



Moorside High School

Critical Incident Policy

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Date Reviewed:February 2017
Date of Next Review:February 2018.....
Reviewed by:Health & Safety Committee

February 2017



CRITICAL INCIDENT POLICY

Introduction

In responding to an incident the aim should always be to ensure:

- rapid and appropriate action is taken;
- accurate information is provided;
- normal school routines are maintained as far as possible, giving continuity to pupils;
- immediate, sensitive and non-intrusive support is offered.

Definition of a Critical Incident

An incident becomes a critical incident when it constitutes a serious disruption arising with little or no warning on a scale beyond the coping capacity of the school operating under normal conditions, and requiring the assistance of the Emergency Services and/or Northamptonshire County Council and others.

Examples of such incidents impacting on schools could include:

- death or serious injury as a result of violence, accident, self harm and/or sudden/traumatic illness;
- major fire;
- building collapse;
- riot and/or civil disorder;
- natural and/or man-made disaster;
- terrorism;
- missing person(s)/abductions.

These incidents might occur:

- on the school site during school hours;
- on school transport;
- whilst the pupils are taking part in activities away from the school site;
- on school premises as part of after school activities;
- within the local community involving pupils from the school.

Using this definition as a basis for decision making, an incident is declared to be a critical incident following consultation between the person(s) managing the incident within the school (normally the headteacher and/or the senior management team) and the senior officer in Education Services Partnership and Planning. If there is doubt it is always better to consult and err on the side of caution and declare an incident critical.

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Good Preventative Practice

Curriculum

We will address sensitive issues such as death, bereavement and serious injury as appropriate within the general curriculum. Therefore, pupils will not have to address these issues for the first time following a critical incident. These issues may be covered through studies in R.E., geography, history and PSHCE.

Pastoral support

We will develop an atmosphere of support and trust amongst our pupils and parents, and provide opportunities for them to talk and share their feelings.

Behaviour policy

As a positive measure to ensure our pupils' safety, our well-established behaviour policy applies off-site as well as within the school boundaries.

Whilst careful pre-planning and effective risk management will minimise our pupils' exposure to dangerous situations, unforeseen hazards may well occur. In these situations, we will immediately brief children about how to proceed and require their compliance with any rulings we make.

Training

We will, from time to time, brief or train all relevant staff groups on their role in the prevention, management and response to incidents.

Security

We will employ effective security measures to prevent unwelcome visitors entering the school; and out of hours security systems to reduce the potential for damage and vandalism.

Administrative practices

- We will maintain a list of all pupils and staff with next of kin contact details held centrally at the school both on computer and as hard copy. Back-up discs and additional hard copy will be kept at an alternative site. such as a designated member of staff's home. At least four members of staff will know how to access these lists.
- We will complete registers promptly at the beginning of each morning and afternoon session. Names of pupils who are late or leave school early will be recorded.
- We will maintain an inventory of equipment held on site in accordance with LEA guidelines. A second copy will be retained at an alternative site. The inventory will be regularly updated.
- We will operate a signing in and out procedure for all visitors and volunteers in school.
- We will display details of emergency evacuation procedures in all areas of the school site.

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Planning for Trips and Visits

- We will follow DfES and NCC guidance when planning and organising school visits (see our separate educational visits policy).
- All supervising adults will carry details of the members of the party and a list of contact numbers (including the other adults' mobile phones and school/LEA emergency contact numbers).
- We will hold additional insurance for all school visits, purchased via NCC.

Health and Safety

- All relevant school policies will include reference to health and safety procedures and how these relate to the teaching and organisation of the subject. This is particularly pertinent for physical education, design and technology, and science.
- We will follow NCC guidelines on the testing and maintenance of equipment, fixtures and fittings. All electrical, PE and fire fighting equipment will be inspected and tested annually.
- We will follow regulations for the storage and security of potentially hazardous substances and chemicals.
- We will conduct regular health and safety checks on the buildings and site, with any potential dangers being reported and dealt with.

Dealing with an Incident

- The emergency services should be contacted immediately.
- At this stage, it may be most appropriate to take whatever urgent action is needed to ensure the safety of others.
- As soon as possible, the headteacher (or next-most senior person) will start to keep a simple log of all events and actions. There is a sample record sheet attached (Resource Sheet 2).
- The headteacher should communicate with the LEA, emergency services, etc. via the school's fax line or via mobile phone. This will leave the school's main phone line free for incoming calls from parents, etc. (The same procedure should be used for keeping contact with off-site parties if they have been involved in a critical incident.)
- The headteacher (or next-most senior person) will deploy staff as necessary to manage the situation and ensure the safety of all concerned. This may involve the senior management team being relieved of their classroom duties, and their classes being covered by other colleagues.
- The chair of governors will be informed as quickly as possible.
- In many cases, the LEA's senior education officer and his/her team will take over much of the management of the incident, leaving the headteacher free to deal with pupils, parents and colleagues.
- The school secretary will generally answer all calls from anxious parents. She should keep a log of callers and check this against school records to determine who might still need to be contacted.
- Parents will need to be contacted promptly, but the way in which this is done will depend on the nature and scale of the incident. Contact may be made in person or by phone. In very serious circumstances, it may be appropriate for the police to make the initial contact.

Before making contact with parents:

- The headteacher will confer with those who will be making contact about what to say, possibly rehearsing the message first. We will limit our comments to the known facts, and not speculate on the causes or responsibility for the crisis.
- The secretary or other colleagues will keep a strict log of those parents who have been contacted, noting date and time of call, the number called and the person who was spoken to (or if there was no answer). This list should be cross-referenced with those who have contacted us.
- We will ascertain if there are any colleagues who might offer help with transport to the school if required.
- We will endeavour to delegate these calls to those not actually involved in managing the incident.

When calling:

- We will check that parents are not left alone in distress, perhaps making suggestions for making contact with relatives or neighbours.
- We will offer any important phone numbers such as hospitals.
- An important task is to protect children, parents and staff from publicity. Press and television will not be given permission to enter the school premises or be given access to staff or children. One of the headteacher's first tasks on hearing of a crisis will be to contact the LEA's support services. All enquiries by the media will be directed to the officer, who will give factual information to the media whilst maintaining the privacy of staff, children and their families. In any event, the only other persons to speak to the media would be the headteacher or chair of governors.
- Pupils should be told simply and without fabrication what has happened, in the smallest group possible – usually within their class. Questions should be answered as straightforwardly as possible. Children and parents should be informed (preferably by letter) by the end of the day if the school has to be closed. As far as possible the school's normal routine should be followed to maintain security and continuity for the children.
- In the event of deaths or serious injuries, the headteacher will maintain close contact with the families involved and make arrangements for the school's representation at funerals, respecting the view, customs and wishes of parents.
- If an incident happens off-site, the headteacher will arrange for all contact with the party to go via the school. Therefore, we will contact parents, the LEA et al on behalf of the party leader. It is also highly probable that the best course of action will be for children to be reunited with their families as soon as possible. The headteacher, with advice and help from the police and the LEA, will arrange to bring the children home. In some instances it may be appropriate to arrange for parents to be taken to the children.
- The leader of an off-site party may need to act 'in loco parentis' to authorise emergency medical treatment. However, they may only do this if every reasonable effort has been made to contact the parents.
- The whole school will be affected by a tragedy. The headteacher will arrange de-briefing sessions for directly-affected staff, check that procedures are in place for monitoring staff and pupils, and activate strategies for allowing all involved to express their feelings if they wish. In the case of prolonged absences of anyone injured in an incident, the headteacher will ensure that a member of staff makes contact with the child or colleague at home or in

hospital, and subsequently make sensitive arrangements for their return to school, and thereafter check that monitoring procedures are in place. Consideration must also be given to arrangements for a special assembly or memorial service. In the longer term, the headteacher may need to introduce strategies to continue to monitor vulnerable pupils and staff, consult and decide on whether, and how, to mark anniversaries, and to ensure that new staff are aware of which pupils/staff were affected and in what way.

Summary of Action Plan

Task

1. Obtain immediate information at the start of the crisis
2. Call the emergency services
3. Take whatever urgent action is needed to ensure the safety of others.
4. Senior management team and office staff meet to decide on key actions to be taken.
5. Establish links with the LEA and chair of governors
6. Contact families
7. Call staff meeting
8. Inform children in class
9. Arrange de-briefing for children involved
10. Arrange de-briefing for staff involved
11. Identify high risk children and staff
12. Identify the need for group or individual support.
13. Arrange memorials, etc

Responsibility

Headteacher

Head or secretary

Head, secretary and others

Deputy head

Class teacher

H.T. & Deputy

H.T. & Deputy

H.T. & Deputy

All

Headteacher

Timing

Immediately

Immediately

Immediately

Within an hour

Within an hour

Continue until

all informed

ASAP

As appropriate

Same day if

practical

ASAP

ASAP

In following
days and weeks



In following
days and weeks

There are several useful model letters and advice sheets attached.

Dates & review

This policy was adopted by the administrative committee of the governing body at its meeting on

_____ after due consultation with the staff of the school.

It is due for review by _____.

Signed: _____ Chair of Administrative Committee