

# Critical Incident Policy

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## Who should use this policy?

This policy should be used by all Senior Leaders and any senior member of staff who needs to give advice or guidance on how to deal with a critical incident.

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# Critical Incident Management Policy and Procedures

## Introduction

An incident becomes critical when it constitutes a serious disruption arising with little or no warning on a scale **beyond the coping capacity** of the Trust or individual school operating under normal working conditions.

Examples of critical incidents include death, serious injury, serious accidents, major fire, building collapse, riot, acts of terrorism and serious acts of violence.

Such incident can occur on site whether during or outside of school hours, or away from the school site, such as residential and school trips.

The prime objective of the Trust, is to serve the best interests of pupils and staff in coping with an incident, collectively and individually.

This Policy has been compiled to provide guidance, in the hope that it will never be necessary to refer to it in the context in which it has been written. It is impossible to plan for every eventuality and by their nature; critical incidents will disorientate and overwhelm those involved. Effective planning and adherence to responsibilities will greatly assist in the management of a critical incident and help to restore normality as soon as possible.

### A critical incident may be defined as:

- An accident leading to a fatality
- Severe injury or severe stress
- Circumstances in which a person or persons might be at serious risk of illness e.g. outbreak of contagious illness/disease like coronavirus
- Circumstances in which any part, or whole of the school is unable to function as normal due to external influences e.g. fire
- Any situation in which the national press or media might be involved.

### Critical incidents may include:

- Death of a pupil or member of staff
- Death or serious injury on educational visit
- Epidemic in school or community
- Violent incident in the school or Trust building
- A pupil missing from home
- A pupil missing from a school visit or residential
- Destruction or major vandalism or arson in the school or Trust building
- A hostage taking
- A transport accident involving Trust/school members
- A disaster in the community
- A civil disturbance or terrorism

## Good Preventative Practice

### Curriculum

Schools should address issues such as death, bereavement and serious injury in the delivered curriculum. The teaching of these issues in RE, English, history lessons etc. is enormously beneficial to pupils in the event of an incident.

### Pastoral Support

Effective pastoral support policies and structures, which include strong links between pupils and staff underpinned by a clear ethos of care, trust and support will enable the effective management of any incident.

### Administrative Practice

In the event of a critical incident, good administrative and back-up systems assist effective management and a fast response.

Schools and the Central Services Team will;

- Maintain an up to date list of all pupils and staff including next of kin contact details
- Store computer copies with back up information either off-site or in a suitably risk assessed area on site if appropriate
- Promptly complete registers at the beginning of each morning and afternoon session with the names of those who are late or leave early recorded
- Complete registers of staff in the building
- Operate an effective signing in and out procedure for all visitors and volunteers

### IT Disaster Recovery

Schools will:

- Ensure all work is able to be accessed through the OneDrive

This will ensure that all information can be easily accessed through the OneDrive at any time.

### Educational Visits

All schools will plan educational visits carefully and refer to the Off Site procedure, follow prescribed risk assessment protocols and seek approval from the Senior Leadership Team.

### Health and Safety

The Trust's Health and Safety policy should be read in conjunction with this policy. Regular health and safety checks on the buildings and site will be conducted and all health and safety procedures followed.

## Preparing for an Emergency

### Awareness of the Plan

The plan has been discussed with all staff within each school and their Governors and will be published for parents, carers and volunteers.

### Critical Incident Management Team (CIMT)

This will consist of:

- Headteacher
- Chair of Governors
- Deputy Headteacher
- Senior Leadership Team

This Team will be responsible for leading the school through the emergency for incidents taking place out of school hours. They will need to keep the CEO fully briefed at all times. A full list of contacts is found on Appendix 1 and must be kept up to date.

## Critical Incident Room/Area

A critical incident room/area would be created in the front office – 1<sup>st</sup> critical incident room (schools to add details) – 2<sup>nd</sup> critical incident room with the following facilities wherever possible:

- a telephone(s) to receive incoming calls
- a separate dedicated telephone line for outgoing calls – this might be a mobile phone or a line that cannot take incoming calls
- computer(s)
- map of the local area

A parents' meeting/greeting point would be held in the school hall if required, staff welfare facilities would be available in the staffroom.

## Information

The Headteacher and a member of the SLT would be responsible for maintaining a log of events, giving the time and brief details of the event and action taken. The log will be an essential item in any subsequent enquiry. A sample incident log sheet is provided at Appendix 2.

There should be ready access to school records and other data, e.g. a list of all pupils and staff, with next of kin details. This information will be found on CPOMS or SIMS.

An emergency actions checklist can be found in Appendix 3.

## What to do in the event of a bomb threat

Most bomb threats are made over the phone and the overwhelming majority are hoaxes, often the work of malicious jokers, although terrorists do make hoax calls with the intent of causing alarm and disruption. Any hoax is a crime and, no matter how ridiculous or unconvincing, must be reported to the police. Please refer to Appendix 4 for a bomb threat checklist.

Calls may be of two kinds:

- Hoax threats designed to disrupt, test reactions or divert attention;
- Threats warning of a genuine device – These may be attempts to avoid casualties or enable the terrorist to blame others if there are casualties. However genuine threats can provide inaccurate information about where and when a device might explode.

## Principles

All staff who could conceivably receive a bomb threat will be trained in handling procedures or have ready access to instructions.

Where possible staff will complete the checklist appended to this document.

Even though staff may be unable to assess a threat's accuracy or origin, their impressions of the caller could be important.

Basic advice for staff on handling a threat:

1. Stay calm and listen.
2. Obtain as much information as possible – try to get the caller to be precise about the location and timing of the alleged bomb and whom they represent. If possible, keep the caller talking.
3. Ensure that any recording facility is switched on.

4. When the caller rings off, dial 1471 (if that facility operates and you have no automatic number display) to see if you can get their number.
5. Immediately report the incident to the relevant headteacher to decide on the best course of action and notify the police. If you cannot get hold of anyone, and even if you think the call is a hoax, inform the police directly. Give your impressions of the caller and an exact account of what was said.
6. If you have not been able to record the call, make notes for the police. Do not leave your post – unless ordered to evacuate – until the police arrive.

## Evacuation Procedure

The decision on evacuation will depend upon the nature of the threat and whether a full external evacuation is appropriate, an evacuation to a single identified space internally (lock down), partial evacuation from an affected area or retreat to internal spaces. A decision will be made by the Headteacher in consultation with the Police and staff will be informed using the walkie talkie system where appropriate or via an internal telephone cascade.

Full evacuation would be the same procedure for Fire Evacuation (Appendix 3). Lockdown procedure is attached to this plan (Appendix 4).

## Lock down Procedure

This would be used in the event of an internal evacuation to a central space as per the attached procedure (Appendix 4).

## Staff Awareness

Staff will be advised of plans and an emergency drill will be scheduled for different scenarios. In addition National Counter Terrorism guidance and a supporting film for the 'RUN, HIDE, TELL' principles will be presented as per the poster on the following link.

<https://www.gov.uk/government/publications/stay-safe-film>

Staff will be reminded to be extra vigilant with housekeeping to reduce the opportunity for suspicious items to be left, and to report any suspicious items to the Headteacher or Senior Leadership Team immediately.

## Communications

Families directly affected will be contacted quickly and sensitively. Consistency of information is vital. Any message should relay known information and assurances of appropriate action being taken. **Note: The school should not confirm details of injuries/fatalities - this is always done by the relevant emergency service.**

Inform families not directly affected. It may be sufficient to inform parents by sending a letter home with children. In some cases, it may be appropriate to call a meeting at the school.

Inform teaching and support staff. It is vital that all adults who are in contact with pupils are kept well informed and feel secure in handling questions and comments. The schedule for giving information updates would need to be arranged e.g. during breaks, at the end of the day or first thing in the morning. This ensures that knowledge is shared and questions are answered in an informed manner.

Inform pupils. This is best done in classes or small groups with particular care being taken to protect and support children close to someone involved with the incident and any staff who

are unable to handle the emotions and distress confidently. Children should receive a consistent account of the incident while allowing for differences in their ability to understand. Inform School Governors through a previously agreed cascade initiated by a CMT member.

**Note:** Children should not be sent home without the knowledge of their parent/carer. Consideration should be given to taking children who can't be sent home to a neighbouring school where they can be kept safe, warm and supervised, perhaps in the school hall. Schools are encouraged to plan for such a contingency and formalise a reciprocal arrangement with a 'buddy' school.

## Media

**Staff should be cautioned not to talk to the media or respond to questions from reporters. All staff to ask reporters to contact the CEO in the first instance.**

The school's key objectives are:

- to show that it is controlling the incident and doing all that can be done to minimise the consequences;
- to set minds at rest as far as possible and counter dangerous rumours;
- to establish itself as caring, calm, responsible and competent.
- Prepare to provide answers to the following questions:
  - what happened, where, when and why?
  - are there any injuries or fatalities? **(Note: Confirmation always to be given by the relevant emergency service.)**
  - how many were on site when the incident happened?
  - has everyone been accounted for?
  - what action is being taken?
  - what advice do you have for local residents/next of kin?
  - when will normality be restored?

## Returning the School to Normality

- Every attempt should be made to provide as much continuity as possible for children.
- Maintain the normal school day so children will be less likely to feel unsettled.
- The Trust will assist in facilitating a swift return to normality.
- Make arrangements for expressions of sympathy and/or acknowledgement of what has happened.
- Plan for return of those involved in the incident.
- Plan memorials and commemorations.

## Use of Counselling Services

As part of our Occupational Health Scheme employees can be given access to confidential counselling.

People will react very differently to a major incident. Some will readily give vent to their feelings while others will find it more difficult. Pupils' ages and development will affect their understanding and feelings. The nature of the incident itself has a major bearing on the feelings generated.

The most common reactions include:

- Denial;
- Distress;
- Guilt;
- Anger; and
- Helplessness.

Consent of a parent/carer is required for a pupil to receive counselling or other individual attention from non-school staff.

It is important to remember that those dealing with the incident and providing support to others need support. CIMT staff should be properly scheduled for relief periods (this might entail expanding the team if the incident is prolonged) and will receive support through the duration of the incident from the Trust.

All staff will be encouraged to take part in a clinical safeguarding supervision following critical incidents.

## **After Action Review**

After any incident you should perform an after action review at a school using the incident log to reflect on the nature of events. Consider:

- What happened?
- How did you respond?
- What worked well?
- What didn't work?
- What made the situation worse or hampered your response?
- How would you respond next time?
- What could be done to minimise the chance of such an incident occurring again in the future?
- What changes need to be made to plans, procedures, environment, etc?
- What materials or equipment do you need?
- How does this impact on your response and preparedness for other incidents?
- What things could you do to minimise the chance of other incidents occurring in the future?
- Who is going to be responsible for making any changes?
- How are you going to monitor that these changes have taken place?



## Appendix 1 – Trust and School Emergency Contacts

Trust and School Emergency Contacts		
Cheryl Weyman	CEO	07736 230180
Roger Willoughby	Chair of Directors	
Nick Hind	Director of Education	07714 427643
	Headteacher	
Wendy Parr	Safeguarding Lead	07985 189794
	SLT	
	Chair of Governors	
	Vice Chair of Governors	
Media	Liz Parnell	07821 251747
Police and non-urgent	The Duty Officer	999/101
Fire Brigade – and non-urgent	The Duty Officer	999/101
Hospital Emergency Department	Torbay Exeter	01803 614567 01392 411644
Educational Psychologist	Dr Adam McCartney	
Torbay Multi Agency Safeguarding Hub (MASH)	Torbay	01803 208100 Out of hours 0300 4564876
Devon Multi Agency Safeguarding Hub (MASH)	Devon	0345 155 1071
Somerset childrens@somerset.gov.uk.	Somerset	0300 123 2224

For incidents taking place out of school hours a 'call out' procedure will need to be agreed. Contact mobile phone numbers will be circulated

## Appendix 2 – Incident Log

[illegible]

## Appendix 3 - Emergency Actions Checklist

### Fire (schools to enter details)

1. IF a fire is discovered raise the alarm using the nearest call point.
2. Designated person to ring the emergency services.
3. On hearing the alarm sound evacuate the building immediately following fire routes to the muster point
4. Do not take personal belongings
5. Follow the IEP/Behaviour care plan for individual pupils requiring additional support
6. The SLT/Fire Wardens will check the building is empty as far as possible
7. Fire extinguishers are available only for use by the SLT/Fire Wardens, if it is safe to use them.
8. Routinely, evacuation would be the first expectation.
9. Assembly points are (schools to add details)
10. On arrival at muster points check all staff/pupils/visitors are present and raise arm to indicate check completed
11. Alert a senior member of staff immediately if anyone is missing
12. A member of the admin team will have a master checklist and list of visitors
13. Do not return to the building until the all clear have been given that it is safe to do so
14. Please refer to the school's fire evacuation plan

# Emergency Actions Checklist

## If you find a suspicious package

Action	Tick
Try to note any names or other details which will help with identification	
Check with other staff – there may be a simple explanation	
Close any windows and doors	
Switch off any air conditioning or ventilation	
Ask other employees to leave the immediate area	
<b>Do not</b> use a mobile or radio within 15 metres	
Notify your manager or main reception	

## If employees have been exposed to biological or chemical material

Action	Tick
<b>Do not</b> touch eyes, nose or any other parts of the body	
Do whatever it takes to find clean air quickly; exit the building if they do so without passing through the contaminated area or break a window to access clean air.	
Wash hands or other exposed parts of the body with ordinary soap, preferably liquid, and water. Flush skin with lots of water; flush eyes if they are irritated	
Remove outer clothing and put it in a sealed plastic bag and put on clean clothes	
Avoid too much movement	
Remain in an empty room away from the suspected hazard	
Seek medical attention if you have been exposed, and watch out for any immediate symptoms that could help the authorities identify the type and toxicity of the substance, e.g. reddening, burning sensations, difficulty with breathing etc.	

## Headteacher

Action	Tick
Notify the Police and other emergency services using 999	
Switch off central controls for any air conditioning or ventilation systems	
Arrange for a message to be sent to all staff	
Arrange the precautionary evacuation of the affected areas only	
Contact a member of the Trust Leadership Team	
On their arrival, liaise with the emergency services about additional actions or evacuation	

## TELEPHONE THREATS

### If you receive a telephone threat

Action	Tick
Remain calm – chances are it will be a hoax	
Take notes on the conversation. If the pre-prepared checklist is not to hand make notes and rewrite them when the call ends.	
Notify your Headteacher or line manager	
<b>Do not</b> evacuate unless advised to do so	

### Headteacher

Action	Tick
If a viable threat is identified notify the Police and other emergency services using 999	
Switch off central controls for any air conditioning or ventilation systems	
Arrange for a message to be sent to all staff in the establishment	
Arrange the precautionary evacuation of the affected areas only	
Contact a member of the Trust Leadership Team	
Liaise with the emergency services on additional actions or evacuation	

## SUSPECT PERSON

### If you spot a suspicious person

Action	Tick
Keep your distance	
Do not engage a person who is acting suspiciously. Do not try and block their exit or travel.	
Notify your headteacher or reception	
Be a good witness. Observe the situation and be prepared to provide a description of the person and their behaviour: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Gender</li> <li>• Height and weight</li> <li>• Build (heavy, average, medium or thin)</li> <li>• Skin colour</li> <li>• Hair (colour, length)</li> <li>• Facial hair</li> <li>• What they are wearing (clothing type, colour, shoes, hats, etc.)?</li> <li>• What were they doing?</li> <li>• When were they last seen?</li> <li>• Where were they last seen?</li> <li>• Are they moving? In what direction?</li> <li>• Are they using a vehicle (or bicycle)? Can you describe (make, model, colour, license, etc.)</li> </ul>	

### Headteacher

Action	Tick
Make your own assessment – is the person suspicious?	
<b>Do not</b> use a mobile or radio within 15 metres	
Notify the Police and other emergency services using 999	
Switch off central controls for any air conditioning or ventilation systems	
Arrange for a message to be sent to all staff	
Arrange the precautionary evacuation of the affected areas only	
Contact a member of the Trust Leadership Team	
On their arrival liaise with the emergency services about additional actions or evacuation	

## Appendix 4 - Bomb Threat Checklist

This checklist is designed to help staff deal with a bomb threat effectively and to record the necessary information.

### Actions to be taken on receipt of a bomb threat

Record the exact wording of the threat in the box below:


Ask the following questions and record the answers in the box supplied

QUESTION	ANSWER
Where is the bomb right now?	
When is the bomb going to explode?	
What does the bomb look like?	
What kind of bomb is it?	
What will cause the bomb to explode?	
Did you place the bomb?	
Why?	
What is your name?	
What is your address?	
What is your telephone number?	

### Details of the call:

Time and date of call	
Length of call	
Caller's number if displayed	
Time the police were contacted	
Number on which the call was received	

**Details of the caller:**

<b>Gender</b>	
<b>Nationality</b>	
<b>Age</b>	
<b>Delivery of threat</b>	
<b>Delivery of threat</b>	Well Spoken Irrational Taped message Offensive Incoherent Message read by threat maker
<b>Background sounds</b> <b>Further comments below:</b>	Street noises House noises Animal noises Crockery Clear Voice Static PA system Music Factory machinery Office machinery Other (please specify)
<b>Caller's voice</b> <b>further comments below:</b>	Calm Crying Clearing throat Angry Nasal Slurred Excited Disguised Stutter Slow Lisp Accent (if so what?) Rapid Deep Hoarse Laughter Familiar (if so whose voice did it sound like?)
<b>Other Remarks</b>	
<b>Signature</b>  <b>Print Name</b> <b>Date</b>	

## Appendix 5 – Lockdown Procedure

### Lockdown Procedure

Lockdown procedures should be seen as a sensible proportionate response to any external or internal incident which has the potential to pose a threat to the safety of staff and pupils within the school. Procedures should aim to minimise disruption to the learning environment whilst ensuring the safety of all pupils and staff

A school lockdown is a procedure that is initiated when the Headteacher believes that there is a credible threat to pupils and staff safety. The procedure has two stages as follows:

1. Partial Lockdown - Secure building – maybe used when someone is trying to use unauthorised access to damage property/low level confrontation
2. Full Lockdown – use when the threat is serious and immediate e.g. if a weapon is suspected/visible

### Procedure

1. The Headteacher will determine the level of threat
2. The Headteacher will decide if full or partial lockdown is necessary
3. **As appropriate, the school should establish communication with the emergency services as soon as possible tel: 999**
4. Designated staff will have defined roles according to the nature of the threat
5. Staff are alerted to the activation of the plan by using **CODE RED** for a full lockdown and **CODE AMBER** for a partial lockdown - you need to inform the staff if it is partial or a full lockdown and how you will communicate this – phones/walkie talkies etc.
6. Pupils who are outside of the school buildings are brought inside as quickly as possible
7. Those inside the school shall remain inside the classrooms or designated place of safety
8. All external doors and, as necessary, windows are locked (depending on the circumstances – internal classroom doors may also need to be locked)
9. Once in lockdown mode staff should notify the office immediately via email of any pupils not accounted for (and instigate an instant search for any missing pupils)
10. Staff should encourage the pupils to keep calm and quiet
11. If necessary, parents should be notified as soon as it is practical to do so via the school's established communication systems
12. Pupils will not be released to parents during a lockdown
13. If it is necessary to evacuate the building the fire alarm will be sounded
14. Staff should await further instruction.
15. It is of vital importance that the school's lockdown procedures are familiar to members of the SLT, school administrators, teaching staff and support staff.





## Partial Lockdown

Staff will be alerted to a partial lockdown via a message '**Code Amber - Partial Lockdown**'.

This may be a result of a reported incident/civil disturbance in the local community with the potential to pose a risk to staff and pupils in the school. It may also be a result of a warning being received regarding the risk of air pollution etc.

## Immediate Action

All situations are different, once all staff and pupils are safely inside, SLT will conduct an ongoing and dynamic risk assessment based on advice from the emergency services. This will then be communicated to staff and pupils. Partial lockdown is a precautionary measure but puts the school in a state of readiness (whilst retaining a degree of normality) should the situation escalate.

In the event of an air pollution issue, air vents can be closed (where possible) as an additional precaution. Emergency services will advise as to the best course of action in respect of the prevailing threat.

## Full Lockdown

Staff will be alerted to a full lockdown via (school to add information) informing them of a '**Full Lockdown**' **CODE RED**. This signifies an immediate threat to the school and maybe an escalation of a partial lockdown.

Staff and pupils remain in lockdown until it has been lifted by a member of SLT/emergency services. At any point during the lockdown, the fire alarm may sound which is a cue to evacuate the building

During the lockdown, staff will keep agreed lines of communication open but not make unnecessary calls to the main office as this could delay more important communication.

Examples of discreet communication channels are as follows:

- Staff access internal email system and await further instruction if possible, may depend on where the computer is located
- School mobile phones

## Communication between Parents and the School

School lockdown procedures will be communicated with parents (schools to add details). In the event of an actual lockdown parents will be communicated with as soon as practically possible. It is obvious that parents will be concerned but by regularly communicating accurate information we will help to alleviate undue anxiety.

Information shared with parents will include:

- They do not need to contact the school - calling the school could tie up telephone lines that are needed for contacting emergency providers
- Do not come to the school – they could interfere with emergency providers' access to the school and may even put themselves and others in danger
- Wait for the school to contact them about when it is safe for them to collect their child and where this will be from
- Reassure them that the school understands their concerns for their child's welfare and that school is doing everything possible to ensure their safety

It is important that part of the communication to parents includes **'the school is in a full lockdown situation. During this period the switchboard and entrances will be unmanned, external doors locked and nobody allowed in or out for any reason'.**

## **Emergency Services**

It is important to keep lines of communication open with emergency services as they are best placed to offer advice as a situation unfolds. The school site may or may not be cordoned off by emergency services depending upon the severity of the incident that has triggered a lockdown. Emergency services will support the decision of the Headteacher with regards to the timing of communication to parents.