

Critical Incident Policy

The handling of an incident is a normal part of school life, but some incidents are of a critical, more overwhelming nature. A critical incident is defined as a serious disruption arising with little or no warning on a scale beyond the coping capacity of the academy operating under normal conditions, and requiring the assistance of the emergency services and/or other agencies.

This policy is the Academy's contingency plan and is designed to provide a framework for handling a critical incident, in the hope that it will never be necessary to refer to it in the context in which it has been written. It is accepted that it is not possible to plan for every eventuality, but by defining roles, responsibilities and procedure this policy aims prepare the academy community so that the reaction to an incident is effective and efficient and able to maintain the safety of students and staff.

For the purposes of this policy the term Academy includes all provision on the Academy site – for example this might include a nursery, children's centre or playgroup which must be included in the arrangements described in the policy.

This policy should be read in conjunction with other academy documents including:

-  Safeguarding and Student welfare policies
-  Risk management strategy
-  Health and Safety policy
-  Communications policy
-  Business continuity policy

Appendix One contains an **emergency contact list** – this list will be reviewed annually, and updated whenever necessary.

Aims

-  To prevent/minimise the loss of life/injury to all students, staff and visitors
-  To swiftly inform emergency services and relevant organisations
-  To take control of the incident until the emergency services arrive, minimising stress and discomfort
-  To swiftly carry out measures to ensure actions by others following the original incident do not further damage the Academy, its students or staff
-  To fully support students and staff following an incident, so that they are able to return to fully participating in education at the academy as soon as possible

Roles and responsibilities

The Education Fellowship delegates all responsibility of such incidents to the Principal.

The Principal will identify key members of staff who will form the Emergency Management Team, and communicate the names, roles and responsibilities of this team to the whole academy staff, and to Head Office. The Principal will, at his/her discretion amend this team as appropriate to any situation.

IN THE EVENT OF THE DEATH OF A STUDENT OR STAFF MEMBER IT IS THE RESPONSIBILITY OF THE POLICE TO INFORM THE FAMILY.

Position	Role
Principal	To take overall control of the incident
Vice-Principal	Responsible for the immediate management of the incident, under the direction of the Principal, including liaison with Academy personnel, emergency services, Head Office Team etc.
Vice-Principal with other SLT	Responsible for the immediate management of all students and staff assisted by other managers.
Principal and SENDCO	Responsible for arranging any required bereavement or trauma counselling.
Business Manager or other person nominated by Principal	Under the direction of the Principal to carry out all necessary tasks to ensure the smooth functioning of the team, including responsibility for ensuring all records are up to date, including contact records for students and staff, fire records, action plans etc.

Types of Emergency

In Academy

-  Accidents
-  Deliberate acts of violence
-  Fire or explosion
-  Student or member of staff being taken hostage
-  Bomb or suspected bomb being discovered, or threat made about this
-  Health – medical condition or infectious condition e.g. meningitis or influenza
-  Serious gas or water leak
-  Curtailment of gas, water or electricity service for prolonged period
-  Death or serious injury of a student or member of staff
-  Computer failure – e.g. risk of virus/hacker/parasite invasion from internet with additional implications for data protection

Off site

-  Death of a student or member of staff by accident or natural causes
-  Missing person – student or member of staff
-  Transport related incident to student or staff which result in hospitalisation
-  Severe weather – snow, storms etc
-  Terrorist act which results in injury or death

Preventative and precautionary measures

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

At **[Academy Name]** we expect that:

-  Staff and students will be familiar with the Academy routines for fire and the evacuation of the academy building(s) 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 students will be familiar with the academy's security procedures, in particular that all visitors not wearing a visitors badge should be questioned and escorted to the main reception area

- 🤝 Staff organising trips and visits follow the guidelines in the 'Trips and Visits Policy' and write a risk assessment to be signed off by the Principal and/or EVC
- 🤝 Staff will sign in and out of the premises, either on paper or electronically, in line with academy procedure. This routine is to be followed every time a member of staff enters or leaves the academy site
- 🤝 Staff are aware of students with medical or health problems
- 🤝 Staff are aware of the academy policy in dealing with violence at work
- 🤝 Staff are aware that they should assess associated risks to students before carrying out any 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

Preparation

In order to minimise the effect of any emergency the academy will thoroughly prepare to ensure that all emergencies are dealt with smoothly and efficiently, with the minimum of stress to students, staff and bystanders. This preparation will include ensuring that all staff have seen and understood the procedures described in this policy, and that students and staff are clear about evacuation procedures and expectations through regular fire drill practices and evaluations.

The establishment of an Emergency Management Team will be one of the first steps to be taken. The Principal and key staff will participate in relevant training provided by the DfE or The Education Fellowship. Where other organisations operate on the site they should be included in the Emergency Management Team, and in the implementation of the procedures described in this policy.

In the development of this policy, the emergency planning section of TeacherNet has been used extensively:

www.teachernet.gov.uk/emergencies/index.html

-  Our policy will support and be consistent with the relevant Local Authority emergency planning strategy
-  We will consult with all relevant services to ensure our policy is robust
-  We will carefully consider all possible scenarios and prepare comprehensive plans to resolve these issues

Implementation

This policy will be discussed with key staff who are nominated within the policy to ensure they are fully aware of their roles and responsibilities. Regular staff and/or team meeting time will be allocated to share the information in this policy, and the procedures to be followed, with all staff.

Training will be considered for appropriate staff in relation to some of the main types of incident below, including bereavement counselling. Support for staff, and appropriate ways to obtain it, will be identified.

The Academy Business Manager/nominated person will review and update this policy and associated contact information and records on a half-termly basis.

A central location will be identified to keep a hard copy of the policy. The Principal will decide who should have a copy of the emergency contact details and will work to ensure that this document is kept up to date. The Principal and Business Manager or Office Manager will also nominate staff who have access to personal files so that these are always kept up to date.

Current lists of contact phone numbers and next of kin will be available in hard and electronic versions, for both students and staff. The Principal and nominated staff will keep a copy of the current policy and all contact details at home, as emergencies sometimes happen when the Academy is not occupied. A soft copy of the details will also be sent to Head Office, and kept up to date.

All staff will be instructed not to give interviews or comments to the media. All enquiries from the press or public should be directed to the Press Officer. (See appendix one) All staff will be instructed not to give out any information or make any comments through social media e.g. Facebook, Twitter etc.

An **emergency resource bag** (or box) should be prepared and stored centrally, and should contain:

- 📄 Copies of this policy
- 📄 Contact numbers for all students, staff and key organisations eg Emergency Planning Team, School Meals Provider.
- 📄 List of students who have medical conditions
- 📄 Emergency registers
- 📄 Pens and paper
- 📄 Megaphone and spare batteries
- 📄 First aid kit and, if available, medication for students with medical conditions
- 📄 Plan of the school
- 📄 A list of the key pad number combinations for the Emergency Services
- 📄 Spare set of keys for the premises
- 📄 Visitor badges
- 📄 Other resources, appropriate to the nature of the setting e.g. for nursery food for babies and nappies etc

This bag should be located in an accessible but secure location marked 'Emergency Resource Kit'. Any member of the Emergency Management Team can request this bag by contacting a member of the Admin Team or the Site Supervisor (if required out of hours).

Evacuation and Lockdown

Procedures for evacuation and lockdown are described in Appendix Five. All staff must make themselves aware of these procedures and they should be practised (and this practice documented) at least termly. In particular staff should note that rendezvous points for evacuation in case of fire may be different to those for other purposes, e.g. for a suspected bomb staff and students should assemble at least 100 metres from any building. The EMT should establish clear plans for where this might be, and if it is outside the academy boundary, appropriate risk assessment should be made.

Timelines

Depending upon the nature of a critical incident, the actions and responses the EMT will need to take will vary. Details of the sorts of actions that would need to be taken in the short, medium and long term are listed in Appendix Three; it should be noted that this list is not exhaustive and is intended to be used as a guide.

Communication

The importance of having clear lines of communication to all stakeholders and outside agencies, including the media, must not be underestimated. All members of the Emergency Management Team will have a list of each other's contact telephone numbers; they are required to ensure that the Academy Business Manager/nominated person is notified if their details change.

It is the role of the Principal to ensure that staff and resources are allocated which allow information to be distributed without hindrance to all appropriate parties. **ALL** communication and information sharing with the Media must be through the Fellowship Press Officer. Information for parents and carers should be prepared by the Principal and shared with staff, who should only share this information if they have reason to speak to parents and carers. Students should be strongly discouraged from using their personal mobile phones to ring parents or others.

Emergency Contact Tree – see Appendix Two

Where possible, staff would be contacted about an academy emergency or closure by text message. If this is not possible the contact tree would be used – staff are asked to phone the next person on the tree. This process to be discussed in staff training meetings.

Policy review

The Principal is responsible for reviewing this policy termly, with the support of the Academy Business Manager.

Further information

Northamptonshire County Council Guidance on dealing with critical incidents includes useful resources including an incident log and sample letters to send out:

<http://www.northamptonshire.gov.uk/en/councilservices/EducationandLearning/services/emergencies/Pages/School-Emergency-Plans-and-Procedures.aspx>

'Guidance on First Aid for Schools: A Good Practice Guide', DfE (Contains lots of useful references)

https://www.gov.uk/government/uploads/system/uploads/attachment_data/file/306370/guidance_on_first_aid_for_schools.pdf

'Supporting pupils at school with medical conditions', DfE
https://www.gov.uk/government/uploads/system/uploads/attachment_data/file/306952/Statutory_guidance_on_supporting_pupils_at_school_with_medical_conditions.pdf

'Fire safety in new and existing school buildings', EFA
<https://www.gov.uk/government/publications/fire-safety-in-new-and-existing-school-buildings/fire-safety-in-new-and-existing-school-buildings>

'A legal toolkit for schools', (downloadable through the UCL website)
<http://dera.ioe.ac.uk/6363/>

Appendix One

Emergency Contacts List

Name	Telephone Number
Principal	
Vice Principal	
Mrs Lizzie Rowe, COO, The Education Fellowship	
Head Office, The Old Dairy	01832 770512
Mrs Sarah Flanagan, Press Officer, The Education Fellowship	
Kate French, Lead for Welfare, Inclusion & SEND	
Local Radio (SF to organise)	www.bbc.co.uk/connectinacrisis/index.shtml

Appendix Two

Emergency Contact Tree

[Academy to insert their contact tree here]

Appendix Three

The academy's reaction to a critical incident can be divided into the following categories. The exact actions and timescales will depend upon the nature of the critical incident.

Immediate Action – i.e. within hours of the incident occurring

-  Obtain and collate information relating to the incident – uncertainty breeds rumour and accurate information is essential
-  Alert the Principal who will arrange for the emergency services (if needed) and the COO to be notified
-  Principal to activate the Emergency Management Team
-  Select and set up control arrangements to manage the incident and ensure students and staff in the Academy are safe
-  Set up an incident management base
-  If possible/appropriate set up a phone line to deal with calls from parents and carers
-  COO to notify Press Officer, and produce initial statement to be given to parents and carers who call the academy
-  Contact families of students directly affected – needs to be done quickly and with sensitivity. Consistency of information is vital. It may be appropriate for families to come to school and immediate emotional support may be a possibility
-  Make arrangements to inform other parents and carers. This should be done after taking advice from the COO and Press Officer, who will support with the writing of any letters to be sent out
-  If sending a letter home with students at the end of the day, consider sending a text to families advising them to look out for an important

letter. The letter should also be posted on the academy website as soon as possible

-  Inform academy staff – they must be cautioned that they must not talk to the press or post information or opinion on social media
-  Inform students – this may be done in small or large groups depending on the circumstances. Care needs to be exercised to protect students and adults closely involved in the incident. It is important that students receive a consistent account of the incident, allowing for differences in their ability to understand
-  Encourage people to talk – the incident may need to be discussed before students go home for the day, for both students and adults
-  Deal with the media – this must be done through the Press Officer, and all enquiries must be directed to her
-  Devise a plan for handling the reactions and feelings of people affected. Consider the use of external agencies to support
-  EMT plan short term reaction to the incident

Short Term Action – the next stage

-  Reunion of students with their families – especially where the incident occurs outside of the academy. Mostly children and young people will need to be brought home, but sometimes parents and families need to visit the scene of the incident
-  Managing staff – support needs to be organised for staff. Staff monitoring of all staff including EMT should be a priority. If a crisis persists over many hours staff may become tired, weary and upset and this affects their powers to make sensible decisions
-  Encourage students to talk
-  Debriefing meeting – it may be appropriate to hold these for staff, students and parents to clarify what has happened, allow for sharing of reactions, reassuring people that these reactions are normal and mobilising resources such as groups to support parents. An experienced person, possibly someone from outside of the school community, should lead this meeting
-  Formal and informal recognition of rituals – it is important to express sympathy to the families of the hurt or bereaved. Visits to students and/or staff in hospital. Students may wish to send letters or cards. Consider attendance at funerals and/or desirability of holding special assemblies or memorial services. Anniversaries are also key times when support and sensitivity are required
-  Re-establishing routines – every attempt should be made to provide continuity for the students. The return to school of staff or students

directly affected by the incident will need to be managed carefully and with sensitivity, but the re-establishment of routine is an important stage in emotional recovery

Medium Term Action

Return to school for staff or students after long absence – re-integration will need to be planned carefully and may involve home visit prior to return, part time attendance initially, reduced workloads, putting mentoring in place etc.

-  Consulting 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
-  Keeping parents and carers informed – about the possible delayed reactions of students to the incident
-  Support for staff – ongoing monitoring and support for staff is a major consideration

Long Term Action

-  Monitoring the vulnerable as the effects of a crisis can be felt for years.
-  Marking anniversaries – these difficult times need to be treated with sensitivity. Staff and students may want to mark an anniversary with a service, memorial etc
-  Legal processes – the length of time taken over some legal processes can prolong the recovery process following an incident. May need to plan for this especially if staff are involved in attending hearings etc
-  Curriculum implications – it may be appropriate to schedule CPD for staff around issues raised by an incident

Action as soon as possible, for as long as necessary

-  Decide and agree on a range of responses and support measures (COO to be involved in these arrangements)
-  Continue such measures as needed
-  Refer affected students and staff to appropriate counselling

Appendix Four

Arson Prevention Strategy

The Academy completes a termly Fire Risk Assessment, which will include the possibility of Arson. This assessment forms part of staff induction and on-going training.

Fire Safety is included in the curriculum as part of PSHE work.

The Academy Behaviour Policy will support staff to carefully manage student access during lessons, at breaks and before and after lessons.

A comprehensive site security review will be completed on a yearly basis, or at a shorter time interval if changes to the building occur. This review will control:

-  Unauthorised entry to the Academy site – this will be minimised through the installation of appropriate signs, fencing signs and CCTV systems where appropriate. Further control of unauthorised entry will be achieved by ensuring that all doors, windows and skylights are secure, lighting around the building is effective, an effective intruder alarm system is fitted and prosecution-quality CCTV cameras and digital recording facilities are fitted where necessary
-  Any new building work 'designs out' potentially vulnerable areas.
-  Procedures are applied to ensure that access to any combustible materials is strictly limited
-  Refuse bins are kept locked, away from the academy building.
-  Procedures to 'close down' areas of the Academy are applied after school, every day, as appropriate

- 🤝 In line with Government advice, any instances of suspected arson will be reported to all parents and carers, to inform and equally stress the dangers of arson
- 🤝 The Academy Emergency Evacuation Procedure is applied and reviewed annually; support to complete this may be sought from the Fire & Rescue Service

Appendix Five

Evacuation and Lockdown Procedures

[Academy to insert own procedure here]

Appendix Six

Bomb Threat Procedure

ACTION TO BE TAKEN ON RECEIPT OF A BOMB THREAT.

1. Remain Calm and talk to the caller
2. Note the caller's number if displayed on your phone
3. If the threat has been sent via email or social media see appropriate section below
4. If you are able to, record the call
5. Make a note of the time
6. Write down the exact wording of the threat:

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7. Ask these questions and record the answers as accurately as possible:

1.	Where exactly is the bomb right now?	
2.	When is it going to explode?	

3.	What does it look like?	
4.	What does the bomb contain?	
5.	How will it be detonated?	
6.	Did you place the bomb? If not you, who did?	
7.	What is your name?	
8.	What is your address?	
9.	What is your telephone number?	
10.	Do you represent a group or are you acting alone?	
11.	Why have you placed the bomb?	
12.	Time phone call ended:	

8. Inform Principal/SLT in charge
9. Dial 999 and inform Police
10. Once the caller has hung up and the Principal and Police have been informed record the following information:

13.	Date and time of call	
14.	Duration of call	
15.	Telephone number that received the call	
16.	About the caller	Male/Female? Nationality? Age?
17.	Threat language	Well Spoken? Irrational? Taped? Foul? Incoherent?
18.	Caller's voice (Circle all that apply)	Calm Crying Clearing throat Angry Nasal Slurred Excited Stutter Disguised Slow Lisp Rapid Deep Laughter Hoarse Accent (what?)

		Familiar (who did it sound like?)
19.	Background sounds/noises	Street Motor system House Clear Booth Animals Voice Music Crockery Static PA Factory machinery Office machinery Shop
20.	Additional things you noticed	
21.	Print your name and sign and date this document	
22.	As soon as practical give this document to the Principal	

ACTIONS TO BE TAKEN ON RECEIPT OF A BOMB THREAT SENT VIA EMAIL OR SOCIAL MEDIA.

1. DO NOT reply to, forward or delete the message
2. If sent via email note the address
3. If sent via social media note the application that has been used and the user name/ID
4. Dial 999 and follow police guidance
5. Preserve all web log files for your organisations to help the police investigation – as a guide for 7 days prior to the threat message and 48 hours afterwards