



BERKHAMPSTEAD SCHOOL AND DAY NURSERY

Critical Incident Management Policy and Procedures

SECTION A INTRODUCTION

ABERFAN LYME BAY DUNBLANE M40 MINIBUS MENINGITIS COVID

1. Purpose

All these tragedies, and many more, caught the headlines – schoolchildren are at risk both inside and outside school. Disasters do not happen often but even with thorough safety measures and competent staff they still can. The impact of such critical incidents can be acute and prolonged causing considerable distress.

This document is designed to give advice and procedures on coping with a critical incident. It cannot be comprehensive since we cannot foretell what may occur, however, it aims to be wide reaching, to encompass a range of possibilities and establish a basic structure for managing the problem. The shock of an incident often prevents colleagues from thinking rationally – this document should help in such situations.

2. Safety

It is the responsibility of all staff to follow the provisions of the School's Health & Safety Policies. This document recognises that the unexpected can still happen, and provides guidance on actions to be taken in the management of an emergency or crisis.

The priorities in the event of an emergency will be:

- o to minimise or eliminate any changes or risks to individuals
- o to ensure the School acts in a lawful manner
- o to facilitate effective recovery
- o to communicate with all involved parties and media in a professional and caring manner

3. Training and Review

The Senior Management Team will review this document in 12 months initially and after that every two years. This document is subject to approval by the Governing Body who will review it every two years.

SECTION B SUMMARY

I. CRITICAL INCIDENT MANAGEMENT PLAN – OVERVIEW

	Prime	Secondary Support	Comments
Operation Base	Admissions Office School Office Head's Office	Day Nursery Office	
Command	Headmaster	SMT Bursar	Holiday Cover List in Critical Incident Box
Essential Actions (examples)	Secretarial Communications Events log Staff & pupils Parents Governors Emergency services Press and Media liaison information and briefings	Catering Electrician Plumber Heating Engineer	Contact List in Critical Incident Box
Evacuation Areas:	Prep or Pre-Prep Halls	Day Nursery	
Support Agencies	Emergency Services Marsh Insurance Samaritans Chair of Governors	Governing Body Local Ministry Educational Psychologist Social Services	Contact List in Critical Incident Box
Information Database - iSAMS	- Parent contacts (School office) - Staff next of kin (School office). - Telephone lists (School office). - Trip lists/team lists (School office).		Contacts on Clarion Call Staff
Communications	- Telephone system. - Clarion Text Message System.	- School/Staff Mobile telephones.	
Administration Information	Doors and alarm codes.		

2. POTENTIAL CRITICAL INCIDENTS

This list is not exhaustive but offers a range of possibilities to develop programmes to assist in the management of crises.

INCIDENT	EXAMPLE	ISSUES	
		Short term	Medium/long term
Fire in School		<ul style="list-style-type: none"> - fire drill - evacuation - re-housing - communication 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> - re-housing - lost possessions - lost information - re-building - Health & Safety Executive (HSE)
Minibus Accident	M40	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> - communication - recovery of pupils 	- HSE review of driving regulations
Adventurous Training Accident	Lyme Bay	- communication	
Pupil and/or staff assaulted in School by intruder. Hostage taking	Dunblane	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> - removal of intruder - emergency services - pupil welfare - communication 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> - H&S - security - Counselling
Death of Pupil or Teacher	Malvern College	- communication	- review
Other Disaster	Aberfan Lockerbie	- communication	
Bomb threat		<ul style="list-style-type: none"> - emergency services - evacuation - re-housing 	
Serious Illness	Meningitis Coronavirus (COVID)	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> - communication - reportable disease 	Home-schooling if applicable

SECTION C

CRITICAL INCIDENT MANAGEMENT POLICY

Preventative & Precautionary measures:

All staff are issued with or have access to:

1. Health & Safety Policy
2. Educational Visits policy including:
 - planning a trip
 - approval for the trip
 - information to be given to parents
 - standards of behaviour
 - staffing ratios
 - consent forms
 - medical forms
 - risk assessment
3. Other guidance in the form of policies and procedures in the Staff Handbook
4. Fire instructions and drills
5. Critical Incident Response Box

In the event of an incident:

- The Headmaster, or in his absence the Bursar with the SMT, will take overall responsibility.
- He/They will assemble a team and activate the Critical Incident Management Plan.
- He/They will allocate responsibilities to his team.
- During the holidays there will be contact details and/or mobile telephone numbers for the SMT and details of when they are away. If there is a School trip on there will be a contact number of a duty member of staff who can be contacted 24 hours a day.
- The Headmaster will deal with all communications personally or authorise other members of the team. All incoming and outgoing communications must be logged and available to the Headmaster.
- The Headmaster will ensure that staff, parents and governors are kept informed. Information will be given to parents of the sources of help that are available. Where parents need to contact School for advice they will be advised whom they should contact.
- The Headmaster will advise the Bursar who will, if necessary, contact the Health & Safety Executive on the same day.
- It is recognised that after the event there may be issues such as investigations and pupil/staff welfare that the Headmaster will deal with.

SECTION D

PROCEDURES FOR STAFF IN CHARGE WHEN AN OFF-SITE INCIDENT OCCURS

These procedures are for guidance and may well need to be adapted to the situation

1. Establish the nature and extent of the emergency.
2. Make sure all involved are accounted for and safeguard the uninjured members of the group.
3. If there are injuries, establish their extent and administer appropriate first aid if you have been trained and feel capable. Be aware of consequences that might follow were you to give incorrect treatment. Have regard to your own safety vis-à-vis blood contact. Call the appropriate emergency services and anyone who needs to know of the incident.
4. Advise other staff present of the incident and of actions taken. Decide if appropriate who is in charge and responsibilities to be undertaken by each adult member of the group.
5. If staffing allows:
 - An adult should accompany any casualties to hospital.
 - Remaining pupils should be adequately supervised and arrangements made for an early return to base.
 - Arrange for one adult to remain at the site of the incident to liaise with the emergency services until the incident is over and all pupils are accounted for.
 - If there is a lack of available staffing then a decision will have to be reached as to the best course of action.
6. **Contact the senior member of staff on call:** The senior member of staff will contact the Headmaster (or, if absent, the designated deputy) who will take charge of the situation and activate the emergency plan. The Headmaster will advise the Chair of Governors.

Control access to telephones until a senior member of staff has contacted parents and others directly involved. Give full details of the incident including:

- nature, date, location and time of the incident.
- names of person/s involved and details of their injuries.
- names of others involved so that parents can be reassured.
- actions taken so far.
- actions yet to be taken (and by whom).
- telephone numbers for future communication.

7. No member of staff or pupil should discuss matters with the media – in particular under no circumstances should the name of any casualty be given to the media. Media enquiries should be referred back to the Headmaster.

8. If an emergency occurs abroad the British Embassy/Consulate should be notified.

9. The party leader should, at the first opportunity, make notes on the incident, as should other people involved. A record should be kept of the names and addresses of any witnesses or people involved. Ensure the Bursar is advised immediately (by the party leader or the Head) and accident forms are completed as soon as possible.
10. Neither blame nor legal liability should be discussed.
11. If parents cannot be contacted quickly members of the senior staff team may need to give medical consent in loco parentis.
12. Do not interfere with any equipment etc. which may be relevant to any subsequent inquiry.

SECTION E

PROCEDURES FOR STAFF IN THE EVENT OF AN INCIDENT AT SCHOOL

These procedures are for guidance and may well need to be adapted to suit the situation.

1. Where there is a life-threatening situation staff will normally use the fire alarm in order to evacuate staff and pupils. There may be some situations, e.g. a person carrying a firearm or some other person on the premises making a threat to people's lives, where evacuating pupils could make matters worse. School staff should feel free to contact the police directly in an emergency and are encouraged to nip a situation in the bud and offer support where doing so will not put pupils at risk.
2. Situations are often effectively tackled at an early stage before they escalate. However, members of staff should avoid provoking intruders.
3. The Headmaster must be informed without delay.
4. In the event of one or more of the School buildings needing to be evacuated pupils should be moved quickly and quietly to the Prep Hall or the Pre-Prep Hall.

SECTION F

MANAGEMENT ACTION PLAN

1. Leadership

In the event of an emergency the Head will take overall charge, although he may delegate this responsibility to one of the Senior Management Team. The Head, or person in charge, will first of all ensure that the relevant emergency services have been called. He should free himself from as many routine responsibilities as possible and remain, for most of the time, in the operations base in order to ensure effective control and communication.

2. Team

Allocated responsibilities may include

- Incident secretary – maintain a record of communications, decisions and actions
- parent liaison – office staff
- welfare – of staff and pupils
- media liaison – monitor media interest, help prepare briefing notes
- security/safety – ensure area is secure and all staff/pupils are safe
- legal, insurance, finance – liaison with external agencies and preserve evidence of proceedings

3. Communication

The Head will set up an incident management area (School Office/HM Office or Day Nursery Office) with dedicated telephone lines, using mobile 'phones if none other exists. Consideration will be given to establishing separate lines for:

- School
- Press
- Personal Callers

Other telephone lines likely to receive important incoming calls should be 'redirected' to the incident room. All callers will be given an agreed factual statement from the Headmaster along with reassurance of action being taken at the incident site.

Pupil and parent data is held on the School databases and in paper format in both the School Office (Admin) and the Day Nursery Office (for the Day Nursery). A backup of this is on Clarion Call – accessed over the Internet or mobile phone.

Communication during an incident may include:

- recording/logging incoming information
- dissemination of incoming information
- contacting parents
- contacting staff
- contacting Governing Body
- liaison with media
- liaison with emergency services
- liaison with other agencies (e.g. social services, etc)

4. Information on the incident

One of the team will obtain and collate all information about what has happened. The following prompts may be used:

- what has happened?
- where and when?
- name and contact number of an adult at the incident site.
- extent of injuries - numbers and names.
- location of injured, names and number of adults present.
- location of uninjured, names and number of adults present.
- what help is required from the School? (cash, legal, decisions, recovery, language, contacting third parties, extra staff).
- who has been informed.
- what has been said.

5. Evacuation

In the event of a School evacuation the Head will detail one of the following areas:

- o Prep Playground
- o Prep Hall
- o Pre-Prep Hall
- o Day Nursery

6. Emergency services

The Head will ensure that a member of staff meets the emergency services. Once they have arrived it should be borne in mind that ultimately the police can take control; in practice there is likely to be a partnership. The emergency services may need an incident room.

7. Casualties

Where there are casualties on the campus the School database will provide an up-to-date list of disabilities and medical problems. The list might be copied for the ambulance incident manager.

If parents cannot be contacted quickly members of the SMT may need to give medical consent in loco parentis.

8. Families

Contact will be done quickly and sensitively. If a parent cannot be contacted by telephone it may be necessary to use another parent or guardian to relay information. Any message should relay known information and assurances of appropriate action being taken.

If provision needs to be made for parents to come into School – the Library or a classroom would be suitable as a reception centre.

If parents arrive at the School it will need to be decided whether pupils can be allowed home. Pupils affected in some way by the incident should be accompanied home. Staff should be considered for briefing and counselling.

9. Information from the School

9.1 Briefing staff and pupils

When an incident occurs in the holiday, consideration will be given to informing staff (including support staff) by letter before their return. For all incidents it will need to be decided which pupils are to be briefed on the incident and by whom. During term time briefings will be carried out by members of the senior management team, with the Head possibly briefing personally particular groups of pupils or particular years. The first briefing will be given on the day of the incident where possible to quash any rumours or untruths. Where briefings of pupils take place concerning traumatic incidents staff will be provided with written briefing notes.

Briefings of pupils and staff may contain the following elements:

- factual account of the problem
- details of any arrangements necessary as a result of the problem
- details of help that is available
- information on coping with the press.

Pupils should be advised not to talk to the press unless arrangements have been made for them to do so by a member of the senior staff team.

Subsequently briefings may be undertaken on a daily basis on being told what, if anything, is to be communicated to pupils in the way of further briefing. Consideration will be given to providing staff with written briefing notes. Subsequent briefings might advise staff and pupils of sources of available help, e.g. counselling.

9.2 Provide statement for staff

A formal statement will be prepared. The information in this statement is unlikely to remain confidential and will give necessary facts, an expression of sympathy/concern and details of changes to School procedures if any. A schedule for updating of information will be arranged. Staff will be cautioned about talking to the media or responding to questions from the media.

9.3 Statement for other parents

A formal statement will be prepared. The information in this statement is unlikely to remain confidential and will give necessary facts, an expression of sympathy/concern and details of changes to School

procedures if any. It could be by letter, leaflet or parental meeting. This information is likely to be accessible to the media.

9.4 Statement for pupils

This will be done via Form teachers with particular care taken to protect and support both children close to someone involved with the incident and staff unable to handle the emotions or distress confidently. Parents will receive a written copy of this statement given to the pupils.

9.5 Sources of help

Staff, pupils and parents may need help in coping with problems. Consideration will be given to contacting the School Counsellor and/or School Chaplain. Outside professional agencies may need to be involved.

10. Media

Only the Head or designated person should formally speak to the press. Consideration will be given to briefing the press on a daily basis and to giving them a room in the School. Preparations for a media briefing may include:

- copies of the School prospectus as background information
- refreshments and a room for press
- an agreed text for release to the media and/or as a script

Advice for talking to the media:

- Be available (especially at night and weekends); reporters work to very tight deadlines.
- Decide what's important ("say less, better") and prepare a "sound bite". Tell the story quickly, accurately and get key messages across. Avoid jargon.
- Ensure everybody involved has the same story.
- Consider needs of the audience.
- Listen to what the reporter knows. Deadlines are tight and although you cannot ask for unlimited time to mull it over you can ask for a few minutes (15 maximum) to research and ring back. It is important to keep this promise.
- Present the School's side of the story, even if it is to say "this is a very isolated incident".
- Before the interview be clear about the areas you will not discuss, for example, confidential information involving child protection.
- Respond to "what" and "when" questions but beware of "why" and "how" questions.
- If possible choose your own time to report to the media.
- Do not speculate, bluff, mislead or lie. Remember that reporters have access to extensive archive material.
- Do not make promises you can't keep and do not make excuses or blame others.
- Do not respond to blind quotes (e.g. "one of your staff tells me....do you agree?" or allow words to be put into your mouth (e.g. "would you agree that...?)).

- Do not say “no comment” - explain why you cannot comment or use “we’re investigating the situation”.
- Invite reporters inside the school - exterior shots of the school with a reporter outside can give a strong impression the school has something to hide.
- Do not ignore the press or let the reporter get stuck at the “secretary stage” - deal with it.
- On TV dress the part.
- On TV and radio it is important that you know who is asking you for comment, who else is taking part and the likely areas of questioning (you will not be given a list of questions).

In times of crisis dealing effectively with the media can prove to be an important damage limitation exercise.

11. After the incident

Consideration will be given to setting up meetings of pupils and parents seriously affected by traumatic incidents to talk things through and to help one another. The senior staff team will decide who is to lead such a group. Leaders and groups will need to be assisted by educational psychologists.

Consideration will be given to having staff visit the homes of pupils seriously affected by the incident. This will normally either be Head, Deputy Head(Pastoral) or Form Teacher to pupil or parent but each visit must be sanctioned by the Head.

Decisions should be made on whether the incident is to be discussed in School in a controlled way. If it is, it will be decided how this is to take place. Advice may be sought from an educational psychologist on setting up discussions.

Ideas for handling reactions of pupils, staff and parents may include:

1. Informing all staff and giving guidance on how to support and talk to children.
2. Outlining measures within the School to provide further help for distressed children.
3. Providing information to families on the kinds of help and support available to them and their children.
4. Resisting expectations of immediate counselling.
5. Structuring debriefing for children and staff involved.
6. Providing opportunities for those involved to discuss in private.
7. Attempting to ensure continuity and normality to help minimise the effect on others while encouraging pupils to talk about their feelings. Be prepared to listen.
8. Recognition of formal and informal rituals:
 - arrangements to express sympathy to the families directly affected by the incident
 - injured children can be visited in hospital
 - encourage children to send cards and letters
 - plan to attend funeral, if welcome. Consider School closure
 - discuss desirability of holding special assemblies and memorial services
 - plan anniversaries

Close contact with parents should be maintained to ensure their wishes are always taken into account.

Where deaths have occurred the Head will consider the lessons and activities being adjusted on the day of funerals as a mark of respect. Consideration will be given to one member of the senior staff team being present at each funeral to represent the School. Decisions will be taken as to whether staff and pupils are to be given time off School to attend funerals, and if so who. Floral tributes or donations to charities will be considered.

It should be recognised that the burden of support may fall on a few members of staff who may in turn need support themselves.

The incident may also act as a trigger for children who are emotionally vulnerable even if they were not directly involved. This may result in difficulties in behaviour and relationships.

Critical Incident Response Plan

Key Actions for School and Day Nursery

No two incidents are alike. Use the guidelines flexibly and in relation to the information available.

Instant response incident

IMMEDIATE RESPONDERS: This could be any member of staff - follow actions below

Event requiring an instant response where seconds count e.g. Fire, bomb threat, explosion, road accident, heart attack, intruder attack, suicide attempt, death or serious injury in school. Someone* must take immediate charge. He/she must take immediate action

- Delegate actions to nearby personnel – to contact Office and Head/Day Nursery Manager etc.
- To evacuate the building if necessary (Fire alarm, check heads)
- To call emergency services
- To arrange first aid
- To maintain normal routines where possible

Secondary, considered response/ Less urgent incident

COMMANDERS: Headmaster and SMT

COMMAND CENTRES: SCHOOL OFFICE, HEAD'S OFFICE, DAY NURSERY OFFICE

COMMUNICATIONS: School Office/Bursary Staff/Day Nursery Manager

COORDINATE EMERGENCY SERVICES: Bursar, Estates Manager, Office Staff

Event causing damage to the premises. e.g. flooding, subsidence, earthquake

1. Head/Day Nursery Manager takes command and establishes a Command Centre
2. Notify emergency services/other relevant authorities (Secretary, Bursar, Estates Manager)
3. Notify Chair of Governors. He/she then informs other Governors (Headmaster/Bursar)
4. Gather factual information and start an Incident log (SMT)
5. Meet with Critical Incident Response Team to assess the incident and agree what staff, pupils, parents and media will be told. (SMT - MEETING)
6. Set regular briefing times
7. Delegate tasks to team members
 - Incident secretary: Secretary
 - Communication with staff: Head + SMT
 - Communication with pupils + Security/safety of pupils: Head + SMT
 - Media liaison: Head + Chair of Governors
 - Communication with Parents: Office

- Liaison with emergency services + legal, insurance, finance: Bursar + Estates Manager
8. Re-establish and maintain normal routines

Event causing harm to personnel eg. Death or serious injury out of school of staff/pupil/parent, Meningitis or other notifiable disease.

Event causing reputational damage eg. Staff misdemeanor (police incident, fraud), food poisoning, child abuse, drugs, bankruptcy, long term absence of Head

1. Head/Day Nursery Manager takes command and establishes a Command Centre.
2. Notify emergency services/other relevant authorities.
3. Communicate with parents of personnel involved as soon as the initial information is confirmed, keeping in mind legal implications and respecting aspects of privacy.
4. Notify Chair of Governors (Headmaster/Bursar). He/she then informs other Governors.
5. Gather factual information and start an Incident log (SMT)
6. Meet with Critical Incident Response Team to assess the incident and agree what staff, pupils, parents and media will be told.
7. Set regular briefing times.
8. Delegate tasks to team members
 - Incident secretary: Secretary
 - Communication with staff: Head + SMT
 - Communication with pupils + Security/safety of pupils: Head + SMT
 - Media liaison: Head + Chair of Governors. Ensure a correct and consistent message is given.
 - Communication with Parents: Office
 - Liaison with emergency services + legal, insurance, finance: Bursar + Estates Manager
9. Re-establish and maintain normal routines.
10. Organise assistance, such as transport home, for staff or pupils who are distressed. Try to ensure they are not alone on the evening after an incident.

Aftermath

1. Head consults with the families affected to determine their wishes concerning public announcements and information for staff and pupils.
2. Continue gathering factual information regarding the incident.
3. Continue to inform staff, students and parents.
4. Provide sources of help for pupils and families e.g. counselling.
5. Encourage communication between parents and school.
6. Confirm the school's response plans.
7. Identify 'at risk' pupils and staff and arrange for follow up debriefing/support.
8. Arrange for the support of the Critical Incident Response Team.
9. Continue to liaise with the Chair of Governors.

10. Take appropriate steps to ensure tactical/strategic reputational and financial damage limitation or mitigation. The Governors would lead on any change of strategy, which might, in the most extreme circumstances, be a decision to close the school.

After the immediate crisis is over the Head would be able to take over responsibility.

CRITICAL INCIDENT RESPONSE BOX (in School Office and Day Nursery Office)

INCLUDES:

1. Critical Incident Policy and Response Plan
2. SHE Guidance Notes – Suspicious Packages and Bomb Threats
3. NPCC Guidance Reviewing Protective Security
4. Contact Numbers for the SMT, Chair of Governors, Admin Team,
5. Contact Number for Emergency Services and other services (eg. Fire Alarm, Electrical etc.) and Useful Information
6. HI-VIS Jacket