



Long Lane Primary School

Critical Incident Policy

Date	Description
September 2024	Reviewed by Operations committee

Review Schedule	Two years
Next Review	September 2026

Aims

This Policy sets out the procedures to be followed to ensure the safety and protection of the whole school community in the event of a critical incident.

Policy Aims

A critical incident can be a physical incident or psychological trauma that has a severe immediate impact and likely long term effect on pupils, staff or parents. This may include:

- Incidents that involve staff, children or other persons;
- People made disasters/emergencies
- Natural disasters/emergencies

Crisis management and recovery processes involve personal support, crisis intervention and a whole range of practical assistance.

The Policy will name the people who will assume key roles (Critical Incident Team), the information and procedures that will need to be in place. The communication framework required to handle any contingency and the support structures for staff.

Responsibilities

The Critical Incident Team (CIT) has responsibility for ensuring that procedures are properly addressed at times of high emotion and that if the Headteacher is the subject of the incident then the response mechanism should proceed effectively. If the incident subsequently involves legal action, a precise response to the incident should be known and be able to be verified by more than one person.

Major Incidents Focused on People

Whilst all critical incidents are difficult for all concerned, those that involve serious injury or death are inevitably traumatic.

By their very nature and definition, critical incidents tend to disorientate and may overwhelm those involved. Planning ahead is a necessary precaution and can be crucial.

Communication during and following an incident is, of course, of great importance.

Planning for an Emergency

It is important that the school knows which people can be contacted immediately following an incident, what information is available and where this stored. Therefore, the Critical Incident Team will:

- Display a flow chart and contact telephone numbers in the Administration Area and Staff Room.
- Review the Critical Incident Management Plan at a staff meeting during the first term of each school year
- Agree who will act as spokesperson(s) to external contacts and enquiries.

The Critical Incident Team will comprise of the Headteacher, Deputy Head and the School Business manager.

Others may be co-opted as necessary in light of the nature of the emergency and the availability of the people and personal involvement of those concerned. An Incident Manager will be appointed by the Headteacher (or Deputy in his absence) in response to the type of incident being faced.

In the event of an emergency all staff, including non-teaching and temporary staff, should be notified as soon as possible.

The School Office should be used as the central liaison point for all incidents. However, if this is not available, an alternative area will be identified (e.g. Headteacher's Office).

The following information should be held in school and readily available to members of the Critical Incident Team.

- Telephone numbers of all members of staff
- Contact number for the LA - WBC
- Names of key holders
- Student contact information
- Details of names, location and contact details relating to all pupils and staff who are off site at any time, eg school outings, etc
- Significant medical information relating to pupils and staff
- Telephone numbers of all Governors
- Contact list of all people, groups or organisations who visit or use the school and would need to be informed
- Contact list of people and groups used by the school, eg suppliers, contractors

- Location of keys to school safe
- Premises and site plan of the school, including critical locations, eg chemical storage, key salvage priorities
- Gas, electric and water mains control positions
- Copy of the Asbestos log
- Copy of the Fire log
- Computer based copy of Schemes of Work, Policies, etc These are backed up daily by WB IT and recoverable via OneDrive

Responding to an Emergency – Guidance for all staff

Initial responses should be to:

- Contact the Headteacher and/or members of the Critical Incident Team
- Assess that all children and young people are safe – during a major incident the safety of all is paramount
- Build a profile of the incident, eg who is most affected by the incident and how it may have affected them
- Check to establish whether any individual or group needs immediate attention
- Assess immediate practical needs

The incident will be reported to WBC LA by telephoning their critical incident number. This number is to be held by the Critical Incident Team members at home and at school and displayed in specific common areas of the school.

Further Guidance for Critical Incident Team:

Communications

Those dealing with in-coming calls should provide an agreed factual statement together with re-assurance of action being taken at the incident site. A separate dedicated line will be needed for out-going calls; this might be a mobile phone or line that cannot take in-coming calls, eg the alarm/security telephone line.

Contacting Families Directly Affected

This should be done quickly and sensitively. Consistency of information is vital, so it is best to avoid a chain of communication in this instance. If parents cannot be contacted leave a message with a relative, friend or neighbour. Alternatively, drop a note through the door of the house, asking the parent to call the school as soon as possible.

Responding to Calls from Relatives

Agree which members of staff will be delegated/permitted to talk to relatives. These members of staff should:

- Use language and tone that alleviates anxiety
- Anticipate questions relevant to the incident, eg 'Did my child witness the incident?' and be prepared to answer them.

Information for Teaching and Support Staff

It is vital that all adults in contact with children and young people are kept well informed and feel secure in handling questions and comments. A schedule for up-dating them will be arranged, eg breaks, at the end of the school day or first thing in the morning. This ensures that knowledge is common and questions are answered.

Staff will be cautioned against talking to the media or responding to questions from reporters.

Informing Pupils about the Incident

Staff may need to be given advice and guidance on what the pupils should be told and how.

Some information may be given in whole school assemblies and then discussed in class. Other types of information may best be disseminated in small groups by the staff closest to the pupils.

Our pupils may not understand the full implications of any incident, so information given should be tailored to cognitive and emotional levels of the children.

Pupils must be given all the time they need to ask questions or talk about the incident to have their worries allayed.

Families should be informed about the amount of information their children have been given as they will not be able to relay this information themselves.

Contacting Families and Others not Directly Affected

It may be sufficient to inform other parents by letter. In other cases, it may be more appropriate to call an early meeting at the school, especially if the incident is one which could call into question aspects of the school's organisation that could affect all pupils.

A prepared verbal or written statement can provide necessary facts, expressions of sympathy and concern and possibly a message for the community. It is essential to

remember that a letter can be passed on to the media. Seek guidance from WBC LA Press Office before issuing any form of written statements.

The Critical Incident Team will make a decision based on the nature of the incident whether a letter is sent immediately or if it would be better to be delayed until all facts are known.

The Media

The media may make contact before a contingency plan and support systems are in place, therefore if the media contact a member of staff they should: -

- Buy time, e.g. by saying the Headteacher is not available but will call back
- CIT will have made clear who is and is not permitted to speak to the media on behalf of the school
- Anyone talking to the press should have a colleague present to take notes or record what is said
- Provide nothing but the facts
- Give a prepared statement rather than an interview and anticipate the worst possible questions
- Immediately correct any incorrect or misleading information – by interrupting if necessary
- Be sensitive about personal information
- Do not apportion blame or liability to anyone even in ‘off the record’ conversations
- Remember to praise and thank any person or service that have helped during the incident

Remember than there are no ‘off the record’ conversations and that all contact with the press should be treated with caution.

Support for People

Particularly in the event of a critical incident, it is easy for the emotions and stresses experienced by the person managing the incident to be overlooked.

It is important that those managing the incident also take care of themselves and that someone takes on responsibility for ensuring this element is not forgotten.

It is important to acknowledge the emotional state of all the people involved – staff, pupils and parents.

It must be recognised that, depending on the nature of the emergency, not all staff may feel able to support others or the pupils and that a burden of support may, therefore, fall on a

disproportionately small number of staff. It is important that this is openly acknowledged and recognised as an acceptable and possible inevitable position to adopt.

Recognise that a critical incident could have an impact on emotionally vulnerable children and affect their behaviour or emotional state and be prepared to offer them support from appropriate professionals within or outside school.

Staff closely involved in the incident in any way should be offered opportunities for debriefing and counselling, informally or through a more formal structure.

Be aware that there may be long term effects on some people and staff or pupils may need to be offered professional therapeutic help. Consider designating areas for parents and others to meet so that support can be given but privacy maintained.

Formal and Informal Recognition and Rituals

- Arrangements may be made to express sympathy to the families directly affected
- Injured children can be visited in hospital and pupils can be encouraged to send cards and letters
- Staff and pupils may attend funerals if they are sure of being welcome.
- School may be closed in recognition of funerals.
- Special Assemblies and in-school memorial services may be held.

Implications for the Wider Curriculum

Following an incident of this nature: -

- Ensure that staff receive training in areas such as loss, change or bereavement as part of the School Improvement Plan
- Consider the provision of relevant fiction and non-fiction books in the school's Library
- Consider in PSHE, discussions with pupils about what are normal reactions to bereavement, stress or crisis

A procedures page which follows forms a part of this policy

Critical Incident Procedures:

People who **MUST** be contacted immediately:

- Critical Incident Team – Headteacher + SBM + Deputy Head
- WBC Critical Incident number - 01635 519027

If not on the premises the following phone numbers should be used:

Head: Mrs Tina Allison

School Business Manager: Mrs Jodie Smith

Deputy Head: Miss Kerry Penn

Here is the list of keyholders for Long Lane School:

Mr. Tom Lynch – Caretaker

Also;

Headteacher, Mrs Tina Allison

Deputy Head, Miss Kerry Penn

PTA Chair, Laura Maskell

Linked Policies

Health and Safety

Child Protection and Safeguarding

First Aid

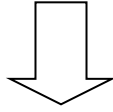
CRITICAL INCIDENTS

ESSENTIAL INFORMATION PROMPT - HAVE AS MUCH OF THIS INFO READY
AS YOU CAN

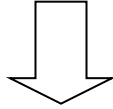
Your name and school name
Telephone number you are calling from
What happened?
To whom?
Where?
When?
Numbers of those affected or injured
Location of those affected
Whether there is still a continuing danger or not
What has happened since?
Which emergency services are involved?

CRITICAL INCIDENT FLOWCHART

**Gather factual information to assess situation as appropriate.
(see checklist)**

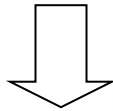


Take immediate action to safeguard pupils, staff and property, where necessary



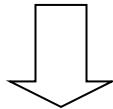
Call for Support

Contact Emergency Services - Dial 999, if appropriate



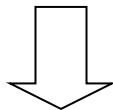
Contact School Emergency Team

Follow Critical Incidents Procedures list



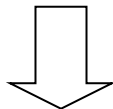
Contact Education Critical Incident Team

- 01635 519027 (Office Hours)
- 01635 42161 (Out of hours)



Implement School Critical Incident Plan

- Follow guidance in CI policy.
- Log all communications and actions



Contact parents or families of affected persons