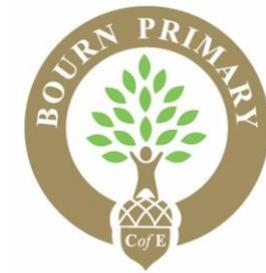


# Critical Incidents Policy



## Bourn Church of England Primary Academy

<b>Approved by:</b>	Resources Committee	<b>Date:</b> May 2021
---------------------	---------------------	-----------------------

<b>Last reviewed on:</b>	February 2020
--------------------------	---------------

<b>Next review due by:</b>	May 2022
----------------------------	----------

## **1. Introduction**

- 1.1. This Policy has been drawn from the Cambridgeshire 'Responding to Critical and Major Incidents' guidance (Revised June 2019), and information available from the Department of Education Website - [www.education-ni.gov.uk/articles/dealing-critical-incident](http://www.education-ni.gov.uk/articles/dealing-critical-incident).
- 1.2. It will be reviewed at least annually to keep the information up-to-date.

## **2. Aims**

- 2.1. This policy aims to balance the twin objectives of managing the incident and meeting the needs of the whole School community.
- 2.2. It should aid the School in:
  - recognising which incidents may be critical for the School community;
  - responding to a critical incident;
  - creating a positive, open, communicative climate where the needs of staff and pupils are met;
  - creating a safe school environment whereby the physical, social and psychological health of pupils and staff is prioritised;
  - outlining, monitoring and reviewing the management plans for dealing with different emergencies;
  - establishing positive working relationships and dialogue with outside agencies, enabling full and effective collaboration in the event of a critical incident.

## **3. Critical Incidents Defined**

- 3.1. "A critical incident may be defined as any sudden and unexpected incident or sequence of events which causes trauma within a school community and which overwhelms the normal coping mechanisms of that school."

## **4. Preventative and Precautionary Measures**

- 4.1. Whilst no amount of planning can totally prevent accidents and problems occurring, it is hoped that some can be prevented and the effects on others can be minimised by taking sensible precautionary measures.
- 4.2. It is expected that:
  - staff and pupils should be familiar with the School's routines for fire and the evacuation of the School building on hearing the fire alarm (see the School's Health, Safety and Welfare Policy);
  - staff should be familiar with the routines and procedures for dealing with emergencies (as detailed in this Policy);

- staff and pupils should be familiar with the School's security procedures, in particular that all visitors not wearing a visitor's badge should be questioned and escorted to the School Office;
- staff organising school trips and visits follow the guidelines and complete the Evolve online Risk Assessment which is signed off by the EVC and Headteacher ;
- staff are aware of pupils with medical needs or health problems and are trained regularly in the use of inhalers and auto injectors;
- staff are aware of the 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.

## 5. Definitions

5.1. A major incident may be defined as:

- an accident leading to a serious injury or fatality;
- severe injury or severe stress;
- circumstances in which a person or persons might be at serious risk of illness;
- circumstances in which any part, or the whole of the School, is unable to function as normal due to external influences;
- any situation in which the national press or media might be involved.

5.2. As such, major incidents include:

- sudden death of pupil or member of staff;
- disappearance of a pupil or member of staff;
- death or injury of a pupil or staff member on a school outing;
- severe injury to pupil or staff member as a result of road traffic accident;
- serious assault on pupil or staff member in School;
- violent/disturbed intruder on the School premises during the school day;
- serious damage to a School building or property through fire, flood or vandalism;
- civil disturbance in local community;
- pupil with contagious illness;
- immediate evacuation of the School with no likelihood of return for a number of hours.

## **6. Priorities in the Event of an Incident and the Lockdown Process**

- 6.1. In an emergency situation during the school day where an event occurs that indicates imminent danger to those in the School, the Bourn Primary Lockdown Procedure will be followed.
- 6.2. 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;
  - minimise personal injury;
  - safeguard the interests of pupils and staff;
  - minimise loss and to return to a normal working environment quickly.

## **7. Critical Incident Response Team (CIRT)**

- 7.1. Bourn Primary's Critical Incident Response Team (CIRT) will comprise the following people:
- Head Teacher
  - Deputy/Assistant Head Teacher(s)
  - Chair of Governors
  - Health and Safety Governor

## **8. Reaction to a Critical Incident**

- 8.1. Bourn Primary's reaction to a critical incident can be divided into 4 categories:
- Immediate action (8.2)
  - Short Term Action (8.4)
  - Medium Term Action (8.5)
  - Long Term Action (8.6)

### **8.2. Immediate Action (IA) – within hours of the incident occurring**

- 8.2.1. The key tasks will include:
- responding to any inevitable risk or threat e.g., evacuation or first aid;
  - notifying the emergency services/other relevant authorities and agreed parties (see Emergency Contact List in the Appendix);
  - mobilising the Critical Incident Response Team;
  - agreeing the school routine for that day;
  - informing staff;
  - establishing a dedicated, telephone line and central information point;

- setting-up recovery/designated room;
- informing pupils and parents;
- preparing/adapting a media statement; and
- assessing initial impact of the critical incident on staff and pupils.

### 8.3. **Steps to be Taken**

**IA 1:** Obtain and collate information relating to the incident, separating the known facts from unconfirmed reports; uncertainty breeds rumour and accurate information is essential.

**IA 2:** Gather and brief the CIRT (Critical Incident Response Team). Brief the whole staff team, allocate roles and responsibilities.

**IA 3:** Trigger support from the LA and other contacts on Emergency List (see Appendix) and establish clearly who is going to contact whom.

**IA 4:** Set up an incident management room and dedicated phone line to deal with calls from anxious parents etc. The CIRT should agree a factual statement and avoid speculation.

**IA 5:** Contact families affected. This must be done quickly and with sensitivity. Consistency of information is vital. It may be appropriate for families to come to the School and immediate emotional support could be a possibility.

**IA 6:** Make arrangements to inform other parents. There may be the need to take advice from LA, especially if there is the possibility of legal liability. The CIRT may wish to send a letter to parents or prepare a leaflet.

**IA 7:** Inform teaching and other school staff. The staff need to be cautioned about talking to the media or responding to questions from reporters. It is vital that all staff in contact with pupils are kept well informed and feel secure in handling comments or questions from pupils.

**IA 8:** Inform pupils. This can be done in small or large groups depending on which is most appropriate. Care needs to be exercised to protect both children or adults closely involved in the incident. It is important that children receive a consistent account of the incident allowing for differences in their ability to understand. Consider providing a designated area for children should they wish to come out of class and talk.

**IA 9:** Encourage people involved in the incident to talk. The incident may need to be discussed before children go home for the day, for both pupils and adults.

**IA 10:** Deal with the media. It is most important to seek advice from the LA before agreeing to speak to or be interviewed by the media. If this is not an option, then an agreed text for release should be prepared by the CIRT and a designated spokesperson briefed and prepared to respond on the School's behalf.

**IA 11:** Devise a plan for handling the reactions and feelings of people affected. The most common reactions will include denial, distress, guilt, anger and helplessness. The CIRT needs to consider outside professionals to support and debrief staff and pupils affected by the incident. Those providing support also need support. At this point the CIRT will need to plan their short-term reaction to the incident.

#### 8.4. **Short Term Action (STA) – the next stage**

**STA 1:** Reunion of children with their families, especially where the incident occurs outside the School. Mostly children will need to be brought home, but sometimes parents and families need to visit the scene of the incident to understand how they deal with repercussions in terms of children's fears etc.

**STA 2:** Manage staff by organising support for them according to their needs, preferably from within the School, but using outside agencies if appropriate. Staff monitoring should be a priority, even members of the CIRT. If a crisis persists over many hours staff become tired, weary and upset and this affects their powers to make sensible decisions.

**STA 3:** Encourage pupils to talk. Activate strategies for enabling young people to talk about the incident and their feelings, using outside agencies if appropriate. Staff will need briefing about ways to help the children affected by the incident and how to identify patterns of behaviour etc. This may have implications for the wider curriculum i.e. training in bereavement counselling for staff, provision of a range of books, PSHE discussions etc.

**STA 4:** Debriefing meeting. It may be appropriate to hold a debriefing meeting for staff, children and parents to:

- clarify what has happened;
- allow for sharing reactions;
- reassure people that reactions are normal;
- mobilise resources e.g., parental support groups.

An experienced person, possibly someone from outside the school community, should lead this meeting.

**STA 5:** Formal and informal recognition of rituals. It is important to remember to express sympathy to families of the hurt or bereaved.

**STA 6:** Visits to children/staff in hospital. Pupils may wish to send cards and letters. The School may also need to consider attendance at funerals, and/or the desirability of holding special assemblies or memorial services. Anniversaries are also key times when support and sensitivity are required.

**STA 7:** Re-establishing routines. Every attempt should be made to provide continuity for the children. The return to School of staff or pupils directly affected by

the crisis will need to be managed carefully and with sensitivity. The re-establishment of routine is an important stage in emotional recovery.

#### 8.5. **Medium Term Action (MTA)**

**MTA 1:** Return to School for staff or pupils after long absence. Re-integration will need to be planned carefully, and may involve home visits prior to return, part time attendance initially, reducing workloads, putting in place mentoring process etc.

**MTA 2:** Consult professionals. Consideration should be given to consulting the Educational Psychology Service for support and guidance, especially to help those showing unusual or prolonged reaction to the incident.

**MTA 3:** Keep parents informed. It may be appropriate to produce a leaflet for parents giving guidance on the possible delayed reactions of pupils to an incident and making suggestions to help them deal with these.

**MTA 4:** Support for staff. Ongoing monitoring and support for staff is a major consideration. The CIRT, especially, will not be immune to reaction from their ordeal.

**MTA 5:** Review the Critical Incident Policy about six weeks after an incident to evaluate the effectiveness of the plan and make necessary modifications.

#### 8.6. **Long Term Action (LTA)**

**LTA 1:** Monitoring the vulnerable. The effects of a crisis can reverberate for years, and it is especially important that new staff and pupils are briefed in the School's history to help them understand and deal with potential repercussions, especially at anniversary times.

**LTA 2:** Mark anniversaries. These difficult times need to be treated with sensitivity. Some suggestions for schools to mark anniversaries are by annual concerts, memorial services, memorial prize giving ceremonies, memorial gardens etc.

**LTA 3:** Legal processes. The length of time taken over some legal processes can prolong the recovery process following a critical incident. The CIRT may need to plan for this, especially where staff may be involved attending legal processes and may be facing extended emotional trauma.

**LTA 4:** Curriculum implications. It may be appropriate to schedule INSET training for staff in loss-counselling, bereavement etc.

### 9. **Action Cards**

- 9.1. The action cards at the Appendix, which allocate responsibilities to specified staff in the event of a critical incident, should be used in the event of a major incident.

- 9.2. Detailed check lists and sample communication letters can be found in the DfE document: <https://www.education-ni.gov.uk/sites/default/files/publications/de/guide-to-managing-critical-incidents-in-schools.pdf>.

## **10. Related Policies**

- 10.1. This policy should be read in conjunction with the Health & Safety Policy and the Bereavement Policy.

## APPENDIX



### EMERGENCY LIST of CONTACT DETAILS

#### People who may need to be contacted in an emergency:

Emergency Services:	999
Head Teacher – Laura Latham	07825 241968
Assistant Head – Helen Culley	07543 459794
Assistant Head – Sarah Wheatman	07548 165051
Site Manager	07568 356071
School Administrator – Debs Paul	01954 719282
Chair of Governors – Vince Chaney	07977 991210
Hospital – Addenbrooke’s	01223 245151
Education Welfare Officer	01954 286012
Bourn Surgery	01954 719469
LA Health and Safety Team	01223 699120
Sara Rogers, LA Safeguarding Manager	01223 729045

(The LA contact number is repeated in Action Card 4 – Evacuation Procedure)



## **ACTION CARD 1**

### **Guidance for School Staff in the Event of a Major Incident in School**

- ☐ Obtain facts and information
- ☐ Call the Emergency Services using 999
- ☐ Retain any relevant equipment
- ☐ Inform rest of school staff and children as appropriate
- ☐ Ensure register of all children is maintained
- ☐ Contact local authority for advice
- ☐ Contact Chair of Governors
- ☐ Contact Health and Safety reps
- ☐ Prepare to deal with the Media



## **ACTION CARD 2**

### **Guidance for School Staff in the Event of a Major Incident Off-Site**

- ☐ Administer first aid as appropriate
- ☐ Establish a contact point with the Emergency Services
- ☐ Allocate responsibility to ensure other pupils are safe including registering
- ☐ Inform School
- ☐ Use communication systems e.g. phone/text/email to communicate with parents
- ☐ Travel with casualties to hospital
- ☐ Complete accident forms



### **ACTION CARD 3**

## **Guidance for School Staff in the Event of a Major Incident On-Site**

*For incidents such as a Fire or a Flood etc.*

- ☐ Keep a record of witnesses
- ☐ Keep others informed of situation
- ☐ Ensure register of all children is maintained
- ☐ Arrange for non-casualties to evacuate school and relocate to other premises
- ☐ Use communication systems e.g. phone/text/email to communicate with parents
- ☐ Manage traffic onto the site to ensure that emergency access vehicles can arrive
- ☐ Care for relatives arriving at school
- ☐ Remain available to emergency



## **ACTION CARD 4**

### **Protocol for Evacuation of the School Site**

If there is an incident for which emergency services are required, staff will move the children to the far edge of the field at the front of the School, remaining in their class lines and facing away from the School.

The School Administrator will take the Red Evacuation Pack, together with Emergency Inhalers and Auto Inhalers.

All staff will take Walkie Talkies

Teachers will take their Pink Fire Registers and ensure they have all children when they leave.

Teachers will take the blue box from their Classroom containing children's medication/inhalers.

One member of staff will take the Auto Injectors stored in the staff room.

The Senior Leadership Team (SLT), or the most senior members of staff on site at the time of the incident, will take advice from the emergency services. If it is recommended that the children and staff should leave the site for their safety, the following process will take place.

- ☒ A member of the SLT will ring 01954 713974 (office)/ 07986726531 (mobile) (Great Barn at Manor Farm) to inform them that the School is being evacuated and that access to a computer and the internet will be required.
- ☒ A member of the SLT will brief teachers on the action to be taken, whilst TAs supervise the children.

- ☒ A member of the SLT will inform the TAs whilst the Head Teacher informs the children that they will be walking to the Great Barn at Manor Farm, walking in twos, sensibly and quietly.
- ☒ Teachers will count the children in their class as they leave the School site.
- ☒ Class teachers will lead their classes in the following order: Year 5, Year R, Year 1, Year 4, Year 2, Year 3, Year 6. All adults are to walk with children, well-spaced, walking on the roadside.
- ☒ The route will be along Riddy Lane using the pavements on the right-hand side. Cross the main road (Alms Hill) opposite the house and to come in to the Manor Farm via the pedestrian gate.
- ☒ A member of staff in Hi-Vis should be positioned at the corner near the village sign to warn traffic coming down Chapel Hill (High Street).
- ☒ Children will be escorted into the Barn and will sit as directed by their class teacher.
- ☒ A register will be taken on arrival at the Barn using the Pink Fire Registers.
- ☒ The School Business Manager or the Office Administrator will access School Comms via the computer made available at Manor Farm and will alert parents via email or text as appropriate. There is WiFi in the barn and there will also be access to the office where there are several computers, WiFi and telephones.
- ☒ Parking/Collecting: Parents should access the Manor Farm site via the main farm entrance and collect the children from the Main Yard. Adults will be allocated to marshal the cars coming in and leaving the farm site. If available, Manor Farm staff will help.
- ☒ A member of the SLT will contact the Local Authority Health and Safety Team 01223 699120 to alert them to the situation.
- ☒ As children are collected, the register will be ticked to show that the child has been collected.

## **Evacuation Pack**

An Evacuation Pack is kept in the School Office and will be taken to the Great Barn at Manor Farm by a member of staff.

Items to be included in Evacuation Pack:

- Class lists
- Paper and pens
- Critical Incident Policy
- This guide
- First Aid kit including paper bags, silver blankets
- Hi-Vis jacket

**Office staff and the SLT should take mobile phones with them during any evacuation, if safe to do so.**