

CRITICAL INCIDENT POLICY

This policy should be read and understood in conjunction with the following documents:

- Child Protection Policy
- Policy for the Physical Intervention to Control and Restrain Others
- Planning and Managing Critical Incidences in Schools and Other Settings (Wiltshire January 2018) **(Appendix 1)**
- Emergency conditions and major incident guidance for Head Teachers (Wiltshire County Council – Current copy) **(Appendix 2)**

Definition

- A critical incident is defined¹ as a sudden, unexpected event that causes a level of shock, trauma and distress on a scale beyond the coping capacity of the school or setting. Examples may include:
 - the sudden, unexpected death of a student or staff member
 - violent death or serious harm to someone within the immediate community
 - a serious accident involving several students
 - an incident with a high media profile or one involving a number of schools
- There are other events that may disrupt learning or lead to emergency school closure that require the involvement of the LA but are not viewed as a 'critical incident'. These might include a more widespread emergency in the community, unsafe buildings, severe weather, gas leaks etc. The procedures which should be followed in the event of such incidences are outlined in 'The Emergency conditions and major incident guidance for head teachers' **(Appendix 2)**.

Aims

The aims of this policy are to:

- minimise the threat to the safety and wellbeing of staff and pupils;
- minimise potential damage to the infrastructure of the school;
- establish clear areas of responsibility;
- establish clear guidelines and procedures that are understood by all involved and therefore consistently applied;
- ensure that all appropriate parties are informed of the incident in line with County guidelines and procedures;
- carry out required duties and responsibilities as outlined in the school's Emergency Information Guidelines

Response to a critical incident

- Schools should inform the LA where events challenge the internal coping mechanisms of the school or where events have wider implications (e.g. higher media profile)
- If a tragic incident occurs that can be managed from within internal resources, there is no requirement to notify the LA, however the school may still wish to call to discuss the event and their actions.
- Where an incident takes place on, or close to the school premises, an immediate emergency response by members of staff on the scene may involve:
 - ensuring the immediate safety of individuals at the scene
 - contacting the emergency services
 - administering first aid
- The school's Critical Incident Management Plan should be put in place and roles assigned to the Critical Incident Management Team.

¹ LA Circular A003/18 'Planning for and managing Critical Incidents in schools and other settings' January 2018

- Information needs to be gathered and recorded in order to establish the facts and whilst it should be started immediately it is likely to be ongoing.
- The response required in the event of a critical incident and the order in which various tasks are undertaken may vary slightly depending on the type of incident. However, the response required and the tasks that make up that response are clearly outlined in the school's Emergency Information Guidelines.
- Along with the Head teacher and Deputy Head teacher, all members of the Senior Management Team and the Chair and Vice Chair of Governors should be familiar with the procedures set out in this guide. In addition the school secretary should have a copy of the guide and also be familiar with the procedures set out in that guide.
- All members of the SMT and responsible Governors should also keep a copy of the guide at home in the event that an incident occurs out of school hours.
- A complete set for each team member will be kept in the Head Teacher's office and the Head Teacher will also keep a complete set at home should it be necessary to put together a team comprised of different members during a school holiday or when access to the school is not possible due to the nature of the incident.
- All staff need to be aware of the response required in the event of a critical incident and to be trained in tasks and procedures that they might personally be involved in. Accordingly, all new staff will be made aware of the Critical Incident Policy and procedures as part of their induction and all staff will receive an annual update and reminder on the policy and procedures.

Tasks for the Incident Team following a critical incident

- Subsequent to a critical incident there are a number of tasks and duties that must be carried out by the response team.
- Specific tasks and duties have been pre-assigned to specific members of that team but there is obvious need for flexibility dependent upon the availability of team members at the time of the incident. What is important is that specific individuals take on specific roles and that these roles are clearly defined in the school's Emergency Information Guidelines (**Appendix 3**).

Updating the Emergency Information Guidelines

It is the responsibility of the Head Teacher to ensure that all details are kept up to date.

Guidelines for all staff

1. In the event of a critical incident a Critical Incident Management Team (CIMT) is formed as described in the Emergency Procedures booklet.
2. All staff will be notified by email or contacted by telephone if not at school at the time.
3. No member of staff should discuss the incident within any one outside school nor should they post any information on social networking sites.
4. As soon as practically possible, all staff will be called together and briefed on events and the response of the CIMT.
5. Any enquiries from outside agencies must be referred to the CIMT.
6. If the incident happens during school holidays a CIMT will be formed out of available staff to manage the situation (e.g. death of a child whilst on holiday).
7. As the incident unfolds it is important to stick to routines and as far as possible, maintain a sense of normality. Some teachers, children and classes may be more affected than others and the assessment of needs is part of the job of the CIMT.
8. The site manager will be directed by the CIMT whether it is necessary to remain on site.

Review of the Policy

- This policy and the procedures outlined in it will normally be reviewed every two years. However, in the event of a critical incident, the SMT will review the policy and procedures to determine its effectiveness and any shortcomings.

Appendices:

1	Planning and Managing Critical Incidences in Schools and Other Settings (Wiltshire January 2018)
2	Emergency conditions and major incident guidance for Head Teachers (current version)
3	School's Emergency Information Guidelines