



Critical Incidents – A Policy for School

DEFINITIONS

A “Critical Incident” is an event which causes the appropriate elements of this plan to come into operation. There are four categories of Critical Incident, all of which are events (usually sudden) which impact upon the whole school and can involve:

- ✚ the experience of significant personal distress to a level that can potentially overwhelm individuals involved,
- ✚ major media attention,
- ✚ the powerful fear of something occurring, whether realistic or otherwise (e.g. a terrorist attack or act of war),

These 4 categories are:

CATEGORY 1:

A serious accident or other incident requiring the urgent attendance of any emergency service, which involves pupils and/or staff on any activity:

- ✚ on the school site (e.g. accidental fire or explosion, or violent incident involving intruders)
- ✚ off the school site (e.g. accident while involved in a school-based activity):-
 - a) during the school day or
 - b) on a residential activity

CATEGORY 2:

A personal tragedy which has occurred outside the structure of a school activity.

- ✚ the death or very serious injury , under any circumstances, of a pupil or
- ✚ the death or very serious injury, under any circumstances, of a member of staff,
- ✚ a pupil or teacher being held hostage, otherwise being declared “missing” or abducted.

CATEGORY 3:

An incident rendering any area of the school unusable for any reason (e.g. gas explosion, fire)

CATEGORY 4:

A local disaster/civil emergency – flood, tanker leak, pipeline leak, risk of major explosion – resulting in the school SPACE being needed as a reception centre.

A coherent, planned response is essential to minimising the impact of that distress in each of these cases.

There are 2 “levels” of Critical Incident:

- ✚ Level 1, the fullest response, applies when a Category 1 incident occurs
- ✚ Level 2 applies in the case of Category 2, 3 and 4 incidents.



TAKING THE DECISION TO ACTIVATE THE CRITICAL INCIDENT RESPONSE PLAN

The decision to activate the C.I.R.P. should be made:

- a) by the Headteacher
- b) but
 - ✚ in the Headteacher's absence, or
 - ✚ in the event of it being impossible to contact the Headteacher,
 - ✚ or in the event of the Headteacher being involved in the incident the decision must be taken by:
 - i) the Deputy Headteacher designated by the Headteacher in his absence to carry this responsibility or
 - ii) in the absence/unavailability of the designated Deputy Headteacher, the most senior member of the school staff on the school premises (normally a member of the School Management Team) at the time the incident is reported, or
 - iii) by the first SMT member to be contacted if the incident occurs/is reported when the school is closed/vacated.

TAKING A DECISION AS TO THE CATEGORY OF THE CRITICAL INCIDENT

The person making the decision must judge whether to call a Level 1 or Level 2 Response using the criteria laid down in Section 1 above.

This judgement must be made on the basis of the nature and scale of the problem as it is presented to them. If in doubt a Level 1 Response should be activated. This can be "scaled down" later if necessary.

Broadly, if the incident involves:

- a) a death,
- b) serious injury,
- c) extensive damage to the premises making an immediate re-opening unlikely or impossible
- d) the likelihood of major media interest,

a Level 1 Response should be activated.

THE CRITICAL INCIDENT RESPONSE TEAM (CIRT)

The CORE CIR Team (all of whom must have a copy of the CIRP) comprises:

- The Headteacher
- The Deputy Headteacher
- SMT

The EXTENDED CIR Team would possibly be involved in a Level 1 Response could be the

- Chair of Governors,
- Vice Chair of Governors
- Premises Officer
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Also

- any available member of the School Team living nearby may be called in if it is judged necessary.

THE TIMING OF THE “GATHERING” OF THE CRITICAL INCIDENT RESPONSE TEAM

Normally:

- In a Category 1 incident, generating a Level 1 Response **all team members would be contacted as soon as possible and the decision agreed when and where to meet. This would normally be at school and immediately.**
- In a Level 2 Response, all team members should be contacted as soon as possible by telephone informing them of the incident, informing them of proposed action and arranging a meeting for the designated CIRT members at a designated time.

DATA TO BE CARRIED BY ALL TEAM MEMBERS

The following papers should be close to hand for all members of the CIRT and a copy kept at home in a Critical Incident Response Plan File:

- The current CIRP,
- Emergency Contact List for all staff,

A copy of this information should be available in the school office.

This data is updated annually in the Spring term as part of the review process. This process will normally be led by the Headteacher.

LEVEL 1 RESPONSE: A SERIOUS INCIDENT OFF SITE ON A DAY OR RESIDENTIAL VISIT

The roles adopted by members of the team may vary. It is the responsibility of the team's members to use their judgement and experience to manage the crisis in the light of all the circumstances and given all the data at their disposal. In general, however, the following steps will apply:

The SMT is responsible for:

- ensuring all team members can get access to the site and building.
- Delegating team members to manage the telephones and any enquiries.
- delegating team members, if appropriate, to support communications etc. (if the school is open/when the school building is opened up).
- ensuring adequate communications are available (as far as possible)
- contacting other members as necessary if the Headteacher is unable to do so,
- arranging food and drinks for key staff
- maintaining, and circulating to team members, up-to-date lists of contact numbers for :
 - all staff (including mobile phones, labelling the CIRTeam)
 - all pupils



- local hospitals
- local newspapers, radio and television stations
- ensuring this data is circulated to all members when changes occur, or annually, whichever is earlier.

THE PREMISES OFFICER is responsible for:

- opening designated areas of the school as necessary,
- providing any furniture etc. to designated rooms as required,
- securing the building and site from unwanted intrusion.
- ensuring access is maintained and parking is available.

THE CHAIR and/or VICE CHAIR OF GOVERNORS (as available and appropriate) in addition to being involved in key decisions to do with managing the crisis, are responsible for acting as “figureheads”. They MAY be involved in talking directly to the media representatives on camera and on sound.

NB. The first to be contacted is responsible for reporting to all other governors.

Action to be taken:

AN ACTION LOG NEEDS TO BE KEPT AT EACH STAGE, USING THE LOG SHEETS PROVIDED.

1. Incident Reported to school and as much information as possible gleaned.
2. Headteacher briefed.
3. Headteacher checks facts with staff to ensure it is not a hoax.
4. Decision to Activate the Plan.
5. Decision as to whether or not to call an IMMEDIATE meeting if not, WHEN a meeting should take place.
6. Headteacher contacts emergency services and staff on the scene to glean further details.
7. CIRT summoned and briefed. All CIRT members complete (and keep up to date) INCIDENT FACTSHEET.
8. A rota set up to answer phones and deal with queries.
9. Headteacher contacts police and gives direct mobile number to Police Liaison Officer.
10. Headteacher prepares script with SMT members for parents.
11. Headteacher deals directly with parents and others most substantially and directly affected in as careful, unhurried a manner as possible (and freed to do so by the work of other key staff) to call parents with bare details of known events. SMT members involved with parents of those known to be safe/unaffected.
12. Head teacher proposes arrangements “cover story” to be given to siblings of pupils.
13. If necessary/possible class teachers involved are informed at this point.
14. Parents contacted and informed. Agree with parents of siblings in school what should be said, when and by whom.
15. Headteacher contacts
 - the Chair and Vice Chair of Governors
 - the ECP and Archdiocesan Officer



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- Arrangements made for room for parents and siblings.
 - Snacks and cold drinks, tea and coffee etc.
 - ENSURE THE INFORMATION FLOW IS THROUGH ONE POINT ONLY to avoid confusion.
 - The designated SMT will:
 - “meet and greet” media representatives and escort them to the designated area
 - ensure vehicle parking is orderly and sensible.
16. Siblings collected by support staff and taken to LM Room. No explanations other than “cover story”. Cared for by support staff.
17. Arrangements made for two members of staff to leave a.s.a.p. for the site. Their responsibilities are to:
- i. relieve and support the group leader(s).
 - ii. offer reassurance to the party.
 - iii. liaise with authorities regarding any investigation.
 - iv. liaise with the authorities re the return of the party.
 - v. prepare for the arrival of, and support for parents of pupils affected.
18. All staff “clear decks” of all other work.
19. Headteacher keeps Chair and Vice Chair of Governing Body informed.
20. Headteacher keeps CIRT informed, so Incident Factsheets can be kept up to date.
21. If time permits and if judged appropriate, prepare for end-of-day assembly.
22. Arrange for ALL after-school activities and community events to be cancelled.
- Alert parents.**
23. Prepare brief letter for parents for pupils to take home, collecting these as they leave at the end of the day.
24. Message drafted by Headteacher and sent round by office to all classes, regarding cancellation of all after school activities.
25. STAFF asked to meet in Staffroom for briefing by Headteacher as soon as possible.
26. Hold end-of-day assembly if necessary, passing on the bare facts to pupils in preparation for news they may hear overnight.
27. Teaching staff to see children out of school. Pupils expecting to remain behind have access to phones to inform parents that they are going home.
28. Press release prepared (and updated as appropriate).
29. Day 2 Further briefing for staff.
30. Assembly for all pupils with information as known if necessary.
31. Contact families of injured and bereaved families, to express sympathy and identify support needed.
32. Check and activate procedures for monitoring pupils and staff reactions and emotional health.
33. Identify and activate strategies for allowing pupils to express their feelings if they wish.
34. Arrange for reunion of pupils involved.
35. Arrange for debriefing of pupils with support of the LM and other services if necessary.
36. In the event of any child's or member of staff's death refer to LEVEL 2 responses.



LEVEL 2: IN THE EVENT OF THE DEATH OF A CHILD

Painful experience suggests that the appropriate way forward involves ensuring all members of the community have a chance to grieve, and that pupils, who may never have lost a loved one or friend, are "taught" to grieve and supported as they do so. This may include:

- The Head making direct contact with the family – by making a personal visit if appropriate a.s.a.p.
- Ensuring that child's Class Teacher and TAs, are made aware at the earliest possible moment (by 'phone if necessary).
- Announcement to staff in a full Staff Briefing (at the beginning of a morning/afternoon session). This may be called by staff being "summoned" by special messages during the session.
- Arrangements to be made for the Headteacher to inform all other Team members:
- The pupils are told via the most appropriate means, often in class by own Class Teacher.

NB:

- Whole School Assembly could be too overwhelming, especially for younger pupils, and could give scope to self-indulgent hysteria from some pupils.
- In class, at the appropriate time Teachers may want to :
 - Remember the pupil.
 - Record any memories or feelings they may have.
 - Consider ways of celebrating his/her life.
- SMT staff to ensure part-time staff informed.
- Letters home to parents giving such details as it is proper/possible to give.
- Liaison with family (and Parish Priest) regarding the funeral arrangements.
- Collating suggestions for a lasting memorial
- Mass Card(s) sent to family and any other pupil(s) directly affected – from SMT.
- School day before the funeral – Whole School Assembly (Headtcher) with proposed arrangements for the funeral if appropriate.
- This may well be preceded by requests to attend the funeral. Arrangements to be based around:
 - Friends wishing to go, and to be accompanied by staff in an "official party" to bring reply slips to letters made available by Headteacher (and agreed by Governors) giving parental consent.
 - Parents taking their children independently to send in reply slips to that effect.

The relevant SMT member and Teacher to arrange:

- Other issues to be dealt with during this period:
 - Counselling to be arranged via the LA (Ann Farrell) if needed.



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- Support for staff affected.
 - School providing continuing support for, and contact with the family.
 - Removal of the child's name from the school roll. Collection of work for return, at the appropriate time, to the child's parent/guardian/carer.
- The follow-up – designed to create a permanent memorial and enable pupils to create something positive out of the tragedy: e.g.
 - Creation of a memorial for memorial garden et cetera
 - Charity events in the name of the lost member of the school community.

We are advised to keep a “log” of matters related to the crisis and actions carried out, from which to learn and for future reference in the event of problems arising.

Preparing for the possibility of such an eventuality must include consideration of the possibility that a pupil might die as a result of an incident during the school day. **If this is so, it may be necessary to activate the appropriate part of the plan regarding partial closure of the building.**

LEVEL 2: IN THE EVENT OF THE DEATH IN SERVICE OF A MEMBER OF STAFF

As with the death of a child, the loss of a member of staff will be a painful experience.

Preparing for the possibility of such an eventuality must include consideration of the possibility that a member of staff might die during the course of a school day. **If this is so, it may be necessary to activate the appropriate part of the plan re partial closure of the building.**

Advice received, and experienced by some colleagues, suggests that the appropriate way forward involves:

- informing those most closely affected as quickly and sensitively as possible,
- supporting family and friends appropriately,
- ensuring all members of the community have a chance to grieve and,
- where pupils are most affected, especially where they may never have lost a loved one or friend, are “taught” to grieve and supported as they do so.

Actions are likely to include:

- The Headteacher making direct contact with the family – by making a personal visit (This visit should include another SMT member and/or close colleague).
- Ensuring that the closest colleagues are made aware first and at the earliest possible moment (by ‘phone if necessary),
- An announcement would need to be made to the whole staff in a full meeting (at the beginning of a morning/afternoon session). This may be called by staff being “summoned” by special messages during the session.
- It may be necessary for arrangements to be made for the Headteacher to inform all other staff members.
- The pupils should be told in their classes by their Class Teachers where possible.



NB:

- Whole School Assembly could be too overwhelming, especially for younger pupils, and could give scope to self-indulgent hysteria from some pupils
- The assembly is based on a text prepared by the Headteacher and agreed by the SMT.

Class activities may include :

- Remember the member of staff.
- Record any memories or feelings they may have.
- Consider ways of celebrating his/her life and making a permanent memorial.
- Senior staff to ensure part-time staff informed.
- Letters home to parents giving such details as it is proper/possible to give.
- Liaison with family regarding the funeral arrangements.
- Collating suggestions for a lasting memorial.
- Mass Card(s) sent to family.
- SMT meeting to plan the school's "response" to the funeral arrangements.
- **THIS MAY INVOLVE CLOSING THE SCHOOL FOR THE DAY OR HALF DAY.**
 - This decision must be based on the impact on the whole school community of the colleague's loss. This is not to do with a colleague's status or rank.
 - For a colleague whose passing is likely to impact on the emotions of large numbers of pupils and other colleagues a closure for the whole day will be necessary.
 - For a colleague who may have had less daily contact with pupils a half-day closure to allow colleagues and some pupils to attend the funeral, and as a mark of respect, may be more appropriate.
 - Another factor will be the wishes of the late colleague's family and the practical arrangements for the funeral.
- School Day before the Funeral – Whole School Assembly (Headteacher) with proposed arrangements for the funeral.
- This may well be preceded by requests to attend the funeral. Arrangements to be based around:
 - pupils wishing to go, and to be accompanied by staff in an 'official party' to bring reply slips to letters made available (and agreed by SMT) giving parental consent.
 - Parents taking their children independently to send in reply slips to that effect.

The relevant SMT member to arrange.

- The day of the funeral – IF the school is open in the morning, a full school assembly to be held to go through all arrangements.
- If the school has not closed for the full day, at the end of the appropriate session OR the following day as appropriate, a whole-school assembly will take place, to seek a degree of "closure" as regards the recent events and ensure that all pupils (especially) "move on". Close the school early if appropriate.
- Other issues to be dealt with during this period:
 - Counselling to be arranged via the LA (Ann Farrell).
 - Support for staff affected.
 - School providing continuing support for, and contact with the family.



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- Removal of the colleague's name from the staff roll on SIMS
- Collection of possessions for return, at the appropriate time, to the colleague's family.
- The follow-up – designed to create a permanent memorial and enable the school community to create something positive out of the loss.
 - Creation of a memorial garden etc.
 - Presentation of a Book of Condolence to the family.
 - Charity events in the name of the lost member of the school community.

It will be important to keep a record of matters related to the crisis and actions carried out, from which to learn.

LEVEL 2: IN THE EVENT OF CLOSURE OF ALL/PART OF THE BUILDING.

The way in which the Plan is applied will be decided on the basis of the circumstances.

Broadly, the reasons for a complete or partial closure of the building will include:

- a) the building being rendered unusable because of
 - fire or explosion
 - flood/pipe burst
 - major mechanical, electrical or water supply breakdown
 - impact damage (e.g. lightning strike)
 - exceptionally strong winds
 - central heating failure
 - POLICE incident (e.g. shooting / bombing)
- b) an incident which means it is necessary to remove pupils as quickly and discretely as possible from part of the building,
- c) closure necessitated by seriously disruptive weather .

In the event of scenario a) occurring, the steps normally taken will include, in the most appropriate order under all the given circumstances:

- all staff being informed of the situation and arrangements for update (through the established means)
- information to parents and pupils, again by the established means,
- inspection of the building by the relevant senior staff including Headteacher,
- liaising with LA officers regarding the recovery of the building and other resources,
- making the decision as to whether any, some or all year groups are to be brought in,
- search, via the local family of schools, and LA any spare capacity to house displaced year groups,
- arrangements, via the office, for re-siting any Community activity,
- allocation usable rooms to run as normal a timetable as possible for the year group(s) brought into school,
- establishment of curriculum arrangements for pupils out of the main school site.



- arrangements for regular information updates to staff, pupils and parents.
- following the necessary arrangements for the repair and re-commissioning of the affected rooms/areas.

In the event of scenario b) arising, the normal procedure would be to:

- Inform any emergency service as appropriate,
- screen off any potentially upsetting view,
- arrange for the hall to be cleared, if necessary, as a waiting area for pupils and staff in the affected area,
- inform, as discretely as possible, the members of staff in the affected area and lead pupils out of their classrooms (with all their personal equipment if appropriate) to the hall until further instructions are given,
- register pupils in the waiting area to ensure all are present and record anyone who may be a witness (if appropriate),
- establish when the area may be used again but arrange for any possible cleaning/other modifications.

c) If closure is necessitated by seriously disruptive weather the Unavoidable School Closure procedure is followed.

LEVEL 2: IN THE EVENT OF CIVIL EMERGENCY

The LA and Knowsley Borough Council will apply agreed procedures. Staff immediately contacted so that all or part of the building can be commandeered will be:

- 1st Contact - Headteacher / Deputy Headteacher
- 2nd Contact – School Business Manager
- 3rd Contact –Premises Officer
- 4th Contact: - Chair of Governors

The precise response we will have to make will be decided on the basis of the circumstances. The most likely scenarios include the need to re-house local residents temporarily (for 12-48 hours) as a result of a major gas explosion, flood, dangerous tanker fire etc.

Our response will be influenced by a meeting/consultation with the officer of KMBC charged with coordinating such emergency arrangements.

ASSUMING THE INCIDENT BEGINS OUT OF SCHOOL HOURS:

The following steps will be taken, but not necessarily in this order:

- Premises Officer, Headteacher and Deputy Headteacher make contact by telephone to assess the known situation.

NB It may not be possible for all three to meet at school if the emergency has a major disruptive effect on traffic flow.

- It MAY be necessary to ask the School Business Manager to attend and support.



- It MAY be that mobile telephones will be the main means of communication if land lines are affected. The use of which type of communication to be used will be made at the time.
- All colleagues will consult the notes of arrangements made in the review meeting with the relevant KMBC officer. These should clarify arrangements for providing 'refugees' with:
 - Food
 - Water
 - Toilets
 - Showers/washing/shaving facilities
- On the basis of the numbers, ages and needs of people affected decisions will be made about which areas of the school SPACE will be used for:
 - Sleeping (including young children/babies)
 - Eating (the Kitchen/Infant Reading Room)
 - Toileting
 - Heating
 - Washing/showering (hot water)
 - recreation
 - Meetings with officials etc
 - One-to-one support/counselling
- If it appears likely that 'refugees' will remain in the building into the following school day, the same procedures for an unscheduled closure for other reasons (e.g. heavy snowfall). The assumption will be that unless there are urgent reasons for any year group being in the building to take examinations (in which case we seek to re-locate the venue for the examinations to another school e.g. Longview School) which cannot be rescheduled the school will be closed for at least the morning. This is because:
 - Members of the public will not be "police cleared",
 - There will inevitably be cleaning and possibly repairs to be effected before pupils and staff can reoccupy the building.
- The decision to delay opening must be made during the evening/overnight and relayed to pupils via the media by the usual means.
- The CIRT should assemble at school as early as possible, ideally at around 08:00 the following day, to assess the situation with the Premises Officer and agree on:
 - The length of school closure.
 - The possibility of a partial or staggered return for pupils.
 - The order of events in which this would be needed.

IF THE INCIDENT OCCURS DURING THE SCHOOL DAY AND IT IS NECESSARY TO CLOSE THE SCHOOL:



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- The same procedures apply as in the event of heavy snowfall, with the following decisions being taken:
 - Is it safe for children to be released from the building?
 - What arrangements do we make if we cannot release children?
- Staff and pupils (except the CIRT) would leave the premises as soon as possible
- A “post mortem” on the management of the incident should be held a.s.a.p.

<p>References: NAHT Guidance: Crisis Policy Wise Before the Event (Gulbenkian Foundation) Current LA Advice and Documentation</p>
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APPENDICES



School Emergency Planning Contacts

IN-SCHOOL CRITICAL INCIDENT TEAM – See staff and governor list

LOCAL AUTHORITY CONTACTS

Archdiocesan Officer :

Name: Tony Ford

Mobile:

ECP:

Name: Clare Cook

Mobile:

Legal / Solicitor for Children's Services

Name: Lyana Chan

Tel No: 443

Communications/Press Office

Name:

Tel No:

Ann Farrell CAST

Tel No:

Mobile :

EMERGENCY SERVICES CONTACTS

Police : 999

Local Hospital

Department: Accident and Emergency:

Tel No: 0151 426 1600

MEDIA CONTACTS

Radio Merseyside : 0151 708 5500

(Password -)

Radio City : 0151 472 0967

(Password -)



OTHER LOCAL AUTHORITY CONTACTS

Health and Safety

Mike Fleming Tel : Mobile :

Steven Green Tel : Mobile :

Knowsley Security

Tel : 0151

DND (Kitchens and Cleaners)

Tina Hoey



CRITICAL INCIDENT ACCOUNT SHEET

TO BE FILLED IN ON YOUR OWN AS SOON AS POSSIBLE AFTER THE INCIDENT.

Turn over for more space. Sign extra pages

Name: Date:

Position: Time:

Antecedence, involvement and role in incident

Whereabouts during incident (including where possible times)

With whom incident has been discussed

Factual account

Signed:



RECEIPT FOR DOCUMENTATIONS AND/OR ITEMS

DO NOT LET A SERVICE REMOVE ANYTHING FROM THE SCHOOL WITHOUT A SIGNED RECEIPT. COPY ITEMS IF PERMITTED

Description of documentation or other Items.

Received by:
(Please print)

Date:

Service:

Position:

Signed:

Counter signed by school representative

Name (please print):

Signed:



ACTION LOG

NAME: _____

TIME	ACTION / CONTACT



INCIDENT FACT SHEET

PLEASE ENSURE THE DATA GATHERED ON THE INCIDENT ARE KEPT UP TO DATE AS OFTEN AS POSSIBLE.

INFORMATION REQUIRED/GATHERED	INFORMATION GIVEN, WHEN, BY WHOM
What happened?	
When and where?	
Are other agencies involved? If so, who? Names, contact numbers (including extensions/mobiles)	
Name and Contact Details of the responsible person at the incident site. Staff contact details at the site.	
Number of Injuries, Names of Injured, Extent of Injuries	
Locations of injured	
Names of uninjured Location Contact of Responsible Person	



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Who has been informed?	
What have they been told	
Action required by school	

Signed: _____

Date: _____

Staff Contacts

