



Critical Incident Policy

Including school business continuity and disaster recovery.

TRAFFORD 24 HOUR 912 2020 EMERGENCY NUMBER

Office Data (0) :Policies Updated November 2017 :Critical Incident docs
SMT to hold hard copy including staff/governor contacts off site at all times.

INTRODUCTION

A working definition of a critical incident is as follows:

“An event or events usually sudden, which involve the experience of significant personal distress to a level which potentially overwhelms normal responses, procedures and coping strategies and which is likely to have emotional and organisational consequences”.

(Norfolk LEA 1995)

Such an event may be a serious accident involving one or more children/students/staff on or off the premises which has led to death or serious injury; violence/assault in school; fire/explosion; a natural disaster in the community etc. A critical incident tests our reactions to loss, not only of people by death or serious injury, but the security of the known; change tests our vulnerability as well as that of the children. By definition, a critical incident is an “out of the ordinary event” – it places upon us demands which it is unlikely that we have met before. We all react differently to the “same” critical incident, depending on our perspective.

“In recent years a great deal has been learned about the effects that life-threatening traumas have on adult survivors. Children too are affected emotionally. For a long time adults assumed that these effects were short-lived but, since sympathetic professionals began to ask the children themselves how they were affected, it transpired that they showed a similar range of difficulties to adults”.

(Yule and Gold 1993)

It is also recognised that a person could be exposed to the event not only through direct experience or being a witness, but also through learning about relatives or friends who had been involved in such an episode.

The effects can be long term; a study involved interviews with the children who had survived the sinking of the “Jupiter” cruise liner in Greece in 1988. The survivors showed unusually high incidents of suicide and clinical depression, and many had fallen behind academically, getting lower GCSE results than had been originally predicted.

Examples of in-school critical incidents

- A serious accident to a child or adult
- The death of a pupil or member of staff through natural causes, such as illness
- A traffic accident involving a pupil or staff member
- Violence or assault within school
- A school fire or explosion
- Destruction of part of the school building
- An illness such as meningitis within the school community

Examples of out-of-school critical incidents

- An accident to a pupil or staff while out of school on a visit or swimming etc
- Death or injuries on a school journey
- Tragedies involving children from many schools eg the fire at Hillsborough Football ground
- Civil disturbances

Being Prepared

If a critical incident happens, many events may be occurring within a short space of time and stress levels in staff will be high and emotions possibly overwhelming. In these circumstances it would help schools to already have in place a plan of action which has been discussed, and staff who are prepared for the unlikely eventuality of a critical incident affecting the school. Having a plan, being prepared, and clarifying roles leads to a feeling of greater competence when stressful situations do occur, and allows more time for “thinking”. If staff stress can be reduced in any way, this feeling of competence/feeling in control, will be passed to children/students/families.

The enclosed checklist attempts to cover those areas which would require consideration in the immediate aftermath of a critical incident, to ensure that all parties have their needs met as carefully as possible. Completing the checklist as part of the planning process will give staff opportunities to think through their own individual feelings about a possible critical incident, and will provide some preparation, in the hope that it will never be needed. Schools are advised to personalise the checklist by adding telephone numbers of the Link Adviser, Chair of Governors and other contacts they feel appropriate.

Additional information is also included in the full Trafford Guidance (available from the school office) regarding local and nationwide contacts for support plus reading materials which may be useful to schools.

School Business continuity and Disaster Recovery Plan

- At this school we use Gwarm Technology for disaster recovery on our admin server and TMBC SLA for our SIMS date.
- In case of a critical incident, we would use Parent Mail, Friends of Woodheys (FOW) contacts and our FOW class representatives.

WOODHEYS PRIMARY SCHOOL CRITICAL INCIDENT CHECKLIST

School actions immediately after the event

First Contact:
Alison Milne 912 3255 Education and Early Years Commissioning Manager
Trafford Link Advisor
Emergency 24 hour number 0161 912 2020

Contact: Karen Samples
(911 8686)
Trafford Link Adviser
School Improvement

Contact:
Chair of Governors
Chris O'Brien
07884470681

Contact:
Press Office - 912 1136
Legal 912 4276
Re details of incident if
statement needs to be
prepared

First Contact will inform Karen Samples (911 8686)
Executive Director, Children, Families and Wellbeing

Link Adviser convenes Critical Incident Team including Headteacher to advise the school if appropriate

School Nurse via
Kate Murdock
Operations Manager
0161 912 4291

Educational Psychologist via
Chris Bates
Principal Educational Psychologist
912 3191 /Steph Littleton 0161-912-
2250/07894489535

CAMHS
Child & Adolescent Mental Health
Services via Ken McDonald
0161 716 4747/0745242375

Healthy Schools
Coordinator
0161 912 3395

Where appropriate:
Rev Richard Motterhead 07771624885
PC Carlos 0161 856 7530 (Altrincham Police Station)
Alison Sargent (Bereavement/emotional support)
07766238833

Critical Incident Team meet at the school with the Headteacher to agree:

Short Term Actions

Critical Incident Team roles and responsibilities

To provide:

- Advice in order to support the pupils, staff, Headteacher, school community

To help to organise:

- School response when dealing with enquiries about the incident
- Private area for individual support/grief
- Information and letter to parents with support contact numbers
- Class coverage to maintain routine (Stopgap Supply Agency 912 1186 if required)
- Information and updates to all staff
- Record of actions taken for reference

To ensure:

- Information to local high schools and community if appropriate
- Support when coping with day to day routines including registration, possessions in school after the incident, accessible areas of building

Long Term Actions

Critical incident Team roles and responsibilities are agreed in relation to:

(Where appropriate)

- Advice for memorial and special assembly/funeral arrangements
- Advice for varying degrees of bereavement or loss
- Advice about full return to buildings use
- Review of support and actions to identify any issues for the future
- Requesting the School Nurse to contact the school after 3-6months to discuss the incident with the specific pupil/family/ staff involved where appropriate

Critical Incidents Checklist

In the event of a Critical Incident on or off the school premises, it may be useful for schools to consider (before any serious event occurs) the steps they may need to go through in order that contingency plans can be implemented.

Once details of the incident became known, parents/guardians of those involved will be informed as a matter of priority. It may be necessary to inform the Police if they are not already aware of the incident and especially in the case of a fatality, serious incident or suspected criminal act. Schools will also need to follow the advice given in 'Health and Safety at Work Guidance Note Number 2.1 Accident Investigation and Reporting Procedure' (Trafford MBC July 1997)

Immediately After the Event

Timescale

Step 1

1ST CONTACT

Head/Dep. Head/SMT will contact Commissioning Manager, Ref 1 on appendix A.

Immediately

Step 2

1ST CONTACT

Head/Dep. Head/SMT will contact Dep Dir of Education (Primary)/Link Advisor, Ref 2 on appendix A

Immediately

Step 3

1ST CONTACT

Head/Dep. Head/SMT will contact Chair of Governors, Ref 3 on appendix A

Immediately

Step 4

1ST CONTACT

Head/Dep. Head/SMT will contact Trafford's Press Office And Legal Dept, Ref 4 & 5 on appendix A

Re: details of incident if statement needs to be prepared.

Immediately

These 1st contacts will then immediately contact the Executive Director CYPS

The Link Adviser will then convene Critical Incident Team including Head/Dep. Head/SMT to advise the school if appropriate.

See Flo-Chart.

Further immediate steps to take:

Step 5

Identify a room as an Operation Base. This will be the Computer Room. This may need to be off-site if the school needs to be evacuated. In these circumstances it will be the Methodist Church on The Avenue.

Step 6

It is recommended that someone be nominated to keep a detailed record of events and actions as they happen. These should be kept so they may be referred to later. These records will need to be written until the situation has stabilised.

Step 7

Staff will be informed by the Head/Dep. Head/SMT as soon as possible but within hours. Email/parent mail to be used.

Step 8

If staff are unavailable due to the incident, the following personnel may be considered for the continued running of the school:

- List of known Supply Teachers (StopGap, Hays)
- Informal/Reciprocal links with other schools
- Link Adviser
- Mid-day Assistants
- Governors, Friends of the School, P.A. etc.

All contact names and numbers on Appendix A.

In all cases the Headteacher takes charge. In the Headteachers absence the responsibility goes to the Deputy Head and in their absence the responsibility would be delegated to the Senior Management Team (SMT).

Immediately After The Event

Step 9

Same day if Possible

Press/Media liaison will be carried out by the Local Authority Staff who will be contacted by the Critical Incidents Team. The member of staff will visit the site/school and take responsibility for all liaisons.

Step 10

Within Hours

In conjunction with parents, consideration should be given to informing siblings who attend other schools, e.g. who will inform them, when in what manner.

Step 11

Same Day

Head/Dep. Head/SMT will inform parents of the other children/students in the same class/form/trip by phone/visit.

Step 12

Same Day

Head/Dep. Head/SMT will inform the other children/students in the same class/form/year group. Consideration may be given to sending a letter to all parents. A sample letter is available in the 'Trafford Critical Incident Guidance' (copy available in the school office)'.

Step 13

Same Day

A mobile phone/extra phone line should be considered. Use mobile phones to make outgoing calls to free up phone lines for incoming calls.

Step 14

Same Day

The Chair of Governors/nominated person (unless directly involved in the Critical Incident) will monitor the above arrangements: he/she will be supported by another Governor.

Step 15

Same Day

A briefing meeting for staff involved in the incident will be arranged by Head/Dep. Head/SMT to review the day and consider needs for subsequent days.

Step 16

Ongoing

Consideration may be given to the provision of a room where children/students can talk to each other/older peers/a chosen member of staff/outside agencies. Most likely the Rainbow Room and Family/SEN room. The 'Hope centre' staff will be used for supporting children/families with emotional/shock symptoms.

Step 17

Ongoing

High-risk children/students will be identified and monitored by Head/Dep. Head/SMT or the person of their choice.

In The Short Term

Step 18

Ongoing

Support for pupils/students will be coordinated by Head/Dep. Head/SMT who will also involve/inform parents as appropriate. He/she will make decisions about which specialist agencies to involve with particular children/students/staff/parents (informing parents as appropriate).

Step 19

Ongoing

The designated Critical Incidents Officer will, in the first instance, provide support for the Head. Subsequently the Head may choose another person for ongoing support.

Step 20

Ongoing

Support for the staff will be arranged by Head/Dep. Head/SMT.

Step 21

Ongoing

It may be appropriate for parents to form an ongoing support network and schools may need to consider providing a room for this purpose. Computer Room/Resource Room/Library.

Evacuation of Premises

As this may well form part of a critical incident, it is necessary that schools give consideration to establishing links with neighbouring schools, Churches, Public Halls etc., where large numbers of children can be accommodated on a temporary basis at short notice.

Critical Incidents Checklist: Explanatory Notes

The following notes explain the reasons behind the items on the Critical Incidents Checklist.

1-4 Whilst the Head/Dep. Head/SMT retain overall control, the Critical Incident Team will help by providing support and managing some areas of the incident, e.g. liaison with press/media, damage to buildings, cleaning/restoration etc., leaving the Head and senior staff to deal with other issues. Support can also be provided by the Governors, particularly the Chair who will take responsibility for informing other Governors.

5 Having an identifiable room as an Operational Base provides a single point for the collation of information, record keeping, sources of information for others etc. and should, ideally, be the base of the person-in-charge of the Critical Incidents Plan e.g. normally the Head or a senior member of staff. A black/white board may be useful for displaying information/action taken in order that all are kept informed as soon as possible.

6 Under stress, memories of events and sequences are affected, sometimes seriously. It is thus suggested that a dated and timed record of actions taken, and by whom, should be kept for reference at a later date. It is suggested that this log should be kept in a book, (set aside with this checklist) rather than a loose leaf file, which could be managed by the Head or senior member of staff in charge or their appointed deputy. Such a record may help your school (and subsequently other schools), review and evaluate your approach to a critical incident. Other methods of recording may also be considered e.g. Dictaphone, Camera or Video Footage.

7-8 It is considered important that all school staff, e.g. teachers, kitchen staff, mid-day assistants, caretaker, secretary, admin staff, school crossing personnel etc., are informed as soon as possible and furnished with all the established facts about the incident. Such action helps to unite staff into a coherent team to deal with a critical incident and avoids rumours/misunderstandings which can arise if this does not happen. (It is important to check that pupil and staff personal information, e.g. next of kin is regularly updated). Staff may be unavailable (due to the incident through injury or dealing with children/students) to take their normal time-tabled commitments. Managing the school in order to retain as much normality as possible under difficult circumstances may involve other staff coming into school. It may be important for any children/classes/forms/year groups involved in any way with the incident to be taught by known staff, to ensure continuity of trust and certainty in routines. Children/students who are with familiar staff may find it easier to talk and express their feelings.

9 Approaches from press/media should be referred to the Director of Education on the number given Ref. 1 on appendix A. This action relieves Heads and staff of the perceived requirement to give 'sound bites' and could help in the preparation of a more formal, written statement which could be conveyed to the press/media.

10-11 Informing parents or children/students involved in the incident, or in the same group though not directly involved, is essential as soon as possible after the event when facts have been established. Schools will need to consider how news is given to parents, but a general rule might be that the more serious the news, the more 'personal' should be the way it is given. To avoid parents waiting anxiously, it may be appropriate to consider several members of staff conveying news. A reassuring telephone call to parents of those not directly involved may be sufficient.

For parents with children in other schools, consideration should be given as to how these siblings are to be informed of the incident and the effect on them personally, i.e. in terms of death or injury of a brother or sister. Some, perhaps most, parents will want to accept this responsibility; others may wish a member of staff, either at your school or more likely, at the child's own school to break the news. (Parents need to be informed as to when this is happening in order to be ready for the child's return home).

12 Again, it seems important that other children/students in school, but not directly involved in the incident, are given established facts by a known member of staff in order to allay fears and reduce rumours. If a letter is to be sent to all parents, the example given in (copy available in the school office) may act as a model. This is held on computer file along with the full 'Trafford Critical Incident Guidance' for rapid completion in the event of an incident.

13 The use of mobile phones is suggested, possibly for outgoing calls, so that the 'normal' school telephone number can be kept free for incoming calls and parents can be informed as soon as possible. The mobile phone number should also be shared with staff in charge of groups of children away from the school site.

14 It may be helpful if a member of staff, or someone from outside the school, not directly involved with sections 10-12 above, i.e. someone slightly removed from the crisis intervention, can monitor events. This supportive role will seek to ensure coverage of all essential steps in the Critical Incident Plan and encourage those dealing directly with the children/students/staff/parents.

15 It is essential that staff involved in the incident and other staff, as appropriate, meet regularly (in the first instance) in order to review the events of the day, given opportunity to voice/share their reactions to the events and consider their needs for the next, or subsequent days. This 'formal' meeting does not preclude other 'informal' arrangements but does ensure that all staff are considered and provides an opportunity to reinforce the team approach.

16 Emotional reaction to trauma will vary from person to person and may depend to some extent on the closeness of relationship with those involved in the incident. Some children/students may initially find it very difficult to cope in class situations and having a room set aside may provide a temporary 'sanctuary' when emotions are heightened. Children/students may wish to confide in/share their feelings with others and it seems appropriate that they choose who this person should be, rather than have a designated member of staff or outside agency. (This is an immediate response and not a longer-term support strategy).

17 Some children/students may be unable to ask to talk to others/allow others to see their distress/are keen not to show their emotions in appropriate ways, but whose behaviour indicates their response to the incident. Such children/students require careful monitoring and possibly a known member of staff offering an opportunity, individually, for them to share concerns and work towards other support strategies.

18 Following the immediacy of the incident, consideration needs to be given to on-going support for children/students, for as long as deemed necessary by the child/student themselves. Children/students should be able to express a preference for the person who is to support them, whether a known member of staff or someone from an outside agency. Schools will need to consider the appropriateness of informing parents of these plans, in case there are emotional consequences at home.

19 Heads may consider that, as the person in charge of the school, they should be able to cope with all eventualities. This is an unrealistic assumption; Heads require support, although they remain in control of the Critical Incident Plan – in fact, to help them remain in control. The Head may wish to choose their own support person following the immediate support of the Local Authority Critical Incidents Officer.

20 On-going support for staff may be offered in a number of ways, staff being given the option of who will provide this support and the regularity of contact. Support systems may be from within the staff structure/LEA staff or outside agencies. Please refer to the full 'Trafford Critical Incident Guidance' available in the school office for suggestions.

21 Previous experience in critical incident situations have indicated that parents benefit from meeting with others involved in the same incident. Such a self-help group may arise spontaneously and last as long as participants feel it is necessary.

Ref No	Job Description	Name	Contact Numbers
1	Commissioning Manager	Alison Milne	0161 912 3255
2	Trafford Link Advisor	Karen Samples	911 8686
3	Chair of Governors	Chris O'Brien	0161 905 2997
4	Trafford Press Office		0161 912 1136
5	Trafford Legal Department		0161 912 4276
6	24 HOUR EMERGENCY	TRAFFORD	0161 912 2020
7	Headteacher	Mr J Beisly	Mob 07968316214
8	Deputy Headteacher	Mrs S McMichael	Mob 07506028155
9	Vice Chair of Governors	Mr D Lenihan	07510343536
10	Site Manager	Mr Paul Flynn	Home 0161 286 0078 Mob 07963261821
11	Surety key Holding (24hrs)		0161 477 4044
12	Avenue Methodist Church	Rev. R. Mottershead	0161 973 1832 07771624885
13	SMT/FS Coordinator	Mrs Y Kimitris	0161 973 4478
14	Social Services		0161 912 5199
15	Governor Support	Julie Lawson	0161 912 3218

16	Community Policeman	PC Carlos	07983944445
17	Community Fireman	Paul Duggan	0161 908 3503
18	School Nurse via Operations Manager	Kate Murdock	0161 912 4291
19	Educational Psychologist via Principal Education Psychologist	Chris Bates	0161 912 3191
20	CAMHS (Child and Adolescent Mental Health Services) via	Ken McDonald	0161 860 5157
21	Healthy Schools Coordinator		0161 912 3395
22	STOPGAP Staff Supply Agency		0161 912 1186
23	Hays Supply Agency		0161 228 7300