

CRITICAL INCIDENT POLICY

Safeguarding & Welfare Requirements: Safeguarding & Promoting Welfare

Critical incident describes any occurrence which constitutes a major disruption arising with little or no warning on a scale beyond the coping capacity of the setting operating under normal circumstances.

Informing Parents

We ensure that parents are informed of the following:

- How we will contact them in the event of a critical incident
- Procedures for collecting children (e.g. if there are areas that must be kept clear of vehicles to facilitate emergency service access)
- How children will be released (they must always be collected by a parent or other named contact)
- Location of buddy school:
Trevisker Community Primary School
Warwick Crescent
St Eval
PL27 7UD
Tel: 01841 540 363
- The importance of providing correct contact information
- How to authorise a friend, relative or child-minder to collect their children in the event of a critical incident

Please note that the likelihood of a critical incident occurring is very small. These measures are extra precautions to ensure that children are kept safe.

Parental Contact Details

In the event of a critical incident it will be crucial to be able to contact parents quickly, even if unable to access records on the premises. It is therefore essential we ensure:

- Parental contact details are up-to-date
- The Manager/designated member of staff know where to locate quickly and easily both parental contact details and information on who has been authorised by parents to collect a child in the event of a critical incident - [a printed copy is held at the buddy school](#)
- The safety of this data e.g. through password protection

Preventing Critical Incidents and Lessening Their Impact

Closedown procedure checklist:

The following closedown procedures are in place to reduce the likelihood and impact of critical incidents and are carried out at the end of each day (except in the unlikely circumstance that this causes a greater risk to staff welfare):

- All flammable materials are locked away
- All valuable equipment and monies are secure
- All rubbish and waste is removed from the building and placed in storage

- Check to ensure all persons have vacated the premises
- Rooms are checked for anyone hiding
- Check to ensure external lighting is working correctly
- All windows are shut
- All internal doors are closed to prevent the spread of fire

Preparations to Stay Open During a Pandemic

We will plan for:

- Greater staff absence
- Other possible disruption relating from the pandemic's impact on other services
- Facilities to be able to keep a sick child separate from other pupils (and minimise their contact with staff)
- Systems to minimise the spread of infection e.g. hand washing, disposal of tissues etc.

Recovery Stage

Once the initial frenzy of dealing with a critical incident has passed, there is no immediate danger to people or property, and it is possible to return to at least some of the site, this is the recovery stage of the incident, in which work begins to try to return services to normality.

If this stage is taken as the point until things return to 'normal' it could potentially last for 10-20 years, as it might easily take that long for a traumatic event to fade from public memory, and from people's view of the setting. This does not mean that efforts cannot be made to move on from the event and to normalise the service. It does mean, however, that staff should be aware of issues they may face e.g. local reputation.

The rehabilitation and recovery stage is also a chance to improve a service, not just return it to how it was before the incident. This can massively reduce the reputational impact of a critical incident.

Emotional Recovery

The death or serious injury of a member of staff, a child or a parent, or experiencing a traumatic even may have a severe short term effect on children, staff and parents. In some cases many may also experience long term trauma. The lists below will need to be adapted for different incidents, but provide a good basis for action.

Short-term Actions (e.g. 1 st week)
Arrange brief meeting for staff, offering support and informing of procedures
Ensure that procedures for monitoring staff and children are in place
Activate strategies for allowing children to express their feelings about the situation if they wish
In the next week, the Manager/Committee should contact bereaved families/families of those injured to express sympathy
Ensure a member of staff makes contact with children at home or in hospital
Manager / Committee to decide about attendance at funerals
Share the planning of the special assembly or memorial service if appropriate

Medium-term Actions (e.g. anything up to 2 months after original incident)
Arrange support for affected staff
Make sensitive arrangement for the return to the setting of any children involved
Liaise with parents, to include the sending of bulletins
Check that monitoring arrangements are in place and followed
Manager/Committee to hold a debrief and review meeting. A review form should be completed. Any ongoing support needed should be included on the form

Long-term Actions (can extend over many years)
Planning to include 'rites of passage' as a matter of course
Set up strategies to support staff when working with painful emotions and sensitive subjects
Take multi-faith and multi-cultural issues into consideration whilst planning future activities and coping strategies
Plan future work and support strategies to take into account the fact that blame inevitable gets attributed
Aim to return to normal service whilst developing strategies for increasing social support between staff and children

Event Debrief and Review

It is important to debrief and review after the critical incident, whatever it may be.

Hot Debrief

Before staff who have been involved in the incident that day go home, a short debrief will take place with each relevant member of staff in order to:

- Commit to paper initial actions and thoughts whilst they are still fresh in the mind
- To clarify what people have already achieved and what remains to be done
- To help combat feelings of isolation or blame

Final Debrief

There will be a final debrief, including all staff involved in the event. It may also incorporate findings from consultation with children involved. It will occur within 2 months of the start of the incident. The debriefing and review will be led by the Manager/Committee.

A debrief will allow the incident to be examined in its entirety, good practice to be recognised and praised, and lessons learnt for the future. It can also help to provide some 'closure' for the staff involved.

In the event of a critical incident, (mis)information is likely to travel quickly. Events including children are especially likely to cause a great deal of anxiety. Ensuring that up-to-date and accurate information is quickly disseminated can help to relieve this situation.

Information to Parents and Families of Casualties

1. In serious cases (e.g. critical injuries, fatalities), the family should be contacted by the police; the Manager / Committee will organise this

2. Liaise with Committee to inform the family of any people with lesser injuries; ensure that parents are informed as rapidly and as compassionately as possible, preferably by adults known to the parents.
3. Get calls done quickly - misinformation will spread informally very quickly
4. A script will be used when calling parents so that information given is consistent; opinions on the cause of the incident, or attempts to attribute blame will not be expressed.

Attack on a child or member of staff

- Staff should try to distract assailant without risking themselves
- Do not engage in physical contact or further agitate the assailant
- Maintain eye contact, be courteous and patient
- Use the word 'stop' and the names of the people involved to promote familiarity
- Staff should disperse spectators and therefore eradicate the risk of further injury

Bomb Threat

- DO NOT turn anything electrical on or off, except the fire alarm
- DO NOT touch any unusual item or suspicious package
- Evacuate to buddy school

This policy is reviewed annually, next review date: December

APPROVAL

Signature:

Name & Position: Rachael Richards -
Manager

Date:

AGREED

Signature:

Name & Position: On behalf of the
committee

Date:

