



## **Critical Incident Management Policy (Non-Statutory)**

Person Responsible:	Headteacher
Date:	November 2021
People Involved:	Business & Finance Committee
Reviewed:	Annually
Adopted:	November 2020
Review Date:	November 2022

# Whitstone School Critical Incident Management Policy

## Introduction

This policy is our school's contingency plan designed to provide a framework for handling a critical incident. The formulation of this policy is intended to clearly define the roles, responsibilities and procedures to follow, for school staff dealing with such an incident. Each critical incident is unique, and it is not possible to plan for every eventuality, but similarly each critical incident can be shocking and disorientating so a prepared procedure is essential to ensure that the school's reaction is effective and efficient.

### A major 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 eg outbreak of contagious illness/disease like meningitis
- Circumstances in which any part, or whole of the school is unable to function as normal due to external influences eg fire
- A complex safeguarding situation
- Any situation in which the national press or media might be involved.

### Major incidents may include:

- Death of a student or member of staff
- Death or serious injury on school trip
- Epidemic or pandemic in school or community
- Violent incident in school
- A student missing from home
- Destruction or major vandalism or arson in school
- A hostage taking
- A transport accident involving school members
- A disaster in the community
- A civil disturbance or terrorism

**In the event of such an incident the priorities of those adults in charge of the school or trip at the time must be to:**

- Save life
- Stay calm
- Minimise personal injury
- Safeguard the interests of the students and staff
- Minimise loss and to return to normal working quickly

### Whitstone School's Critical Incident Management Team comprises of the School Leadership Team (SLT)

Headteacher	Guy Swallow (GS)	Mobile no.: 07989 145368
Assistant Headteacher	Ben Howarth (BH)	
Assistant Headteacher	Debora Pyne (DP)	
Assistant Headteacher	Maz Turner (MT)	

Assistant Headteacher	Neil Elsegood (NE)	
Business Manager	Devlina Main (DM)	Mobile no.: 07731 129902

### Key messages

- No adults or children should speak to the press/media under any circumstances without the express permission of the Headteacher. Media requests for information should be directed to the Headteacher. One person only will speak to the media. **Do not make “off the cuff” or unofficial comments to anyone at any time, even after the incident.**
- A clear and concise record of all actions taken **must** be kept by all of those involved. Use Appendix 3 and 4.
- Always inform the SLT of any concerns however minor they may appear. If SLT are unavailable, please contact your line manager.

The school’s reaction to a critical incident has been divided into the following categories:

- a) Immediate action
- b) Short term action
- c) Medium term action
- d) Longer term action

### Immediate Action Plan

1. Obtain and collate information relating to the incident
  - Staff with information relating to the critical incident will brief GS.
  - GS will contact the support team from the LA and the Chair of Trustees.
  - DM will send for SLT – Cover Supervisors/free staff will cover any necessary classes.
2. Gather and brief the SLT (Critical Incident Management Team)
  - GS will brief the SLT and assign appropriate roles and responsibilities. This can be the same at a weekend.
  - A factual ‘prepared response’ statement to summarise the situation will be prepared.
3. Trigger support from the LA and other contacts on emergency list
  - GS will trigger any additional support required
4. Set up an incident management room and dedicated phone line
  - LS will be stationed in the office to answer in-coming calls from anxious callers using the prepared response. No additional information will be shared with callers to limit speculation or unnecessary rumours.

5. Contact families affected

- SLT will contact parents and share a brief agreed statement to communicate the necessary information.
- If families need to come to the school for support Ambition will be used as a venue provided it is clear of any risk.

6. Inform teaching and other school staff

- An emergency briefing session will be scheduled in the staffroom. GS will inform the staff of the incident and immediate action to be taken. If staff are required to share any information with students a written response will be issued to ensure consistency of approach. Staff will be briefed on the nominated person/s who will address the media if required. This may mean that the school day starts slightly later.

7. Make arrangements to inform other parents

- GS will prepare a letter to inform parents of the situation if appropriate, in consultation with the LA.

8. Inform students

- If appropriate, GS will address all students in the main hall to feedback the necessary information. Alternatively, staff will be provided with a statement to give to students, which will be issued within class/Aspire Groups.

9. Deal with the media

- GS will seek guidance from LA on the appropriate response for the media.

10. Devise a plan for handling the reactions and feelings of people affected

- The SLT will remain in school to support the students, staff and families if appropriate. A short-term action plan will be prepared to manage procedures for the forthcoming hours/day.

**Short Term Action**

1. Re-union of children with their families

- SLT will organise the logistics of reuniting students and families, visiting the scene and the repercussions of the incident as appropriate. An in-house support plan for students, staff and the school community will be prepared.

2. Managing staff

- The LA will guide the SLT on organising the necessary support from outside agencies. A staff briefing will inform colleagues of the planned action and available support programmes.

3. Encourage students to talk

- The SLT will brief staff on the support students may need and appropriate strategies, which could be used in the short term. The long-term implications of the incident will be reviewed.
- Contact Educational Psychologists for student support.

4. Formal and informal recognition of rituals

- The SLT will make the necessary arrangement to contact the affected families on behalf on the school. If necessary, cover will be organised to enable students/staff to attend funerals/memorials. Special assemblies, or an appropriate memorial service will be organised.

5. Re-establishing routines

- The school will return to routine as soon as possible to enable students to gain a sense of normality and begin the initial stages of emotional recovery.

## **Medium Term Action**

1. Return to school for staff or children after long absence
  - The SLT will manage the reintegration of staff or students who return to the school after prolonged absence. Strategies to support returned students/colleagues will be considered according to the needs of the individual. Professional support will be sought if necessary from Educational Psychology Service to support individuals who have given signs of prolonged reaction to the incident.
2. Keeping parents informed
  - GS will update parents of any additional information or guidance to deal with the effects of delayed reactions of those students may have as a result of the critical incident.
3. Support for staff
  - The staff will be monitored and a support programme available for those would need to access it – including the SLT.

## **Long Term Action**

1. Monitoring the vulnerable
  - The school pastoral team will monitor the progress and emotional well-being of students affected by the events of the critical incident. New staff and students will be briefed on the school's history if appropriate to raise awareness of potentially sensitive issues and anniversary times.
2. Marking anniversaries
  - The opinions of the staff and students will need to be sought on how the school community may wish to mark the anniversary of events and if indeed such a commemoration is required. Suggestions for school to mark anniversaries are by annual concerts, memorial services, memorial prize giving ceremonies, memorial gardens etc.
3. Legal processes
  - The SLT will make the necessary contingency plans, if appropriate, to support staff and students through the time period required for legal proceedings to be concluded.
4. Curriculum implications
  - Appropriate support and INSET training will be provided for staff e.g. loss counselling, bereavement etc.

## **CONCLUSION**

The prime objective, shared between the school and LA, is to serve the best interests of the school community 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.

## **Appendix 1 – Guidance for Group Leaders on External Visits**

**Instruct all colleagues to record their actions as soon as possible**

**Maintain vital communications with colleagues at all times**

### **Group Leader**

- Obtain facts and information
- Call the emergency services using 999 or appropriate number if abroad
- Retain any relevant equipment
- Inform the school emergency contact
- Request assistance on site as necessary
- Prepare to deal with the media
- Consider abandonment of activity
- Arrange for non-casualties to return to school
- Remain available to emergency services and supervising colleagues

### **Nominated First Aider**

- Administer first aid where possible
- Establish a contact point with the emergency services
- Travel with casualties to hospital
- Complete accident forms

### **Deputy Group Leader**

- Call other assistance as necessary
- Keep a record of witnesses
- Keep others informed of the situation
- Ensure staff and students do not use telephones until the situation is under control and all necessary information has been passed onto the school emergency contact

## Appendix 2 – Guidance for SLT on Hearing of a Major Incident Affecting an External Visit

Instruct all colleagues to record their actions as soon as possible

Maintain vital communications with colleagues at all times

### School Emergency Contact

- Obtain facts and information
- Ensure emergency assistance has been called
- Confirm who is in charge
- Contact the Headteacher
- Contact Chair of Trustees
- Contact LA support team
- Contact other staff
- Prepare to deal with the media

### SLT

- Decide who and how to tell parents of children on the visit
- Establish incident room
- Establish room for relatives
- Remain available to supervising colleagues

### Local Authority Contacts for Schools at Times of a Critical Incident

#### During Working Hours

Contact the <b>Executive Support Team</b>	01823 356244
Contact the <b>Mendip Area Senior Educational Psychologist</b>	01749 678500
Contact the Communications Team (Press Office)	01823 355020
Contact Somerset County Council CYPD	0845 3459122

#### Out Of Hours

Contact the <b>Educational Psychology Service Emergency Officer</b>	07919 299197
Contact the <b>Communications Team</b> (Press Office)out of hours number	07739 300144 or 01823 652660



**Appendix 3 – Incident log for recording vital information in the event of a major incident**

<b>Name:</b>		<b>Date:</b>	
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<b>Date</b>	<b>Time</b>	<b>Event</b>	<b>Agreed Action (s)</b>

#### **Appendix 4 - Recording vital information in the event of a major incident**

The following information should be recorded at any major incident.

- Who is reporting the incident?
- Where are they reporting from? (Telephone Number)
- What has happened?
- Where has the incident occurred?
- When did the event occur?
- Have the emergency services been summoned?
- Have they arrived?
- Have any other support services been summoned?
- Have they arrived?
- How many of the party are involved?
- What has happened to them?
- What is their condition?
- Where are the rest of the party?
- Who is with them?
- Where are the casualties to be taken?
- Who is accompanying them?
- Do they have a contact number?
- When will the next contact be made?
- If a crime has been committed, has the scene of crime been preserved as far as possible?