 - An established, sympathetic, well-developed link with local press or radio can be a major asset, but it is not a possibility in all local circumstances and, in a major incident, may be insufficient as a line of communication.
 - An outgoing phone line from school or nearby is important both for obtaining and communicating essential information.
 - **"Do's" in facing the news media:**
 - Do respond to what and when questions
 - Do tell your story quickly, accurately and get your key messages(s) across
 - Do consider, when possible, the needs of your audience
 - Do choose your own time when to report to the media
 - Do prepare and rehearse so that everybody has the same story.
 - **"Don'ts" in facing the news media:**
 - Don't reply to why and how questions
 - Don't speculate
 - Don't bluff or lie
 - Don't make 'off the record' comments
 - Don't make promises you cannot keep
 - Don't make excuses or blame others
 - Don't respond to 'blind quotes' (e.g. "One of your staff tells me that - Do you agree?")
 - Don't say "No comment" - explain why you cannot comment
 - Don't allow words to be put in your mouth - e.g. "Would you agree that?"
 - How you present and respond is as crucial as what you say
- Effective, direct communication within the school community can limit the impact of

sensational media coverage.

- Pupils, teaching and non-teaching staff, governors, and parents need appropriate, accurate, up to date release of information and encouragement not to speculate or to give currency to rumour.

Section 3 - Handling the reactions of people affected

Experience from affected schools, and from research, provides a wealth of evidence about the range of reactions and needs generated by critical incidents. People can react very differently; some will readily give vent to their feelings whilst others find it more difficult. Pupils' ages and development will, of course, affect their understanding and feelings. The nature of the incident itself has a major bearing on the feelings generated. The most common reactions include denial, distress, guilt, anger and helplessness.

There are, however, some common needs that should be recognised and addressed:

Action Within Hours	Refer to:
• Information about the incident	Note 1
• For those with explicit knowledge of the incident	Note 2
• Opportunity to talk through or otherwise express personal reactions	Note 3
• Those providing support, need support too	Note 4
• Formal and informal recognition and rituals	Note 5
• Continuing or quickly re-establishing usual routines	Note 6
• Return to school by pupils or staff directly affected	Note 7

Note 1

Information about the incident

- Inform all staff and give guidance on how to support and talk to the children affected. Confront the 'truth' and take care with the form of words used in announcements.
- Outline the measures or arrangements in place that will provide further help for distressed children.
- Provide information to families on the types of help and support available to them and their children from within the school's community and outside agencies

Note 2

For those with explicit knowledge of the incident

- The management of a critical incident can result in high levels of stress for those involved:
 - acknowledge the emotional state of staff and pupils and allow time and space when needed
 - some staff may not wish or be able to be directly involved in supporting pupils
 - the burden of support may fall disproportionately on a small number of staff
 - the siblings of pupils affected will need special support. If they attend another school make contact and agree support arrangements.
- Establish boundaries - avoid 'milling about' (Designate specific areas for parents, supporters, the press etc).
- Acknowledge that the incident may act as a trigger to pupils who are emotionally vulnerable, even if they are not directly involved. This may result in difficulties in behaviour and relationships.
- Be sensitive to the effects on staff or pupil's concentration and performance.
- Be sensitive to the effect on home and social life for families and peers.

Note 3

Opportunity to talk through or otherwise express personal reactions

- While attempting to ensure continuity and normality, staff should encourage pupils to talk about their feelings and be prepared to listen to them
- Groups of pupils can be offered support from external professional organisations or individuals who can 'debrief' them, to help them understand their reactions and develop coping strategies. Parental permission should be sought in this instance. (See section 4 for available support).
- Staff closely associated with pupils involved should be offered opportunities for debriefing and counselling. (See section 4 for available support).
- Exceptionally some pupils may need therapeutic help for a considerable time, or at some time following the event.

Note 4

Those providing support, need support too

- Be aware of possible delayed reactions from those actively involved in responding to a critical incident. Staff who are co-ordinating the school's response should be supported and properly scheduled for relief periods.
- Teachers are vital in supporting pupils through a critical incident; but teachers involved in delivering this, need and deserve informed guidance and emotional support themselves.
- The needs of headteachers and senior staff have not always been fully acknowledged. The strain of leading a school through a critical incident can obscure the headteacher's personal feelings. Be aware of your own welfare needs and the needs of the CIMT.

Note 5

Formal and informal recognition and rituals

- Arrangements may be made to express sympathy to the families directly affected by the incident.
- Injured pupils can be visited in hospital.
- Other pupils can be encouraged to send cards and letters.
- Plan to attend a funeral, if welcome. (School closure is possible at the discretion of the LEA and governors in voluntary aided schools.)
- Discuss the desirability of holding special assemblies to celebrate the life of the pupil(s) and memorial services.
- Engage other pupils in these services as much as possible.
- Anniversaries are key times and the school should ensure such occasions are planned for and handled with sensitivity and support.
- Contact the local faith organisations for support and advice.

Note 6

Continuing or quickly re-establishing normal routines

- Every attempt should be made to provide as much continuity as possible for children.

- Maintain the normal school day so children will be less likely to feel unsettled.
- Parents can be invaluable (e.g. as classroom assistants) in enabling the school day to run as smoothly and 'normally' as possible.

Note 7

Return to school by pupils or staff directly affected

- Some pupils or staff may not return to school immediately after an incident and will therefore need special assistance when they do return.
- Advice and support can be provided by the education welfare service and/or social services. Some pupils or staff may have been injured or distressed and will need significant support to reintegrate into school life. The Social Inclusion Team can provide support and advice on integration.
- This support is co-ordinated by the Head of Social Care. **(Contact: 020 8545 3630)**
- Staff who have been off for some time following the incident may find a planned gradual return easier to cope with.
- Personnel and occupational health can provide support and advice on this. The HR Employee Relations Officer can co-ordinate this support. **(Contact: 020 8545 4674)**

Arson Attacks

- It is rare for personal injury to occur in arson attacks on schools but the sense of loss, distress and anger can be severe. The dislocation for teachers especially can be prolonged. They are forced to revisit their distress day by day as the loss of their investment in place, planning, resources, records and teaching patterns bears down.
- Be aware that the worst effects on teachers' morale and emotional well being can occur some time - often months - after a serious fire.
- The pressure on staff to restore normal routines quickly on a new or restricted site often leaves too little room for grieving, for ritual endings and for reflection.

Section 4 - Available support

Critical incidents test the spirit, organisation and leadership of schools and their communities in extreme ways. Invariably a whole school community (teachers, support staff, governors, parents, other agencies) will rally to support each other through the difficulties. In some circumstances however, either because of the incident itself or through tensions already affecting the school, an emergency can produce or worsen conflict. For many people, critical incidents will provoke feelings and issues beyond their ordinary experience; these need to be acknowledged within the school. Individual reactions to acutely abnormal circumstances cannot be predicted. Some understanding and expectation of disturbed responses needs to be developed.

What additional help is available to schools?

Experience indicates that a school at the centre of a critical incident will usually need external support from the LA and/or other agencies. (This might include social services, local churches, health services and voluntary organisations) can provide emotional support, debriefing and, exceptionally, counselling. It is best if the school itself seeks and manages the external support it requires, but this may not always be possible. A school can, in the aftermath of an incident, be inundated with well-meaning offers of help and advice and also face intense media interest. The priority, shared between the school and the LA, must be to serve the best interests of pupils and staff in coping with the incident both individually and collectively.

The LA can make available specific types of support to schools in the first hours, days and weeks of a critical incident (in addition to the technical and organisational services which some situations will require). The contact numbers are shown in Section 5 and are included in the school's critical incident contact list in Section 6.

Telephone contacts for support and advice

The LA will offer support to the headteacher/staff/parents once they have been informed by the Safety Services Section.

During office hours (9.00 to 17.00) contact: 020 8545 3476 and ask for the Emergency Planning officer (EPO).

For out of hours (17.00 to 9.00) please contact Mascot on 020 8274 5940 who will contact the Duty emergency planning officer, who will alert the emergency management team who will contact the LA.

Most schools will have some strong personal links with the LA, for instance through individual officers in the Education or Social Care, Human Resources and Educational Psychologists. Such contacts can be invaluable, particularly for headteachers, in providing moral support and a trusted sounding board at a testing time. The specific contacts, which can offer personal advice for headteachers and access to the services described below, are listed in Section 5.

Debriefing and support for teachers and other staff

During the time that the CIMT operates it has been found that support for teachers helps

pupils. The CIMT should co-ordinate specialist support to help a group of staff come to terms with a critical incident and to plan their response with pupils, colleagues and parents. Holding meetings where staff can talk over individual reactions in a structured process assists this. During evaluation interviews conducted after other critical incidents, it has become clear that follow-up support may need to continue over a period, particularly in the period preceding the anniversary of the critical incident. If it becomes clear that individual staff need more substantial support or counselling the LA can help in referral to the occupational health unit, who can provide valuable expertise and guidance in helping individual staff facing prolonged stress.

It is important that concern for the well-being and emotional recovery of pupils does not lead to an assumption that teachers and headteachers will somehow cope unaided. Many, perhaps all, will need support.

Debriefing sessions for pupils

All available evidence suggests that when pupils have been directly involved as witnesses to a traumatic incident they will benefit from properly structured debriefing sessions. These debriefing sessions can also be beneficial to pupils otherwise affected and enables them to express what they saw or heard, how it affected them and how they feel about it in retrospect. However, the offer of counselling needs to be considered carefully and it may be best to resist the initial desire to offer counselling immediately. There is some research that indicates that past incident counselling may be harmful as well as helpful. CIMT should consider the situation before engaging counselling. Advice is available from the Educational Psychology Service on **020 8545 4820/1**. In some situations schools may be able to operate such a process for themselves, in others, outside facilitators can help.

The CIMT should not be seen as a team of 'counsellors'. Its role is short term and intended to co-ordinate services or arrangements which enable teachers, parents and pupils to express their feelings about the critical incident. This is to help those involved be clear about what they feel and can be understood and managed by themselves, their families and their schools; to clarify thoughts and feelings so that they can operate as normally as possible in an abnormal situation.

Longer-term support

Some individuals or groups may find it very difficult to shed the distress, anxiety, guilt, and depression that an incident can provoke. Others may suffer a delayed, or not obviously related, effect. Advice and referral to support agencies may be needed for some.

The school can seek advice and guidance from the Educational Psychology Service on the needs of pupils directly or indirectly involved. This might be about the needs of groups or of individuals. The Educational Psychologist can advise on the schools own monitoring and support for pupils and parents. Educational Psychologists may be able to offer direct support for groups of pupils, or to parents with pupils who appear to be particularly distressed. Contact via the school's link EP or the Educational Psychology Service - telephone **(020) 8545 4820/21**.

Where the LA has been involved with a school in dealing with a critical incident, a follow up visit will be offered after an appropriate interval to review continuing needs and to reflect on the

process at the time of crisis.

Support for headteachers and deputies

The strains of leading a school through a critical incident can be profoundly disturbing but may not be identified or acknowledged until after the crisis has subsided. The support of family, senior colleagues, governors, other heads and close friends needs to be engaged. The LA contacts identified in this procedure can also be called on.

Experience so far suggests that heads/deputies too often underestimate the impact on them of such an ordeal and may be reluctant to seek out support. Caring for the carers is sound management.

Section 5 - Contact list

See attached sheets

- Govs names and e mail addresses
- Staff names and e mail addresses
- Agency numbers

Section 6 - School and critical incident contact list

Critical Incident Management Team	Phone 1	Phone 2
Celia Dawson Headteacher	07798807013	02089710031
Louis Jhugroo Deputy head	07713148459	
Russell Hasleden Site manager	07771588898	02086401177
Kevin Vickers Chair of Govs	07939817836	02086480735
Angela Dorris Admin Manager	07952835637	02086489358
Jane Vickers Family Support Worker	07935885948	02086480735

Governors Contact Cascade Details

Celia to Kevin.

Kevin has e mail / phone numbers for all Governors.

Angela has e mail / phone numbers for all Governors.

Details attached:

PROCESS

Kevin / Angela to ring or contact all Govs. Govs to cascade to others.

Angela / CD to contact Russell Hasledene re site issues.

For minor incidents, school closure, cancelled events / meetings etc. Celia or Louis will make contact through Parentmail.(Jane/ Sonia)

Staff Contact Cascade Details

Angela, Celia and Louis have all staff contact details.

Details attached.

PROCESS

Celia to contact Louis and Angela.

Louis to contact Paul, Robert and Bonnie who will contact their teams.

Angela and Jane to contact all other staff, professionals, in school plus the admin team and Russell

Louis to contact agencies.

For minor incidents, school closure, etc. Celia or Louis will make contact through Parentmail.

Rachel to update website when instructed.

<p>Corporate Services Department Duty Emergency Planning Officer (24 hours, 7 days a week)</p> <p>Head of Legal Services</p>	<p>Sarah Chittock</p> <p>Out of Hours Fiona Thompson</p>	<p>020 8545 3476 (during office hours)</p> <p>020 8274 5940 0208 545 3897</p>	<p>MASCOT</p>
<p>Head of Communications Deputy Head of Communications</p>	<p>Sophie Poole Bronwin Pickering</p>	<p>020 8545 3181</p>	
<p>Children's Schools and Families Director</p> <p>Head of Education</p> <p>Head of Commissioning, Strategy and Performance (also queries relating to emergency planning)</p> <p>Head of Social Care & Youth Inclusion</p> <p>HR Manager</p>	<p>Yvette Stanley</p> <p>Jane McSherry</p> <p>Paul Ballatt</p> <p>Paul Angeli</p> <p>Sue Watson</p>	<p>020 8545 3251</p> <p>020 8545 3631</p> <p>020 8545 4066</p> <p>020 8545 3376</p> <p>020 8545 4063</p>	
<p>Housing and Social Services Department Duty Officer (24 hours, 7 days a week)</p>		<p>020 8770 9750</p>	

Updated: Autumn 16	CONTACT	PHONE	NOTES
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Section 7 - Further information

Training Opportunities

From time to time there will be opportunities to give school representatives a chance to explore the issues raised in these guidelines, to action plan for their school and to identify continuing training needs. Support can also be provided in schools on request to assist in introducing and implementing a scheme.

- Consider the inclusion of training for staff in areas such as loss, change or bereavement as part of the School Development Plan.
- Consider the provision of relevant fiction and non-fiction books in the school library.
- Consider discussions with pupils about what are normal reactions to stress or crises and give them guidance about practical measures to alleviate the stress responses, e.g. relaxation techniques or positive imagery.
- Consider the inclusion of skills or projects concerned with the cycle of life and death.

Suggested Reading and Other Resources

Governing bodies should be aware of the following documents:

A Guide to the Law for School Governors* (2008 edition)
Health and Safety of Pupils on Education Visits*
 (*published by DfEE and sent to all schools)

Insurance: A guide for schools
 Issued by the LEA in April 2003

Child Protection Guidelines
 Issued by the LEA in March 2000

Equality Matters Volume 1 Implementing the Recommendations of the Stephen Lawrence Inquiry
 Issued by the LEA in March 2001

Code of Practice - Educational Visits, School Journeys and Outdoor Activities
 Issued by the LA in November 1998

Confidentiality of School Records
 Issued by the LEA in July 1999

Yule W and Cold A. **'Wise Before the Event'**, Pub. Gulbenkian.

A more detailed review and planning guide for schools working to anticipate critical incidents.

Dyregrov, A. **'Grief in Children'**, Pub. 1990 Jessica Kingsley

A handbook for children, death in playgroup and at school. £12.95

Hindmarch, C. **'On the Death of a Child'**, Pub. 1993 Radcliffe Med Press.

Guidelines for the support for both adults and children affected by a child's death. £12.50

Pennells, M & Smith, S **'The Forgotten Mourners'**, Pub. 1995 Jessica Kingsley. £6.95. Concise guidelines for supporting bereaved children, including section on 'What teachers can do' and useful resource section.

Grollman, E.A, **'Talking About Death'** Pub. 1990 Beacon. A guide for adults on how to talk to children about death, with a read together section for adult and child (under 9's).

Jewett, C. **'Helping Children Cope with Separation and Loss'**. Batford

Leaman, O. **'Death and Loss - compassionate approaches In the classroom'**. 1995, Cassell, £12.99. Practical guide for teachers concerned with pastoral care.

Pennells, M & Smith, S Ed **'Interventions with Bereaved Children'**, Pubs. 1995, Jessica Kingsley. £16.95. Covers different approaches, and includes a chapter on managing tragedy in a secondary school.

Ward, B and Associates **'Good Grief 1: Exploring feelings, loss and death for under 11's and 'Good grief 2: Exploring feelings, loss and death for over 11's'**, Pub. 1993, Jessica Kingsley. Wide range of resource materials and ideas for the curriculum.

Wells, R. **'Helping children cope with grief'**, Sheldon Pub. 1988.

Includes suggestions for primary school teachers.

Worden, J W **'Grief counselling and grief therapy'** Tavistock Pub. 1983.

Good general textbook.

Video: **'That morning I went to school'** 12 mins Includes children of different ages talking about their own experiences of bereavement, their reactions and needs. Available from Sue Smith, Social Work Department, Northampton General Hospital NNI 5BD

Board Game: **'All About Me'** produced by Peta Hemmings for Barnardo's.

Useful for work with primary age child.

Organisations offering support for parents and children

ACT (Association for Children with Terminal and life-threatening conditions and their families) - umbrella organisation providing information about available services. ACT,

Orchard House, Orchard Lane, Bristol, BS1 5DT. 0117 922 1556

ALDER CENTRE - for all those affected by the death of a child, providing support, information and training.
Royal Liverpool Children's NHS Hospital, Alder Hey, Eaton Road, Liverpool LI2 2AP. Tel: 0800 282 986

BARNARDO'S 'The Future Matters Project' - offering work with children and families suffering terminal illness. Tel: 0151 708 7848

COMPASSIONATE FRIENDS (TCF) - nationwide self-help organisation for bereaved parents; Resource library and advice leaflets. 53 North Street, Bristol BS3 1EB. Tel: 0845 123 2304

CRUSE - national organisation for anyone who has been bereaved. Various branches. **0844 477 9400. Young persons freephone: 0808 808 1677**

MERTON BEREAVEMENT SERVICE, located at Vestry Hall, London Road, Mitcham, Surrey. Tel: 020 8685 1635

Updated by Goves Policy Group: October 2016

Date: Autumn 2016

Review: Autumn 2017