



# **Critical Incident Plan**

**Park Hall Academy**

**A Member Of**

**The St. Bart's Multi-Academy Trust**



## Park Hall Academy

### A Member Of

### The St. Bart's Multi-Academy Trust

The St. Bart's Multi-Academy Trust believes that education is preparation for life and we seek to prepare each child to face life beyond the School with confidence.

**We aspire** to set high standards for personal behaviour and self-discipline, with courtesy, consideration and respect for other people of all ages, races and cultures.

**We aim** to deliver exciting and quality learning experience in a safe, secure and happy environment.

**We endeavour** to achieve high standards in every aspect of school life by making the most efficient use of all the resources available.

The St. Bart's Multi-Academy Trust is committed to improving the life chances of all children, wherever they may be. This moral obligation, our mission, does not end at the school gates, within our own Local Authorities, or even within our own country. Where St. Bart's Academies have the capacity to make a difference, they are morally bound to do so.

Our core values are represented through the acronym: **PEACE**

**Passion** — We are privileged to be working in education, where we have the ability to profoundly change children's lives; this means that the stakes are incredibly high. Our aim is always to provide for the pupils of our Academies what we would want for our own children.

**Encouraging** — All staff have a duty and responsibility to be encouraging and supportive of each other. All our schools have a "can do" culture where excuses are never tolerated.

**Ambition** — Embodied in the Trust motto, "Achieving schools and caring communities". All academy members are expected to aim for excellence in their individual professional roles.

**Commitment** — In the best traditions of the profession all staff are prepared to go the extra mile to provide the best possible education for their pupils. The interests of children are paramount and guide all that we seek to do and achieve.

**Enjoyment** — The time children spend in education is precious. We have a responsibility to ensure that every moment a child is in a St. Bart's Academy they enjoy learning and strive hard to achieve well and fulfil their maximum potential.

We expect that all members of The St. Bart's Multi-Academy Trust respect and model these values. These values form the basis of initial discussions with all prospective employees of the St. Bart's Academies.

# Critical Incident Plan

## Introduction

Schools, under normal circumstances, provide a safe and secure environment for all children to learn, develop and grow in. Unfortunately, crises or tragedies can occur and can result in significant distress for all individuals involved as well as for the school as a whole. A school can be affected in a number of ways, for instance, if a pupil or member of staff dies the whole school may feel the loss; or, when pupils who have suffered shock or injury return to school they may need to be treated with particular sensitivity. There are any number of possibilities requiring any number of responses and this policy outlines some of the procedures the school will take if such an incident presents itself.

## 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, Members of the Trust Executive Board and/or Local Authority and others.**

**Where there has been a death or serious injury arising through interpersonal violence, this will constitute a Critical Incident, regardless of the perceived capacity of the school to cope.**

The incident or event may be unanticipated, imminent or in progress. It may occur on the school property, in the local community or out of the school area (eg a school trip).

## What counts as a Critical Incident?

There are three levels of incident.  
These are:

- **Level 1** – Major incident involving a large number of children/adults e.g. bus/train crash, major violence
- **Level 2** – Incident involving death or serious assault or other traumatic incident witnessed by children or staff
- **Level 3** – Distress/trauma resulting from an incident such as the sudden death of a teacher or classmate through a road traffic accident for example, but not witnessed by the pupils.

## Types of Emergency / Critical Incident

Pupils may be affected by crises that occur either in or out of school.  
Here are some examples:

### In-school

- the death of a pupil or member of staff through natural causes, such as illness;
- a traffic accident involving a pupil or staff member;
- a deliberate act of violence, such as a knifing or the use of a firearm;
- a school fire or flood;
- allegations or actual incidents of abuse against pupils by staff and staff against pupils;
- an arson attack on the school.

## Out-of-school

- deaths or injuries on school journeys, trips or residential trips;
- tragedies involving children from many schools at public events such as football matches;
- civil disturbances;
- refugee children joining a school, uprooted from their countries and perhaps shocked by wars or atrocities;
- abductions / disappearances;
- Incidents involving the murder of school children that attract the attention of national and international media over prolonged periods;
- a civil disturbance or terrorism;
- a disaster in the community;
- a transport accident involving school members.

The emotional effects of disasters on children are not always immediately obvious to parents or school staff. Indeed, at times children find it difficult to confide their distress to adults as they know that it will upset them. In some children the distress can last for months, even years, and may additionally affect their academic attainment.

Some young people may not feel comfortable enough or be able to share their feelings and thoughts in public or with staff either because they are unable to do so or because they fear their confidence may be abused. Similarly, because many adults are not able to talk about death, bereavement and tragedy, they may unwittingly stop children talking about similar emotional experiences.

At **Park Hall Academy** we take all children's needs seriously, including emotional and psychological and are committed to ensuring all children receive the help they require to explore such matters as death and significant harm or injury in an environment of trust, care and safety. We also recognise the impact such incidents can have on the well-being of staff and parents/ carers and will do our utmost to support any recovery needed and to work with any agencies.

## Preventative and precautionary measures

Whilst no amount of planning can totally prevent accidents and problems occurring, it is hoped that some can be prevented and the effects of others minimised by taking sensible precautionary measures.

At Park Hall Academy we expect that:

- Staff and pupils will be familiar with the schools routines for fire and the evacuation of the school building on hearing the fire alarm;
- Staff will be familiar with the routines and procedures for dealing with emergencies (as detailed in this policy);
- Staff and pupils will be familiar with the school's security procedures, in particular that all visitors not wearing a visitors badge should be questioned and escorted to the school entrance area;
- Staff organising school trips and visits follow the guidelines and write a risk assessment to be signed off by the Principal;
- Staff will sign in and out of the premises;
- Staff are aware of pupils with medical needs or health problems;
- Staff are aware of school policy in dealing with violence at work;
- Staff are aware that they should assess associated risks to children before carrying out a curriculum or other activity;

- Staff are aware that they are responsible for assessing risks to themselves before undertaking an activity.

Additionally, in the event of a critical incident the priorities of those adults in charge of the school or trip will be to:

- Save life
- Minimise personal injury
- Safeguard the interests of all pupils and staff
- Minimise loss and to return to normal working as quickly as possible

A list of useful contacts will be published in the school office to improve the effectiveness of communication during an emergency. Staff will be informed as to the specific location of this.

### **Plan to minimise the impact of a crisis**

At Park Hall Academy we will follow any guidance given by Members of the Trust Executive Board, the Local Authority as well as any advice given by the Emergency Services.

The school's reaction to a critical incident can be divided into the following categories:

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

### **IMMEDIATE ACTION – When a crisis occurs:**

1. Obtain accurate information relating to the incident and relay this to the Principal (or Vice Principal in their absence)
2. Ensure staff have an emergency number (mobile) to contact the Principal as outside lines may be jammed as a response to any incident outside of the school.
3. The Principal should contact the parent/ carer of the child caught in the tragedy and ask them to come into school for a full briefing if this is appropriate. (This may not be appropriate if the parent/ carer needs to go to a hospital if the child has been seriously injured.) Parents/carers need to be informed of all available facts as early as possible.
4. The Chair of Governors, Members of the Trust Executive Board and appropriate officers in the Local Authority will be contacted and notified of the incident so that appropriate assistance can be given.
5. Staff will be informed as early as possible. It may be necessary to relieve the Vice Principal from their duties if they are required to support the careful management of the crisis.
6. Ensure any incoming calls by other parents or agencies are answered. A record of who has telephoned should be kept so the school knows who else needs to be contacted.
7. All other parents/ carers should be informed that a significant accident has occurred and the result of this may be that their child will be upset. Any parent who is distressed will be offered support and telephone numbers given of agencies which can help.
8. A telephone call will be made to inform our neighbouring schools that an incident of significance has occurred.
9. The school will contact the Local Authority press officer for advice regarding dealing with the media. All guidance will be adhered to. No member of staff or member of the Governing Body will talk to the media unless previously arranged. Additionally, all parents/ carers and children will be asked not to talk to the media in the best interests of the children, staff and school as a whole. It is expected that the LA press officer will deal

with any request for television, radio or newspaper interviews. All enquiries will be directed to and through the press officer who will (if required) arrange to have a briefing session with the press.

10. Pupils will be informed of what has happened in a factual but sensitive way so to avoid any misunderstanding. It is preferable to do this as classes so that children can ask any questions they may have. Facts only will be shared and staff will not share any personal comments or speculations. They will be told as close to the time that parents/ carers are informed.
11. School routines will continue (as far as possible). This is to ensure the children feel secure and know there is stability in school.
12. If the incident has resulted in a death, a member of the school team will enquire as to the burial customs of the family (some religions hold their funeral services within 24 hours of death). This will include whether sending flowers, for instance, is appropriate.

## SHORT TERM ACTION

Once it is confirmed that Park Hall Academy is facing a major crisis the following will be followed:

1. Ensure children receive any medical or first aid support they require and that they are physically safe from any further harm.
2. Ensure children are re-united with their families as soon as practicable. If necessary, organise for families to be taken to their children.
3. Ensure all staff, teaching and non-teaching, have an opportunity to express their emotional reactions to the crisis.
4. Make contacts with other professionals and organised support for any member of staff or child who requires professional help. The Principal has responsibility for ensuring that the right professional support is in place for the children. If appropriate, set up a regular support group, counselling sessions and someone who will monitor and access the children's and/ or staff's needs and their well-being.
5. Organise for appropriate agencies or the local clergy to come into school to talk to all the children in assemblies if this is required and will be helpful.
6. After a few days or when deemed appropriate, organise for a designated person in school to be available to listen to any of the children's reflections, thoughts and feelings on the prior events. If a child feels more comfortable talking to another member of staff, this will be acknowledged and organised.
7. If a child or a group of children have been personally affected by the incident, all other children need to be given time to make cards and send messages as appropriate.
8. Staff need to be aware that children may show a reaction in their play and learning and that this can be a normal reaction to significant events. Staff need to make observation notes and keep careful records of any behaviour that is unusual for the child. These should be shared with the parent and the Principal must be informed. Appropriate support will be put in place if this is required.
9. Organise a debriefing session for children and staff by an experienced person from outside the school. This is to ensure:
  - there is clarification about what has happened
  - there is an opportunity for everyone to share and talk about their reaction to what has happened
  - give reassurance
  - mobilise resources
10. The Principal must contact the families of those who have been hurt or bereaved and express sympathy and give support.

## **MEDIUM TERM ACTION**

Careful and sensitive planning is required to ensure pupils, staff and the whole school community recover as quickly as possible and that stability is recreated.

At Park Hall Academy we will:

1. Make sensitive arrangements for the return to school which may include:
  - the possibility of part time or flexible attendance
  - preparing re-entry into the class
  - ensuring the curriculum is well thought through
  - a catch up package is planned
  - organising visits by the class teacher and friends to give confidence and a clear message of a support network at school
  - set up 'sanctuary' arrangements for any pupil if they feel upset or become overwhelmed by the recent events
2. Arrange alternative teaching if necessary (the pupil may have difficulties concentrating or writing and this will need to be considered by staff)
3. Arrange support for affected staff. Staff may need to have their own needs met and the Principal will contact any appropriate outside consultants or agencies to assist with this. Advice will always be sought from Health or Local Authority personnel.
4. Liaise with parents which will include the sending of bulletins. These may include what help has been put in place, a list of people who can offer further support and who to contact if parents have any further concerns about their child.
5. Decide about attendance at funerals. This will usually be the Principal, the Chair of Governors and other members of the staff if available.
6. A special assembly or memorial service will be planned to allow the whole school community to acknowledge the events and to ensure there is a moving on from these.
7. Ensure staff and parents/ carers are aware of how they will be kept up to date with their child's progress in school. The Principal will contact any parent/ carer personally and establish a plan of communication.

## **LONGER TERM ACTION**

At Park Hall Academy we recognise that the effect of any crisis can last for many years.

The following will be considered:

1. Introduce strategies to continue monitoring the most vulnerable pupils and staff. All new members of staff will be informed of the events that took place and additionally, have access to any monitoring notes made. New staff will additionally know how to obtain further help if this is necessary.
2. Consult and decide on whether and how to mark the anniversary of the event.
3. Plan how to deal with any legal processes, enquiries and even news stories that may bring back distressing memories and cause temporary upset within the school.

## **Curriculum planning for serious injury, death and bereavement**

### **The Curriculum**

At Park Hall Academy we believe that the subject of death and how to deal with death should not be left for when a critical incident happens in school. Most children will have experienced death in some way, whether this is the demise of a loved family member or a

family pet. Death should be seen as a natural part of our life cycle and needs to be discussed sensitively through the curriculum we deliver.

The discussion and coverage of these issues in the curriculum will mean that pupils will already have had some familiarity with them. Whatever the age of the children, the issues can be embedded in the curriculum, so that our young people are used to talking about such subjects. In this way they will not be shrouded in mystery and taboo and may feel more open to talk about their feelings and any fears, worries or anxieties they may have. At Park Hall Academy we choose to discuss death and bereavement through our Religious Education, Science and Personal Social, Health, Cultural and Economic curriculum (PSHCE).

### **Helping teachers deal with sensitive issues**

As a school we recognise that some teachers may find it uncomfortable to explore ideas and feelings they are not completely at ease with themselves. Additional development support will be sought from the Local Authority (LA) who will help to develop strategies for dealing with difficult questions and personal feelings. We will always seek advice from professionals within the LA who should enable us to best support all the children within the school.

### **Multi-cultural and multi-faith issues**

At Park Hall Academy we recognise that we need to have a clear understanding of all of our pupils' backgrounds. This includes having an informed understanding of different cultural and religious attitudes to disability, disasters, death, bereavement, mourning and funerals. Such awareness of diverse views and expectations contributes towards creating a supportive ethos within the school.

We aim to discuss these as part of our focus on Spiritual, Moral, Social and Cultural learning (SMSC) which is central to our curriculum.

We continue to strive to deliver a curriculum that best prepares all of our young people for situations they will face during their lives. We value any feedback from children, as well as from parents/ carers. There is always an opportunity to talk to the Principal if there are any issues connected with serious injury, death or bereavement which families feel the school needs to be aware of. By working together, it is hoped that every child will quickly overcome any reaction to critical incidents that they have been involved with, have witnessed or been a part of as part of the school family.

## **Other aspects**

### **Data security – *To be completed by School***

Information is backed up by the ICT Technician on the common driver server and TP Systems run a daily back up of the Admin systems. This is stored securely offsite in line with recommended practice.

### **Significant damage to the school premises**

If the school building is not safe to be used as a place of learning the Principal will contact Members of the Trust Executive Board, the Local Authority and Diocese, as appropriate, for guidance in the hope that alternative arrangements can be made quickly. Parents will be informed that the school has been closed at the earliest opportunity so that appropriate child care can be secured. Information regarding the closure of the school will be publicised through contacting the local radio station, contacting parents through an alert on the website Home Page and through phone calls and text/ email messages if these are available. The school will not reopen until all health and safety regulations have been met. We will always put the safety of our children and staff first.

## **Evacuation Procedures**

If children are to be evacuated immediately from the building, the Principal, Vice Principal, SLT will sound the alarm and normal evacuation will take place (in line with the academies Fire Evacuation Plan) for a roll call to be taken.

In exceptional circumstances staff and children will be directed to St Andrews Church and the roll call taken.

If children are to be sent home but are in no immediate danger, parents or other emergency contact names will be contacted. If no one is available to collect children, staff will be responsible for taking them to St Andrews Church.

Every effort will be made to communicate clearly with children in order to ensure a safe orderly and speedy evacuation of the building and to avoid panic.

In the circumstances outlined above, staff will be addressed by the Principal or Vice Principal to ensure all carry out the correct procedure.

In the event of continued closure of the school, local radio stations will be used to communicate with staff and parents.

## **Multiple staff absence**

There may be an occasion when there is multiple staff absence due to a severe virus, through other illnesses or through the impact of off-site accidents in which several members of the staff have been hurt. If there is insufficient staff to open the school parents will be informed as soon as possible. Guidance will be sought from the Members of the Trust Executive Board, and/or the Local Authority as to whether there is any possibility of staff from within the Trust or neighbouring schools being brought in at short notice to enable learning to continue in school. All possibilities will be looked into to ensure the school functions as normally and as soon as possible.

## Appendix 1 - Timeframe for Action

	<b>Task</b>	<b>Time scale</b>	<b>Lead Person/ Team</b>
<b>1</b>	Obtain factual information at start of crisis <b>Resource Sheet 1</b>	Within hours	Principal
<b>2</b>	Leadership team meet with support personnel	Within hours	Principal, Vice Principal, Chair of Govs
<b>3</b>	Establish a Critical Incident Management Team	Within hours	Principal, Vice Principal, Chair of Govs
<b>4</b>	Contact families	Within hours. Continue until all are informed	Office staff
<b>5</b>	Call a staff meeting to give information	Same day if practicable	Principal
<b>6</b>	Inform pupils in small groups	Same day if practicable	Principal & class teachers
<b>7</b>	Arrange a debriefing meeting for staff involved in disaster	Same day if practicable	Principal & all staff
<b>8</b>	Debriefing for pupils involved in the disaster	As soon as possible, allowing for health and safety	Principal & class teachers
<b>9</b>	Identify high risk pupils and staff	Next few days	Principal & class teachers
<b>10</b>	Promote discussion in classes	Next few days and weeks	Class teachers & teaching assistants
<b>11</b>	Identify the need for group or individual treatment	Incrementally over days or weeks after disaster	Class teachers, teaching assistants and Principal
<b>12</b>	Organise treatment etc. Principal & Vice Principal	As required	Principal, Vice Principal,

## RESOURCE SHEETS / PLAN TEMPLATE

1. Incident Form
2. Contact Telephone Numbers (to be updated as required)
3. Critical Incident Management Team Roles
4. Sample Staff Meeting Agenda
5. Critical Incident Management Team Agenda
6. Sample letter – informing parents
7. Pupil meetings – informing pupils
8. Identifying Individuals who may be vulnerable
9. Emotional distress – supporting the individual pupil
10. Sample letter to parents –arrangements for counselling children
11. Emotional distress – class management
12. Emotional distress – signs and symptoms
13. Incident Evaluation Form
14. Business Continuity Strategies
15. Recovery and Resumption Phase



## Resource Sheet 1

# Incident Form & Incident Management Situation Report

**Use this form to record initial information received on the incident and to log situation updates. This form should be started as soon as possible, and all boxes completed. New or updated information on this form should be entered in RED so those receiving a copy will know what is new or has changed.**

### CALL INFORMATION

Date:  → Time:  → Your Name:

↓

Name of School(s):

↓

### INCIDENT DETAILS

**Description:** detail nature of incident; names of any pupil(s) involved, including age; names of siblings attending or having just left schools, colleges or institutions and the name of that school, college or institution; if individuals affected are adults, note the time they have been at the school, links to other schools and any precursors (e.g. illness, absence from work and length of time)

How were you made aware of the incident?

### IS IT A CRITICAL INCIDENT?

Is it an incident requiring immediate action or is there significant disruption to day to day operation of the school?

No  Yes  → Date and Time declared critical:

↓

Are there any casualties or fatalities?

Have the emergency services been called?

Is the incident currently affecting school activities? If so, which areas?

What is the estimated duration of the incident?

What is the actual or threatened loss of staff/pupils?

1 – 20%

20 – 50%

Over 50%

Has access to the whole site been denied? If so, for how long? (provide estimate if not known)

**Which work areas have been destroyed, damaged or made unusable?**

**Is there evidence of structural damage?**

**Which work areas are inaccessible but intact?**

**Are systems and other resources unavailable? (include computer systems, telecoms, other assets)**

**If so, which staff are affected by the ICT disruption and how?**

**Have any utilities (gas, electricity or water) been affected?**

**Is there media interest in the incident? (likely or actual)**

**Does the incident have the potential to damage the School's reputation?**

**Other relevant information?**

Further information on the incident to be entered on the following pages.



<b>Date</b>	<b>Time</b>	<b>Situation Update</b>

## Resource Sheet 2

# Contact Telephone Numbers

Emergency contacts to be included in a School Emergency Plan and updated accordingly:  
This information should be regularly checked and updated accordingly.

### Critical Incident Team - [name of academy]

Role (refer to Resource Sheet 3)	Name	Telephone Number(s)
Incident Manager		
Deputy Incident Manager		
Parent Liaison Officer		
Deputy Parent Liaison Officer		
Administrator		
Communications Officer/Media Spokesperson		
Deputy Communications Officer/Media Spokesperson		
Pupil Welfare		
Deputy Pupil Welfare		
Local Police Inspector		
Other:		

**Key Contacts - [name of academy]**

Role	Name	Telephone Number(s)
Principal		
Vice Principal		
Site Manager		
Chair of Governors		
Deputy Chair of Governors		
Other:		

**Local Authority**

Name / Service	Telephone Number(s)
<b>City of Stoke-on-Trent Health, Safety and Emergency Planning Team</b> (in the event of an emergency)	<b>Office Hours:</b> 01782 238987  <b>Out of hours:</b> <b>Stoke-on-Call:</b> 01782 235186
<b>City of Stoke-on-Trent - Media Relations</b>	01782 232671
<b>Cheshire East Critical Incidents Team</b>	<b>Office Hours:</b> 01625 374798
<b>Cheshire East - Media Relations</b>	01270 686591 / 686576



## National Organisations

### **CRUSE - Bereavement Care**

Phone: 0844 477 9400 (national rate)

Website: [www.cruse.org.uk](http://www.cruse.org.uk)

*Telephone counselling service for those who are bereaved and those who care for bereaved people. Can offer referrals to local Cruse branches and other bereavement and counselling services throughout the UK*

### **The Compassionate Friends**

Phone: 0345 123 2304 (local rates)

*Support for bereaved parents who have lost a child of any age from any circumstances*

### **Winston's Wish Family Line**

Phone: 0845 2030 405

Website: [www.winstonwish.org.uk](http://www.winstonwish.org.uk)

*Information and guidance for families of bereaved children. Can provide contact details for local groups which support bereaved children*

### **The Samaritans**

Phone: 116 123 (free)

Website: [www.samaritans.org](http://www.samaritans.org)

*Confidential emotional support for anyone in a crisis*

### **Survivors of Bereavement by Suicide**

Phone: 0300 111 5065 (national rate)

*Can provide details of local self help groups for those bereaved by suicide*

### **Childline**

Phone: 0800 1111 (free phone)

*National help line for children*

### **British Red Cross National Office**

44 Moorfields London EC2Y 9AL

Tel. 0344 871 11 11

*Advice on memorials and donations*



## Resource Sheet 3

# Critical Incidents Management Team Roles

### Suggested roles and responsibilities for the School's Incident Response Team:

Role	Responsibility	Possible Candidates
<b>INCIDENT MANAGER</b>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Acts as or appoints schools single point of contact</li> <li>• Consider the need to alert other colleagues and external agencies.</li> <li>• Establish a Critical Incident Management Team.</li> <li>• Collate all relevant information relating to the emergency.</li> <li>• Co-ordinate the emergency response strategy for the school, liaising with relevant services, school governors as appropriate.</li> <li>• Monitor the emergency response.</li> <li>• Provide regular staff / team briefings.</li> <li>• Authorise any additional expenditure.</li> </ul>	Principal Vice Principal Chair of Governors Senior Staff Member
<b>DEPUTY INCIDENT MANAGER</b>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Assists Incident Manager.</li> <li>• Co-ordinates and manages staff in the Incident Management Team.</li> <li>• Monitors staff welfare and organises staff roster.</li> <li>• Co-ordinates evacuation, if necessary.</li> <li>• Liaises with the Emergency Services and other organisations as necessary.</li> </ul>	Vice Principal Vice Chair of Governors Senior Staff Member
<b>PARENT LIAISON OFFICER</b>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Advises parents and provides information.</li> <li>• Provides point of contact.</li> <li>• Arranges on-site co-ordination of visiting parents.</li> <li>• Maintains regular contact with parents where appropriate.</li> </ul>	Senior Staff Member School Governor
<b>ADMINISTRATORS</b>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Staffs telephone.</li> <li>• Help collate information.</li> <li>• Relay incoming and outgoing messages.</li> <li>• Provide administrative support to the Incident Manager and Deputy.</li> <li>• Maintains a master log of key events and decisions.</li> </ul>	School Administrator / Secretary Support Staff
<b>COMMUNICATION OFFICER/MEDIA SPOKESPERSON</b>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Acts as point of contact for media enquiries.</li> <li>• Works with the Local Authority communications team to prepare media statements.</li> <li>• Assist with internal communications.</li> </ul>	Senior Staff Member School Governor
<b>PUPIL WELFARE</b>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Maintain supervision.</li> <li>• Ensure the safety and security of pupils.</li> <li>• Co-ordinate the roll call registers.</li> <li>• Provide information and offer reassurance.</li> <li>• Monitor pupils' physical and emotional welfare.</li> </ul>	Teaching Staff



## Resource Sheet 4

# Sample Staff Meeting Agenda

The following sample staff meeting agenda can be used to inform staff of the critical incident and to introduce the Critical Incident Management Team.

1. **Attendance** – anyone who is not present should be informed of the critical incident as soon as possible following the meeting.
2. Provide as much accurate **information** as possible, including:
  - names of the students or staff members directly involved,
  - time and place of the event,
  - any additional information surrounding the event, and
  - names and grades of the siblings of those directly affected who are also in the school.
3. **Introduce the Critical Incident Management Team**, and any additional support staff or community resource people who are present and explain their roles.
4. **Briefly review the school critical incident plan**. Provide extra copies.
  - **Prepare teachers** to deal effectively with informing their students of the critical incident.
    - Give out a script and model how students should be told.
    - Encourage teachers to allow time for classroom discussion.
    - Provide all staff with a copy of the protocol for class discussion. See resource sheet 11 for guidelines on leading a classroom discussion.
  - **Clarify procedures** for handling students who want to leave the classroom.
    - Students who are highly emotional should be accompanied to the designated area.
    - Students who wish to leave the school should only be released to a parent, guardian or their designate.
  - **Inform teachers** of support plans.
    - Identify staff who will run the support and the appropriate procedure for sending students for the support.
    - Advise staff to be aware of their feelings and support each other.
    - Clarify the way to get counselling assistance for staff members.
    - Inform staff of any outside agencies involved in student or staff support.
  - **Ask for staff help to identify** students who may be at risk or need extra support.
    - Make counselling plans for all students who are potentially at risk for suicide or other serious emotional responses to the critical incident.
    - Direct staff to refer students who appear to be emotionally unstable to the counsellors.
  - **Review media policy.**
  - **Inform all staff of any changes to the regular school schedule** or cancellation of normal school events.
5. **Set the date and time of a follow-up meeting.**
  - Assure staff that they will be kept informed of any relevant information in this update meeting.
  - Follow up meeting will provide an opportunity for staff members to discuss classroom experiences and report information back to the group.



## Resource Sheet 5

# Critical Incident Management Team Agenda

The following sample School Critical Incidents Management Team agenda can be used to discuss all aspects of the critical incident.

- 1. Share information with the team regarding the facts of the traumatic event.**  
No information should be shared with anyone else until a decision is made about what information is to be shared and the process for notifying staff and students.
- 2. Determine the impact** of this particular incident on individual members of the School in order to ensure that all members can function objectively. Assess the likely impact of the critical incident on classes and individuals. Consider the impact for anyone in the school community who may have recently experienced a significant death or loss. Are there staff members who may require assistance in leading the classroom discussion?
- 3. Determine whether there are the cultural or religious implications** surrounding the incident. How should they be addressed?
- 4. Identify school resources.** Are there other staff members who might be helpful additions to the team in this situation?
- 5. Update from other agencies and partners** – confirm co-ordination issues
- 6. Determine whether additional counsellors are required** to provide support to the team and work with students. Assess the extent of the need for additional resources.
- 7. Confirm the overall strategy and the specific roles of the Critical Incident Management Team** members for this particular crisis.
- 8. Develop an agenda for the general staff meeting** and prepare a written statement for the meeting about the critical incident. (Example overleaf)
- 9. Decide whether it would be appropriate to send home a brief announcement** about the critical incident. Sample letters are included in Resource Sheet 6 above.



## Resource Sheet 6

# Sample Letter - Informing Parents

Dear Parents/Carers,

You may have heard...../ It is with sadness and regret that I have to inform you.....

*(known facts of the incident)*

As a school community, we are all deeply affected by this tragedy/  
I am sure that you will wish to join me and my staff in offering our condolences and sympathy to those affected/to .....

*(refer to individuals/families affected only where it is appropriate to release this information)*

I have now spoken to all pupils and staff in school about what has happened and you will need to be aware of the following arrangements that we have now made:

*(Details about:*

- *school closure,*
- *changes to timings of school day*
- *transport*
- *lunch time arrangements*
- *changes to staffing*
- *arrangements for specific classes/year groups*
- *counselling support [see resource sheet 7: sample letter to parents re counselling]*
- *provision of further information as relevant)*

*(If appropriate, advice about media contacts)*

I think it is very important that we all take the time to talk with and reassure children about what has happened. This is likely to be a very difficult time for us as a school community and we will all need to support each other.

We appreciate the expressions of concern we have received, however it would be helpful if parents did not telephone the school during this time so we can keep phones and staff free to manage the situation.

Yours sincerely



## Resource Sheet 7

### Pupil meetings – informing pupils

- Pupils should be told simply and truthfully what has happened, in small groups if possible, eg, class, tutor, year, etc. In some circumstances, it may be appropriate to bring pupils together as a whole school. Where this is the arrangement, ensure that pupils have an opportunity to ask questions and talk through what they have heard with form/class teachers in smaller groupings afterwards.
- Begin by preparing the pupils for some very difficult/sad news.
- Taking account of children's needs and backgrounds, give simple, factual information using language and concepts appropriate to the age of the children.
- Avoid using euphemisms, use words like 'dead' and 'died', etc.
- Pass on facts only; do not speculate on causes or consequences.
- If questions cannot be answered this should be acknowledged.
- Address and deal with rumours.
- Try to give expression to the emotions that individuals may be experiencing (eg, shock/disbelief, etc) and explain that strong and difficult feelings are a normal part of the process of coming to terms with this sort of experience.
- Do not refrain from referring to the deceased by name, perhaps highlighting some positive aspect(s) of their lives.
- Finally, explain what arrangements the school has in hand for coming to terms with what has happened.

*"I've got some very sad news to tell you today that might upset you. There is a serious illness called meningitis. Sometimes people with meningitis get better but sometimes people die from it. Some of you will have known that Jane Smith in year 4 was suddenly taken ill last week. I have to tell you that Jane died in hospital yesterday.*

*Like me, many of you will find it hard to believe that this has happened. It is obviously a very big shock for us all. Jane was such a happy girl who got on well with everybody. We will all miss her.*

It is important for you to know that strong and perhaps difficult feelings are part of the normal process of coping with this sort of situation. It will help to talk about what has happened and about your thoughts and feelings. Please do take the opportunity to talk to your family, friends, teachers and adults in school. This is likely to be a difficult time for us as a school community and we should all try to support each other. Please come and talk with me if you have any questions or if you just want to talk."



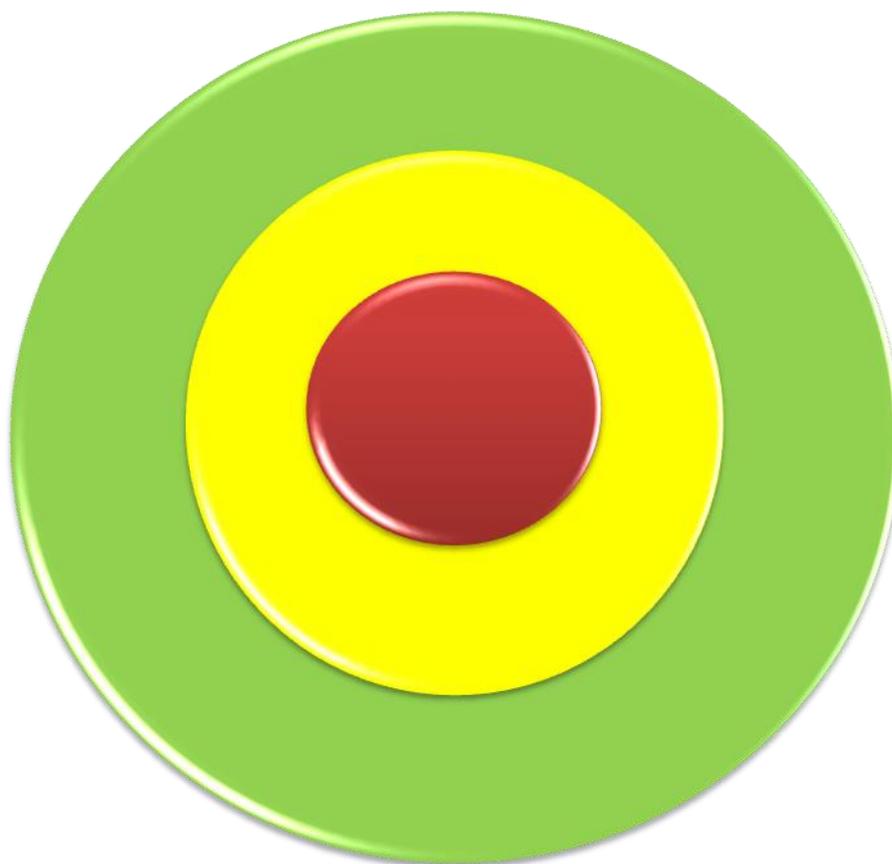
## Resource Sheet 8

### Identifying individuals who may be vulnerable

Place individuals within each circle accordingly.

Within each circle, colour code (**green**: low risk, **yellow**: medium risk, **red**: high risk) according to the following criteria and degree of concern.

- Directly involved
- Witnesses
- At greatest risk as part of incident
- Siblings/relations
- Close friendships
- Any perceived culpability/responsibility
- Being blamed / scape-goated
- Displaying emotional distress (see resource sheet 9)
- Previous bereavement/trauma
- Pre-existing EBD/mental health issues
- Pre-existing home instability / stress
- Learning difficulties
- Culture and/or language issues





## Resource Sheet 9

### Emotional distress – supporting the individual pupil

- Be accepting and allow the pupil to express their emotions. Ask open ended questions (eg, “How are you today ?”) or just sit with them if this is what you feel is appropriate. Avoid touching or hugging but try to be as natural and unembarrassed as possible. Have some tissues to hand. It might be appropriate to use reflective listening (ie, repeating back to the child what they have said) and/or summarise what they have said. This gives an opportunity for the child to elaborate and/or modify what they have said as well as an opportunity to hear a perspective on their own experiences. Sometimes it is helpful to give a name to the emotion that you are hearing being expressed (eg, “That sounds very sad”, “Did you feel angry then ?” , etc).
- You might have to explain your limits of confidentiality (ie, confidentiality can be maintained except where you believe that the pupil is at risk or there are issues relating to a possible criminal act).
- Don’t forget that knowing what to say is far less important than being able to listen in a sympathetic and supportive manner. If it seems appropriate to offer advice, then strategies for the pupil that you might want to suggest could include:
  - Talking to their family and friends.
  - Crying and expressing their emotions in a suitable safe context.
  - Maintaining normal routines.
  - Eating normally.
  - Taking physical exercise.
  - Maintaining normal sleep patterns.
  - Carrying on seeing and being with friends.
  - Listening and playing music.
  - Being creative through art, drama, music, etc
  - Maintaining interests and pastimes.
- As part of such sensitive support, it will be important to ensure that the pupil can continue to seek support from you but without them becoming dependent. If appropriate, agree to a set number of sessions at a set time and place where you can be confident of not being disturbed (in terms of your own safety and accountability ensure that parents and relevant staff are aware of any such arrangements).
- Using a visual aid such as an outline of a hand, ask the pupil to identify 5 individuals (eg, staff, peers, family, other adults) who they feel they could approach as part of their support network to help them feel safe. Ask them to test it out. If all else fails, what else could they always have ‘up their sleeve’ (eg, Childline, etc) ?
- Liaise with parents/carers as appropriate.
- Consider liaising with colleagues to differentiate work outcomes/homework, etc or arrangements for managing the pupil’s emotional distress in class.
- Be aware that holidays, Christmas, birthdays and the anniversary of the event that has caused distressed can mark points of particular emotional vulnerability.

- Taking into account other agencies or professionals who may be involved, consider providing pupil with information about youth counselling and information services/other community support as appropriate.
- Consider involving staff from the Children and Young People's Service eg the Link Educational Psychologist
- Where an individual pupil is experiencing persistent and intrusive thoughts, dreams or flashbacks and avoidance of features associated with the distressing event in conjunction with the physical, cognitive, emotional/behavioural symptoms described in Resource Sheet 9 for at least 1 month, then serious consideration should be given to accessing specialist child mental health services. Referral can be made to Child and Adolescent Family Services by the family via their GP or by the Educational Psychologist linked to the school or indeed by the school nurse or doctor.

**Finally, do not underestimate the emotional demands of this sort of work or the confusion that might arise from any of your own unresolved issues. Ensure that you have the opportunity to talk through any form of support that you provide for an individual pupil with a trusted colleague.**

Resource Sheet 10  
**Sample Letter to Parents –  
Arrangements for Counselling Children**

Dear Parents / Carers,

As a school community, we have all been affected by the recent tragedy involving  
.....

As part of our care and support for the children, we have been able to make arrangements involving outside agencies to provide counselling and support for children in school. We would like to make this available to your child.

This support is likely to consist of staff and professionals from outside agencies talking to pupils in small groups and offering advice and reassurance as appropriate. Please contact me if you have any queries regarding this.

Yours sincerely



## Resource Sheet 11

# Emotional Distress – Class Management

- Maintain normal routines and care.
- Be prepared to be more tolerant and accepting of children who might be more restless, distractible, irritable, emotionally volatile and or difficult to engage than would usually be the case.
- Where possible and where this is something that the pupils clearly need, be prepared to deviate from your lesson plan to allow them to talk and ask questions.
- When in discussion with children, do not be afraid of referring to deceased person(s) by name.
- Be honest when answering questions. Do not be afraid of saying that you do not know the answer or that the question is one that is too difficult for you to answer. Taking account of children's needs and backgrounds, give simple, factual information using language and concepts appropriate to the age of the children (avoid using euphemisms).
- Consider setting up a 'questions post box'. Consider how best to follow up questions raised.
- Allow children to talk about their feelings including difficult, confusing and complex feelings. Give them the message that it is OK to talk and that their feelings are a normal experience given the situation.
- In the same way, allow younger children to express themselves through their play. They are likely to feel the need to 'work out' difficult and confusing experiences and play gives them the opportunities to act out some of the issues. Adults may feel uncomfortable witnessing children's excitable 'playing out' of what has happened and may feel the need to intervene. Try to be accepting and permissive except where this is clearly unhelpful and/or distressing for other children.
- Allow children to support each other
- Manage discussion in a calm and reassuring manner. Allow the expression of feeling but try to manage the emotional temperature. Try to help the children to achieve a sense of perspective. Reassure children about anxieties that they may be experiencing.
- Consider setting up a display area for art work, writing, mementos that the children may wish to contribute.

- Calmly and, where possible, discreetly intervene if it is the case that individual pupils are clearly too distressed to remain in class. Ask if they want to remain in class but in an area away from the main body of children. Make sure that they are supported by a friend. If appropriate, send them with a friend to whatever pastoral support arrangements are available in school. Inform parents.
- Be aware of other children in your classes who may not be so visible but who nevertheless may be struggling to cope. Make times and opportunities for them to talk. If you continue to have concerns, refer them through the school's pastoral system. Inform parents.
- Make opportunities to talk to children on an individual or small group basis as part of your social contact with the children. Even if the children are not very communicative, just being available can be very supportive.
- In line with the school's policies and procedures for dealing with racial harassment and bullying, intervene where you are aware of any signs of name calling, abuse and bullying.

**Finally, ensure that you are caring for yourselves.**

## Resource Sheet 12

# Emotional distress - signs and symptoms

A crisis may cause different reactions in different children in different ways. Some of the more common reactions include:

### Physical:

- Wetting / soiling 'accidents'
- Disturbed sleep, bad dreams, fatigue
- Lack of energy, listlessness
- Headaches, tummy aches, muscle aches
- Change in appetite/weight
- Lowered resistance to illness
- Alcohol/drug abuse

### Cognitive:

- Difficulties in concentrating, forgetfulness, increased distractibility
- Loss of previously acquired skills
- Deterioration in standards of work
- Being more accident prone
- Reduced interest in usual activities and interests
- Appearing preoccupied

### Emotional/Behavioural:

- Numbness
- Feeling of irritability, anger, aggressive behaviour
- Nervousness, jumpiness, panic feelings
- Raised levels of anxiety, fear of dark/confined spaces
- Feeling overwhelmed or confused
- Feeling insecure/clinging behaviour
- Regression to behaviour of a younger child
- Repetitive 'acting out' through play/drawing, etc.
- Crying spells
- Mood swings
- Apathy, hopelessness, depression
- Guilt
- Withdrawal from relationships
- Suicidal thoughts

Be alert to delayed reactions which may occur some time after the actual incident.

## When to refer on

Where an individual is experiencing:

- persistent and intrusive thoughts, dreams or flashbacks to do with the distressing event;
- avoidance of features associated with the distressing event; and / or
- physical, cognitive, emotional/behavioural symptoms as noted above, for at least 1 month then serious consideration should be given to accessing specialist child mental health services. You will obviously want to discuss this with the family and referral can be made to Child and Adolescent Family Services by the family via their GP. Referral can also be made by the Educational Psychologist linked to the school or indeed by the school nurse or doctor.

Resource Sheet 13

## Internal School Incident Evaluation Form

School Name:	Date of Incident:
Brief Description of Incident	
Incident deemed critical: Yes / No Trust Board Contacted: Yes / No Local Authority contacted: Yes / No	Police involved: Yes / No Fire Service involved: Yes / No Ambulance Service involved: Yes / No
Key actions taken by school:	
Description of any external support accessed:	
What worked well:	
What worked less well:	
How could things have been done better:	
Comment on the school's critical incident plan:	
Comment on the Trust guidance:	
What actions will you take now:	

Person completing form:.....

Date:.....

## Suggested format for discussion debriefs

1	Introductions
2	Objectives
3	Walk through the incident using the timeline – incident notification, response, managed and stand down.
4	Review individual(s) / Organisations incident logs
5	Identify any problems / issues experienced and their causes
6	Identify what went well and what did not
7	Identify any actions to address any of the issues together with owners if appropriate
8	Closure

# Debrief Preparation

Please complete as honestly as you are willing to – your details are only for administrative purposes and will not be quoted in the final report

Name

Organisation

Contact details - phone number

- e-mail

Name of Exercise/Incident:
----------------------------

Summary of what went well:
----------------------------

Summary of what did not go well:
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What would you change if you were faced with the same situation again?
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## Resource Sheet 14

### Business Continuity Strategies

#### ARRANGEMENTS TO MANAGE A LOSS OR SHORTAGE OF STAFF OR SKILLS

	<i>Please add/amend/delete as appropriate</i>	<b>Further Information</b> (eg Key contacts, details of arrangements, checklists)
1.	Use of temporary staff eg Supply Teachers, Office Staff etc	
2.	Multi-skilling and cross-training to ensure staff are capable of undertaking different roles and responsibilities, this may involve identifying deputies, job shadowing, succession planning and handover periods for planned (already known) staff absence eg maternity leave	
3.	Using different ways of working to allow for reduced workforce, this may include: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Larger class sizes (subject to adult and child ratios)</li> <li>• Use of Teaching Assistants, Student Teachers, Learning Mentors etc</li> <li>• Virtual Learning Environment opportunities</li> <li>• Pre-prepared educational materials that allow for independent learning</li> <li>• Team activities and sports to accommodate larger numbers of pupils at once</li> </ul>	
4.	Suspending 'non critical' activities and focusing on your priorities	
5.	Using mutual support agreements with other Schools	
6.	Ensuring Staff management issues are considered i.e. managing attendance policies, job description flexibility and contractual requirements etc	

#### ARRANGEMENTS TO MANAGE DENIAL OF ACCESS TO YOUR PREMISES OR LOSS OF UTILITIES

	<i>Please add/amend/delete as appropriate</i>	<b>Further Information</b> (eg Key contacts, details of arrangements, checklists)
1.	Using mutual support agreements with other Schools	
2.	Pre-agreed arrangements with other premises in the community i.e. Libraries, Leisure Centres, Colleges, University premises	
3.	Virtual Learning Environment opportunities	
4.	Localising the incident eg isolating the problem and utilising different sites or areas within the School premises portfolio	
5.	Off-site activities eg swimming, physical activities, school trips	

## ARRANGEMENTS TO MANAGE LOSS OF TECHNOLOGY / TELEPHONY / DATA / POWER

	<i>Please add/amend/delete as appropriate</i>	<b>Further Information</b> (eg Key contacts, details of arrangements, checklists)
1.	Back-ups of key school data eg CD or Memory Stick back-ups, photocopies stored on and off site, mirrored servers etc	
2.	Reverting to paper-based systems eg paper registers, whiteboards etc	
3.	Flexible lesson plans	
4.	Emergency generator eg Uninterruptible Power Supply (UPS)	
5.	Emergency lighting	

## ARRANGEMENTS TO MITIGATE THE LOSS OF KEY SUPPLIERS, THIRD PARTIES OR PARTNERS

	<i>Please add/amend/delete as appropriate</i>	<b>Further Information</b> (eg Key contacts, details of arrangements, checklists)
1.	Pre-identified alternative suppliers	
2.	Ensuring all external providers have business continuity plans in place as part of contract terms	
3.	Insurance cover	
4.	Using mutual support agreements with other Schools	
5.	Using alternative ways of working to mitigate the loss eg suspending activities, adapting to the situation and working around it	

## Resource Sheet 15

### Recovery and Resumption Phase

The purpose of the recovery and resumption phase is to resume 'business as usual' working practises for the School as quickly as possible. Where the impact of the incident is prolonged, 'normal' operations may need to be delivered under new circumstances eg from a different location.

	ACTION	FUTHER INFO/DETAILS	ACTIONED? (tick/cross as appropriate)
1.	Agree and plan the actions required to enable recovery and resumption of normal working practises	Agreed actions will be detailed in an action plan and set against timescales with responsibility for completion clearly indicated.	<input type="checkbox"/>
2.	Respond to any ongoing and long term support needs of Staff and Pupils	Depending on the nature of the incident, the School Critical Incident Team may need to consider the use of Counselling Services (requested through the Emergency Planning Duty Officer)	<input type="checkbox"/>
3.	Once recovery and resumption actions are complete, communicate the return to 'business as usual'.	Ensure all staff are aware that the critical incident plan is no longer in effect. <b>[Insert how this will be done eg website/telephone etc. Consider who needs to know that normal working practises have been resumed eg Parents/Carers, Trust, Local Authority etc]</b>	<input type="checkbox"/>
4.	Carry out a 'debrief' of the incident with Staff (and possibly with Pupils). Complete a report to document opportunities for improvement and any lessons identified	The incident de-brief report should be reviewed by all members of the School Critical Incident Team and in particular looking at the Business Continuity arrangements to ensure key actions resulting from the incident are implemented within designated timescales. Governors may also have a role in monitoring progress in completing agreed actions to further develop the resilience of the School. Use the Incident Evaluation Form and documents (Resource Sheet 13) to support you with this.	<input type="checkbox"/>
5.	Review this Critical Incidents Plan in light of lessons learned from incident and the response to it	Implement recommendations for improvement and update this Plan. Ensure any revised versions of the Plan is read by all members of the Critical Incident Team	<input type="checkbox"/>