



St Andrew's C of E School, Totteridge

CRITICAL INCIDENT (POLICY)

(Non-Statutory Policy)

(Resource Management Committee)

(Approval by Resource Management Committee – 3 Year Review Cycle)

Date to be implemented from:	9 th March 2021
Date to be reviewed by:	9 th March 2024
Date Reviewed by Sub Committee:	9 th March 2021

Approved by:

Signed: (Chair – Resources Committee)

(Print Name)

Date

This Policy supersedes any previous Policy of this name or instructions that pre-date this edition.

This Policy has been equality impact assessed and we believe that it is in line with the Equality Act 2010 as it is fair, it does not prioritise or disadvantage any pupil and it helps to promote equality at this School.

1 Procedure Statement

1.1 This Policy sets out the procedures to be followed to ensure the safety and protection of the whole School community in the event of a critical incident.

1.2 St Andrew's School will meet its legal requirement to have a Critical Incident Policy and meet any other legislation or requirements to ensure a safe and harmonious environment for pupils, staff, parents/carers and visitors.

1.3 The Procedure will be readily accessible within the School on the Website and in hard copy upon request.



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2 Reviewing the Procedure

- 2.1 Reviewing the Procedure – St Andrew's School will assess the implementation and impact of this Procedure on a continuous basis and undertake a regular formal review on an annual basis to ensure it is fit for purpose.
- 2.2 The Policy will include additional issues as they arise, including specific issues such as the pandemic novel Coronavirus Covid-19. The Policy will be adapted to ensure Recovery and Resilience.

3 School Vision

- 3.1 Our vision is to become an outstanding School within a loving, Christian community.
- 3.2 Our parents/carers, children and staff will work together to enable all children to:
- achieve their potential
 - learn in a safe, stimulating environment
 - enjoy learning now and in the future

4 Definitions

- 4.1 A critical incident can be a physical incident or psychological trauma that has a severe immediate impact and likely long-term effect on pupils, staff or parents. This may include:

- incidents that involve staff, children or young people or others (eg. death of a pupil, child abuse, hate crime, shooting/massacre in School, trauma, bomb threat)
- people made disasters/emergencies (eg. toxic gas, explosions, major fires, construction issues, loss of services, IT failure and digital security, food poisoning, pandemics, climate change)
- natural disasters/emergencies (eg. flooding, drought, geological and vulcanological processes, weather events taking out services, pandemics, climate change)

It has become apparent that critical incidents may have an element of



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human intervention even though it may have been a long time removed or in a different geographical area. The recent pandemic (novel Coronavirus Covid-19) has raised the question of how much is beyond the control of the human race and how much people's behaviour has contributed to the pandemic.

4.2 A critical incident can be a physical incident or psychological trauma that has a severe immediate impact and likely long-term effect on pupils, staff or parents.

4.3 Schools should begin the process developing a Critical Incident Management Strategy and an operational Critical Incident Plan. The strategy will identify the areas which need to be considered to minimise the impact of critical incidents. The Plan will address the different actions necessary and the responses required to different types of critical incidents. The wider School community should have an input.

5 Aim of Procedure

5.1 Crisis management and recovery processes involve personal support, crisis intervention and a whole range of practical assistance. It has different strands:

- Preparing for critical incidents (training, resource allocation, allocation of roles)
- Managing the incidents (early identification, job responsibilities, line management)
- Restoring confidence, continuity and resilience

5.2 Where there is a likelihood of an issue escalating into a critical incident, early intervention has been shown to help prevent a significant loss of confidence.

5.3 This Policy will name the people who will assume key roles (Critical Incident Team), and the information and procedures that will need to be in place. The communication framework required to handle any contingency and the support structures for staff.



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5.4 The Critical Incident Team has responsibility for ensuring that procedures are properly addressed at times of high emotion and that if the Headteacher is the subject of the incident then the response mechanism should proceed effectively. If the incident subsequently involves legal action, a precise response to the incident should be known and be able to be verified by more than one person.

5.5 At all times, there needs to be flexibility. The nature of the crisis may change or additional issues may emerge and it is important that by following the Policy, that there is the best chance of problem-solving new issues and not exacerbating the issue(s).

6 Major Incidents Focused on People

6.1 Whilst all critical incidents are difficult for all concerned, those that involve serious injury or death are inevitably traumatic. By their very nature and definition, critical incidents tend to disorientate and may overwhelm those involved. Planning ahead is a necessary precaution and can be crucial.

6.2 Communication during and following an incident is, of course, of great importance.

7 Planning for an Emergency

7.1 The Critical Incident Team will manage the process.

7.2 The Critical Incident Team will comprise of the:

- Headteacher
- Deputy Headteacher
- Secretary
- Chair of Governors
- Vicar
- Site Manager
- School Business Manager



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Others may be co-opted as necessary in light of the nature of the emergency and availability of the people and personal involvement of those concerned.

A Local Authority representative and/or Diocesan Board representative may be included depending on the nature, context and severity of the incident.

7.3 It is important that the School knows which people can be contacted immediately following an incident, what information is available and where this is stored.

7.4 Therefore, the Critical Incident Team will:

- issue all staff with a Critical Incident Management Plan
- display a flow chart and contact telephone numbers in the Staff Room, Administration Area and classrooms
- ensure all contact information is held in an IT backup system (if the critical incident is IT failure then it is vital that a backup system is established asap – text, phone, video conferencing etc)
- review the Critical Incident Management Plan at a staff meeting during the first term of each School year and ensure all staff understand the any changes or additions to the Plan.
- An Incident Manager will be appointed by the Headteacher (or Deputy in her absence) in response to the type of incident being faced. This person will be responsible for co-ordinating the actions, monitoring the effectiveness of the actions and update the Critical Incident Team at least daily.

7.5 In the event of an emergency, all staff will be notified as soon as possible.

7.6 The School office will be used as the central liaison point for all incidents. However, if this is not available, an alternative area will be identified very early on and notified to all staff and the School community. In extreme cases a virtual office will need to act as the Central Information Point.

7.7 In the first instance, it may be appropriate to use staff mobile phones to



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separate in-coming and out-going calls. A secure WhatsApp or FaceTime group may be established.

7.8 L B Barnet (0208359200) will assist in contacting key people.

8 Information to be available on and off site

8.1 The following information will be held in School and will be accessible to members of the Critical Incident Team:

- telephone numbers of all members of staff
- names of all key holders
- pupil contact information
- details of names, location and contact details relating to all pupils and staff on-site at any time e.g. School outings etc
- significant medical information relating to pupils and staff off site on School outings at any time
- telephone numbers of all Governors
- contact list of all people, groups or organisations who visit or use the School and would need to be informed
- contact list of people and groups used by the School - suppliers, contractors etc
- School bank details, e.g. account number and sort code
- location of keys
- premises and site plan of the School, including critical locations and emergency exits
- gas, electric and water mains control positions
- fire brigade access points
- copy of the asbestos log
- a record of any flammable or toxic materials and their location
- a record of any medical supplies and their location
- computer based copies of schemes of work, policies etc on Headteacher/staff laptops
- remote learning software / hardware



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8.2 The incident will be reported to the LA and Diocese by phone or secure group (eg. WhatsApp, FaceTime). Email may be used as a follow-up confirmation. These phone numbers are to be held by the Critical Incident Team members at home and at School and in the School office. One telephone call to the LA will be sufficient for all arrangements to be put in place, identifying a control point at or near the site to manage the incident in the initial hours or days.

8.3 The LA and the Diocese will provide full support to enable the incident to be managed as effectively as possible. This could include making arrangements for:

- emergency accommodation
- additional teaching resources
- additional staffing
- transport
- specialist advice
- the dissemination of information
- public relations and press releases

8.4 Those dealing with in-coming calls should provide an agreed factual statement together with reassurance of action being taken at the incident site. A separate dedicated line will be used for out-going calls. It is important to remember that mobile phones are not necessarily secure and that caution about what is said should, therefore, be exercised at all times. The School will agree a corporate statement with the LA and Diocese where necessary (see 9.7).

9. Making Contact with Others

9.1 Contacting families directly affected should be done quickly and sensitively and not induce panic.

9.2 Consistency of information is vital, so it is best to avoid a chain of communication in this instance. If parents/carers cannot be contacted, staff will leave a message with a relative, friend or other identified person in the contact information sheet. It is vital that the person/friend or relative taking the message is coached so as not to cause



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any panic and ensure that the actual parents/carers contact the allocated Central Information Point as soon as possible.

9.3 If parents/carers are to be invited to a venue to meet School or LA staff, the venue should be secure and the location not be released to the media. (It may be that via social media that parents/carers or pupils will release details and hence, the School must be prepared for representatives of the media to discover the location.) The School will be prepared to suggest individuals, groups or organisations that can offer suitable relevant support eg. St Andrew's Church.

9.4 When responding to calls from relatives, it will be agreed which members of staff will be delegated/permitted to talk to relatives. These members of staff should:

- use language and tone that alleviates anxiety
- anticipate questions relevant to the incident and be prepared to answer them
- where they do not know the answer to any question – never guess an answer

9.5 When informing pupils about an incident, we understand that staff may need to be given advice and guidance on what the pupils should be told and how. Some information may be given in whole School assemblies/worship and then discussed in class. Other types of information may best be disseminated in small groups by the staff closest to the pupils. We recognise that pupils may not understand the full implications of any incident, so information will be tailored to the cognitive and emotional levels of the pupils. We acknowledge that pupils must be given all the time they need to ask questions or talk about the incident to have their worries allayed. Families will be informed about the amount of information their children have been given as they will not be able to relay this information themselves.

9.6 When contacting families or others not directly affected, it may be sufficient to inform by letter or email. In other cases, it may be more appropriate to call an early meeting at the School, especially if the incident is one which could call into question aspects of the School's organisation that could affect all pupils. A prepared verbal or written statement can provide necessary facts, expressions of sympathy and concern and possibly a message for the community. It is essential to remember that any written communication (letter or email) could be passed onto the media. Guidance will be sought from the LA and



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Diocese before issuing any form of written statement. St Andrew's will take an informed decision whether a letter is sent immediately or if it would be better to be delayed until all facts are known.

9.7 Once an incident has been reported to the LA and the Diocese it will be treated as a matter of high priority. However, St Andrew's recognises that the media may make contact before LA/Diocese contact is made. If the media contact a member of staff before LA/Diocese support has arrived, staff should:

- if prior agreement has already been gained from the LA that their spokesperson will act on behalf of the School, then divert the media to the LA. (It is important that a strategy is in place and reviewed regularly, even when there is no impending disaster, so that the School can be proactive rather than just reactive.)

Ensure the LA is informed that the media have contacted the School and will be calling the LA. (Ensure the LA feeds back any communication immediately they have had with the media).

Otherwise:

- buy time, by saying that the Headteacher is unavailable but will call back
- be clear about who is and is not permitted to speak to the media on behalf of the School
- accept that in certain circumstances the delegated person may not be the most appropriate person to talk to the press and a substitute needs to be available
- have a colleague present to take notes or record what is said
- provide nothing but the facts
- give a prepared statement rather than an interview and anticipate the most difficult possible questions
- immediately correct any misconceptions or misleading information - by interrupting if necessary
- be sensitive about personal information
- do not apportion blame or liability to anyone
- make no promises
- remember to praise and thank any person or service that have helped during the incident
- remember there are no 'off the record' conversations and that all contact with the press and media should be treated with extreme caution



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10 Providing Support for People

10.1 St Andrew's recognises that, particularly in the event of a critical incident, it is easy for the emotions and stresses experienced by the person managing the event to be overlooked. It is important that those managing the incident also take care of themselves and that someone takes on responsibility for ensuring this element is not forgotten. The LA/Diocese will have the responsibility of ensuring that the Headteacher or Incident Manager will be provided with personal advice, coaching and support.

10.2 St Andrew's places importance on acknowledging the emotional state of all the people involved. We recognise that, depending on the nature of the emergency, not all staff may feel able to support others or the pupils and that a burden of support may, therefore, fall on a disproportionately small number of staff. This is accepted as an acceptable and possible position to adopt.

10.3 St Andrew's recognises that a critical incident could have an impact on emotionally vulnerable children and affect their behaviour or emotional state. Support will be offered from appropriate professionals within or outside School. Similarly, any staff closely involved in the incident will be offered opportunities for debriefing and counselling, informally or through a more formal structure.

10.4 Schools need to be aware that, during a critical incident, offers of help and support will come from many sources; some will be welcome as part of the school's Critical Incident Management Plan and others, though well intentioned, may only serve to complicate that response. It is therefore important to give careful consideration to the benefits to be gained for the School community of accepting help from any source, other than those which had been planned. All contact with pupils by any agency or individuals should be governed by current child protection legislation and guidance for schools.

10.5 The School should, from time to time, model emergency procedures (as is done with Fire Practices or Evacuation of the buildings) to ensure that all staff are



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aware of their responsibilities and to be proactive in recognising any possible pitfalls in the Critical Incident Management Plan for different types of scenarios and different cohorts.

11 Formal and Informal Recognition and Rituals

11.1 Arrangements may be made to express sympathy to any families directly affected. Depending on the severity of the situation, then some of these actions may not be permissible (eg. the attendance at funerals during Covid-19 restrictions) and may either be postponed until a more suitable date or rely on remote attendance.

11.2 Injured pupils could be visited in hospital and pupils will be encouraged to send cards and letters, where appropriate. Staff and pupils may attend funerals if the family sanction it. The School may be closed in recognition of funerals. Special assemblies and in-School memorial services may be held.

11.3 Implications for the wider curriculum may include:

- training delivered to staff in areas such as loss, change or bereavement
- training in remote access
- training in resilience and wellness
- consideration will be given to the provision of relevant fiction or non-fiction books and materials in the School library, accessible electronic materials on laptops, desktops, tablets etc and in displays around the School
- consideration in PSHE curriculum, play, dance, drama etc to include discussions with pupils about what are normal reactions to bereavement, stress or crisis, isolation and loneliness and the effects on mental health



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12 Sources of further information and support

COVID-19 – Latest information and advice – LB Barnet

<https://www.barnet.gov.uk/coronavirus-covid-19-latest-information-and-advice>

Education and Childcare – Gov.UK

<https://www.gov.uk/coronavirus/education-and-childcare>

Dealing with a critical incident - DfE

<https://www.education-ni.gov.uk/articles/dealing-critical-incident>

COVID-19 Mission and Ministry with Children, Young People & Families in a Church Setting - C of E

<https://www.churchofengland.org/sites/default/files/2020-10/COVID%2019%20Mission%20and%20ministry%20with%20children%20and%20young%20people%20v2.0.pdf>

Critical Incidents in Teaching: developing professional judgement – David Tripp

<https://www.google.co.uk/search?tbm=bks&hl=en&q=critical+incidents+in+teaching+david+tripp>