

Critical and Major Incidents Guidance

Newnham Croft February 2025

RESPONDING TO CRITICAL AND MAJOR INCIDENTS

Guidance for Schools

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This guidance is designed to support schools in developing a structured and staged approach to critical and major incidents and in developing their plans. It includes a range of contact numbers and a selection of templates which you can use or adapt and may find useful in your planning. It is not in itself a critical incident plan but provides the information and tools for developing one.

CRITICAL AND OTHER INCIDENTS

A school may experience a range of incidents that have to be managed.

Incident: a situation that is dealt with by the staff team. This may, perhaps, involve some communication with the school leadership team (and/or to parents, and some support from the school management), but the staff member remains in control and is able to cope.

Emergency: an incident which overwhelms the coping mechanisms of the staff team and which requires the establishment's Emergency Plan to be initiated. This may, perhaps, involve some communication with outside agencies and maybe support, but the establishment takes control of the situation and is able to cope.

Critical Incident: an incident which overwhelms the coping mechanisms of both the staff team and the school, and which requires the school's Critical Incident Plan to be initiated.

Major Incident: an incident which (if in the UK) is declared as a major incident by the Police, who will take control, and where the relevant Local Authority's Major Incident Plan is initiated, or where (if outside the UK) the relevant authorities take control. The school's Critical Incident Plan will be required to co-ordinate with the police or other authorities.

THE CAMBRIDGESHIRE CONTEXT

What do we mean by a critical incident?

"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 capacity of that school."

A critical or major incident requires the school's Critical Incident Plan to be initiated.

Such incidents will usually require the assistance of the relevant emergency services and/or Cambridgeshire County Council (The Council) and others.

The incident or event may be unanticipated, imminent or in progress. It may occur on school property, in the local community or out of school. Examples include

- A major incident on the school site
- Gas leak
- Arson/fire or laboratory or gas explosion
- Public health threats (E.g. Pandemic Influenza)
- Pupil sudden death or suicide

- Sudden death of a staff member
- Abduction/disappearance
- Floods from a major water leak, excessive surface run off, or a nearby river or watercourse flooding
- An external security risk or incident requiring the lockdown of the school premises
- Terrorism or a bomb threat or explosion
- An incident which affects access to the school
- An incident off site whilst members of the school community are on a school visit
- A coach accident on a school visit returning to school, no pupils injured
- A terrorism event in London at one site at 7.45 am with a school group on their way into London
- A ferry strike in France, 24 hours before the Paris group are due to return home
- An environmental incident, for example, the release of hazardous substances or severe weather
- A deliberate act of violence, such as the use of a knife or firearm on site
- Civil disturbances
- A transport-related incident near to the school.

While it is hoped that none of these incidents will occur it is important that schools should be prepared for any eventuality. In recent years, Cambridgeshire schools have responded to a range of incidents, emergencies and critical and major incidents including, fires, flooding, lockdown because of an armed adult in the local vicinity, a bomb scare requiring evacuation, threatening hoax emails specifically targeting school communities and a coach crash on a school visit.

Schools should, therefore, be proactive and develop a Critical Incident Plan to cover all eventualities. The intention of this document is to provide guidance for school managers and governors who have a responsibility to plan for critical and major incidents. It offers advice on what to include in a school Critical Incident Plan, which should guide the actions of those responsible if an emergency occurs.

The general guidance can be applied to all schools, but each school will need to make additional local arrangements to reflect the needs of their context and their pupils.

Schools will need to consider their response to a situation:

- Immediately
- In the medium-term
- In the long-term during the recovery phase

Incidents and emergencies

Some incidents are probably non-critical, and examples include:

- Death of a person associated with the school
- Expected death of a pupil or member of staff
- Lower scale health issues
- External incident requiring enhanced awareness

- Short-term loss of staff or infrastructure

Although not critical, schools may still wish to contact a Leadership Adviser to discuss intended responses.

Please note in the event of being notified of an unexpected death you must notify the Leadership Adviser team as soon as possible, as they will initiate the Local Authority 'Child Death Protocol' to alert relevant colleagues.

Schools may also have to close at short notice due to an incident or emergency. Guidance on such unexpected and unplanned closures is published in a separate document.

Schools need to be prepared for the unexpected; The Council strongly recommends that all schools should have an up to date plan in place. If you would like any additional support or guidance when preparing your school's plan please contact: Phil Nash, Senior Adviser for Leadership
01223 699448 / 07920 270820
phil.nash@cambridgeshire.gov.uk

Some critical and major incidents affecting schools may be related to school security. For further guidance on all aspects of school security including various checklists and templates, please see the following link:
[School and college security - GOV.UK \(www.gov.uk\)](http://www.gov.uk)

WHAT CAN SCHOOLS DO TO PREPARE FOR THE UNEXPECTED?

Identify a Critical Incident Response Team (CIRT)

This is the group who will be identified to lead in the case of a critical or major incident and to put the plan into operation. In most schools the CIRT is made up of identified members of the Senior Leadership Team with appropriate co-opted members. This reduces confusion as to who is in charge during an emergency.

The CIRT will also include non-teaching staff. Governors may be included if it is felt appropriate and if they can contribute in the early stages. Teams should also be aware of substitution arrangements and what to do out of hours or during the school holidays.

When planning the CIRT and when forming the team on the day, the roles below will need to be filled. Since schools vary considerably in size and organisation, it is not possible to specify who should fill each role. Furthermore, some roles may be combined where needed. However, each school should ensure that a larger trained staff group is aware that they might be called upon to join the CIRT to put the plan into operation and may be asked to drop in or out as needed.

Potential roles which should be considered are as follows:

1. Incident Team Manager – of the whole process.

2. External Point of contact – for external agencies such as the emergency services, the Local Authority (LA), media, insurance, Chair of Governors and other appropriate outside agencies. Depending on the nature and scale of the incident the contact for media enquiries and liaison with the LA communications team may need to be a dedicated role.
3. Parent/Family Liaison - with responsibility for obtaining and collating key information and contacting parents/relatives of those involved. If appropriate social media could also be monitored to see what is perceived about the incident in the wider community.
4. Liaison with staff, pupils, wider parents and the community, and ensuring the school website says what it needs to say.
5. Managing phone calls and those coming into school.
6. Person to log all calls, people coming in, record keeping and logging significant actions throughout the incident.

Whilst not a part of the CIRT, the school may need to identify a lead member of staff to maintain the normal running of the school as appropriate.

Schools must ensure that all staff are aware of the CIRT and its members' roles.

People identified in the plan with specific responsibilities including the CIRT should provide a 24 hour contact telephone number and arrangements should be made to ensure business continuity during school holidays when named individuals may be away.

DESIGNING A PLAN

Design a plan to meet the needs of your school and its site users and establish a systematic mechanism to implement your plans and advise all parties. Appendix 1 contains useful contacts and numbers; Appendix 2 contains a checklist to help your preparation and Appendix 3 contains a template plan you may wish to use.

In producing a plan you should firstly identify the range of crises that could affect your school. If your school is near to an industrial site, for example, this may include the need to evacuate or contain students and staff at short notice. You should identify if they are likely to be incidents, emergencies, critical or major incidents.

The following information should help you put together the content of your plan.

Basics

It should be simple and straightforward to operate and kept up-to-date.

All staff should be familiar with it.

Every member of the CIRT should hold an updated off-site paper copy.

A copy should not be taken on school visits. Staff on the visit should ring the emergency contact and the plan will be activated back at school.

It should be held safely in duplicate copy off-site in the event of a fire/flood.

The plan should consider that some incidents may run for days, so plan for standby and roster arrangements. Ensure that planning includes a consideration of the medium and long term actions required after the immediate conclusion of an incident.

Contact information

The plan should include arrangements to contact every member of staff (landline and mobile).

It should include contact details for outside agencies, including out of hours numbers where appropriate and emergency contact details for parents.

Resources

Arrangements should be in place for an independent outgoing phone line or a fully charged mobile. Schools should consider having a selection of spare mobile phone chargers or power packs with suitable leads available.

The plan should identify alternative facilities should the school become unavailable for whatever reason. This facility may be a school, a County Council or community building in the vicinity of the school.

This facility should, at the very least, provide an administration base as a bare minimum for business continuity. Facilities for teaching may not be available and assistance would then be available from the LA.

You should consider having a grab pack available if you have to evacuate and move elsewhere. This may include:

- A prepared resource kit including site plans, contact lists, site users and key holders.
- Printed copies of incident recording sheets and spare paper.

You may also want to acquire a supply of florescent vests to identify staff.

Practice and review

It should be reviewed and practiced once a year under a range of on-site and off-site scenarios. If more than 30% of the involved key staff leave the school then the plan should be reviewed.

Information should be updated systematically and communicated to staff.

First Aid

Staff with up-to-date First Aid qualifications should be identified. Remember they may not all work full time. You should ensure you know the exact location of all the First Aid kits in school.

You may wish to use Appendix 2 and the template in Appendix 3 to help you draft your Critical Incident Plan.

Schools may wish to have an easy access folder with key documents to hand, which may include:

- The school's Critical Incident Plan (developed from Appendix 3)
- Some example timelines for reference (Appendix 4)
- A number (10?) of recording sheets ready to use (Appendix 5)
- Any other key documents required.

The above may form a 'pack' which could be held by each member of the CIRT.

MANAGING BOMB AND HOAX THREATS

In recent years schools nationally and in Cambridgeshire have received threats alleging that their school is going to be targeted. These have been hoaxes, but it is essential that schools take them seriously and report the threat to the police and carefully follow their advice. The Leadership Advisers have produced two model letters that schools can use in these circumstances if they need to communicate with parents about such incidents. These are included in the appendix section of this document. The LA will also issue advice to schools if they are made aware of the threat. Please report any threats received to a Leadership Adviser.

There is further guidance on managing bomb threats including a helpful template within the previously mentioned DfE Guidance on school security at the following link: [School and college security - GOV.UK \(www.gov.uk\)](http://www.gov.uk)

EVACUATION AND LOCKDOWN PROCEDURES

Do remember that some incidents may require a lockdown of the school, so you must ensure that the plan does not just focus on evacuation. You should also be minded that incidents may not just occur during the school day, but could take place before and after school, including times when children/families may be travelling to/from the school.

Identify in your plan the contact/rendezvous points and emergency assembly areas for evacuation.

All schools have well-rehearsed fire evacuation procedures, but it is advisable that they should also have plans for a lockdown procedure. Lockdown keeps everybody in and intruders out. Schools are usually secure places during the day and it essential that good visitor access procedures are in place. There are steps that can be taken to make them more secure if the lockdown procedure is activated.

Lockdown procedures need to be realistic and based upon the local risk to the school and its community.

Recent incidents have included major pollution incidents in the local community following a major fire, an individual wandering the local community with a knife, and a perceived risk from an intruder.

Although plans will be different for each institution, schools will need to plan for a two stage partial lockdown or a full lockdown. The latter may be as a result of police advice or the threat as perceived by school staff and will require more protective measures to be implemented. It will be implemented if there is an immediate threat to the school and may be an escalation of a partial lockdown.

Staff need to be alerted about the activation of the plan by a recognisable signal that is not the same as the fire alarm.

The police need to be notified unless contact has come from them.

Pupils and others who are outside should be brought inside as quickly as possible.

All external doors and ground floor windows should be locked.

Staff should inform the office immediately of any unaccounted for pupils.

Staff should encourage the pupils to keep calm. In many situations it will be possible to continue teaching as usual, especially if pupils have not been brought inside and the school is only in phase one of lockdown.

Contact a Leadership Adviser.

Parents should be notified as soon as it is practical to do so. Please note that parents may try to visit the school once they are informed and also be aware that information may be shared by social media.

Pupils should not be released during the lockdown and obviously the school will be closed to visitors. Consider if any members of the school community are off site and arrange for them to return to another location.

It is advisable to practice lockdown arrangements/invacuation/return to base procedures.

EMERGENCY PROCEDURES FOR OFF-SITE VISITS

The Outdoor Education Adviser provides guidance, training and advice for managing emergencies off-site and access to the Evolve website for managing off-site visits. Fold up action plans for staff to take with them on visits are available. Visit Emergency Support Network (VESN) cards should also be part of the plan. Spare copies are available from the Outdoor Education Adviser.

Guidance on visit emergencies can be found here: [4 – Good Practice | \(oeapng.info\)](#)

IMPLEMENTING THE PLAN

Follow the **S A F E R** principle.

Stop – and gather information, start to gather people to help you from your Critical Incident Response Team. Start recording decisions and actions on the incident recording sheet.

- Bring together the CIRT
- Assign tasks and ensure each individual knows what is expected and logs their action on a central log of events record sheet
- Consider whether you may need to close the school
- Identify a member of the CIRT as the person to co-ordinate information
- Consider communication to school staff/pupils/community

Assess – what has happened, what can you see, what did you hear, what are people saying, are there any known casualties, and is first aid or an ambulance required? Who else needs assistance?

- What happened/where/when
- How many involved; who are they?
- Name and contact numbers of adults at location of incident
- Details and location of injured (severity, name of injured and supervising adult(s) name(s) /contact number)
- Details and location of non-injured names, and supervising adult(s) name(s) /contact number

Formulate – a plan for the next 5 minutes.

- Bring people around you to help
- Launch the Critical Incident Plan.
- Work out where you will be based and establish a dedicated phone line to operate from that base.
- What has been done already and what needs to be done next?
- Has anyone else been informed e.g. Emergency Services, Leadership Adviser? (What were they told?)
- Ensure Leadership Adviser/LA/Trust and Chair of Governors/Chief executive are informed.
- Does anybody else need to be informed?

Execute the plan and delegate the tasks.

- Identify actions for CIRT members and identify if more members are required
- CIRT to agree a statement for all incoming calls, which can be managed by properly briefed staff or via informative answer phone messages where not all school lines can be operated personally (e.g. after school hours)
- CIRT to brief personnel having direct links with public/media (factual brief statements only) (Discourage any speculative discussion; route all press enquiries to the LA Communications Team in the case of a critical or major incident)
- Establish a press release in conjunction with the Communications Team
- Action the 'telephone cascade' for staff and governors if appropriate, to keep information flow fast and accurate
- Communicate with families whose relatives (children and adults) are or may be involved. This should be done quickly and with great sensitivity, preferably by a

CIRT member. Remember it is the responsibility of the police to notify next of kin in the event of a death

- Consistency of information is essential, therefore, use the agreed statement and the most up-to-date information available
- Try not to leave messages or use extended chains of communication
- Establish a reception base for concerned relatives coming to the school and think carefully about the siting of this base. Ensure people who can comfort and inform relatives staff this. Maintain direct contact with this base
- Prepare general information for all parents/staff/governors. Information should be simple, factual, express sympathy and concern and should indicate when further information may be available
- Regularly brief school staff and governors and ensure that staff and governors are discouraged from speaking to the media
- Brief pupils. This is best done in class or tutor groups and should be age appropriate

Re-assess – be prepared to stop, look around, is your plan working, does it need to be altered?

- How long is the incident going to continue for?
- Do staff need to be rotated into jobs and tasks?
- Is there somebody to hand over to?
- What continuing support is required for pupils, staff and relatives of those involved? A member of CIRT should have been identified as having responsibility for ensuring continuing support. Your Leadership Adviser may have mobilised help from a variety of agencies able to offer support and counselling to those immediately affected. These may include:

Educational Psychologists
Experienced counsellors
Social Workers
Emergency Planning Team
District teams
Property officers
Health and Safety

- You will need to discuss likely continuing needs with relevant professional staff. Local religious communities may also be able to contribute or take a lead in providing a longer-term focus for support
- You may want to include in your plan details of who can offer specific support and for how long this can be continued.

The Recovery phase

Share information and advice about what has happened (this will apply immediately but will continue into the recovery phase). Do remember that the media will be aware of the anniversary date of a critical or major incident and may follow up in subsequent years. It makes sense to prepare for such interest.

Acknowledge the consequences of the event on the school's community. Provide opportunities for pupils and staff to express personal reactions and feelings (immediate and continuing need).

All staff will need information about what has happened, and they should be advised about how to talk to and support children. The Education Psychology service can provide expert advice on this. Counselling information should be provided for staff. Parents may also need information and advice on supporting and getting help for their children.

Your school's Designated Safeguarding Lead (DSL) has information about a range of support agencies, and it would make sense to include the information provided in their DSL booklet in your Critical Incident resource pack.

The CIRT may also need to consider the overall response of the school after the conclusion of the incident. This will include the response to some of the following:

- Attendance at a funeral. (It will not normally be appropriate to close the school)
- Visit(s) of staff/children to hospital
- Expressions of sympathy to families affected
- Communicating information that the family/families involved want to share with the wider community
- An assembly or service to mark the event
- A memorial in the school or school grounds. It is advisable to consider this carefully and ensure full consultation with all parties
- Do bear in mind that school letters about the incident may be shared with the local and national press and may be posted on a range of social media sites

Review

There should be a formal review of the Critical Incident Plan every time it is put into action and on annual basis. This gives the opportunity to identify alterations and improvements to the plan as well as lessons learned. Consideration should be given at this stage as to how these are shared.

USEFUL CONTACTS AND NUMBERS (see Appendix 1)

This guidance is designed to support schools in developing a structured and staged approach to critical incidents and in developing their individual Critical Incident Plan.

Appendix 1 includes various contact numbers for key LA personnel. Other appendices include a range of templates and examples that you may find useful in your planning.

The initial contact should be made to a Leadership Adviser. The table includes their contact numbers and numbers for other LA staff you may find useful. The Leadership Adviser will contact other LA colleagues who can help and assist. This will be discussed with you when you call.

ADDITIONAL SCHOOL SPECIFIC CONTACTS

Academies and many maintained schools have contracts with a variety of organisations within and beyond the Local Authority. You will have school-specific internal and external contacts that you will want to add. Below is a starter list.

- CIRT members
- Key Federation/Trust/MAT contacts if applicable
- SEND Specialist Services Team Manager
- Educational Psychologist
- Health & Safety
- IT Support
- Insurance
- Legal support
- District Team Manager
- Property Adviser
- Chair of Governors
- Site Manager
- Counselling Services
- School transport contractors
- Key school contractors
- Local PCSO
- Key site users
- Finance contact

THE EMERGENCY MANAGEMENT TEAM

The Council's Emergency Management Team (EMT) forms part of a 24/7 operational response to civil emergencies and major incidents to ensure that the LA is always contactable by the emergency services and partner organisations. The Council has a duty to operate within the Civil Contingencies Act 2004 and other legislation pertaining to resilience and business continuity. The EMT also prepares an Emergency Management Plan, which outlines how the authority would respond to a civil emergency.

EDUCATIONAL PSYCHOLOGISTS

Educational Psychologists (EPs) regularly work with schools at a systematic level in relation to individual children and young people. Every school has a link EP and often a strong working relationship, usually with the SENDCo or equivalent. EPs are trained in trauma and bereavement and in psychological therapeutic interventions. Following a

critical incident or sad event, EPs work in a consultative capacity, giving support and guidance around communicating key messages to school staff, students and the wider community, assessing needs within the school, accessing resources and supporting students and their families. In some cases, where it is appropriate, EPs might engage in some direct work with students.

The Cambridgeshire and Peterborough Safeguarding Children Board have published specific guidance to support schools in responding to teenage suicides.

<http://www.safeguardingcambspeterborough.org.uk/wp-content/uploads/2018/08/Supporting-Schools-in-responding-to-Suicides-in-Teenagers.pdf>

BUSINESS CONTINUITY

Business Continuity Management (BCM) is a framework for identifying an organisation's risk of exposure to internal and external threats. The goal of BCM is to provide the organisation with the ability to effectively respond to threats such as critical or major incidents and to protect the business interests of the organisation. Planning will help you to prepare in advance for interruptions to the core business of the school such as the loss of access to buildings and shortages of staff. The latter may be the resulting impact of a major flu pandemic.

Some templates have been provided in Appendix 6 to help you.

School Activities

These are the activities that would take priority for recovery following an incident. The table provided describes what your school does.

Complete the Key Activities column to fit the context of your school. Add, change or delete activities as appropriate until you have described what you do. Briefly describe the activities including when they happen, where they happen and how many stakeholders are involved. Then note if they are statutory or non-statutory.

What would be the business continuity impact if a school activity was disrupted?

For each school activity assess the impact for each time period. This can either be described in words, or you can objectively score the impact using the Impact Chart on the following page in Appendix 6 (1 being low impact through to 5 being high impact). You can do this for each descriptor, so a cell might have a maximum score of 30 if the impact is extreme for each descriptor.

This will help you identify the impact of being unable to carry out activities over periods of time.

Recovery of time critical activities

Once you have identified and prioritised your time critical activities, you can identify the actions that will need to be taken to restore that activity and the internal and external resources that will be required for the recovery.

Reliance impact

This table allows you to identify who the organisation is reliant upon and who is reliant upon the organisation. The impact of losing that reliance can then be identified. More rows can be added as required.

Once you have completed these tables in Appendix 6, you can add them to your plan and have them ready to support you in the event of a critical incident disrupting business continuity.

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APPENDIX 1 USEFUL CONTACTS AND NUMBERS

Any Critical Incidents:		
Phil Nash	Senior Adviser for Leadership	01223 699448 07920 270820
Stephen Brown	Outdoor Education Adviser (See also VESN Card)	01480 379677 07879 436541
Communications	communications@cambridgeshire.gov.uk	01223 699281

		07833 480348 (Out of hours)
Property Issues:		
John Clayton	Education Capital Programme Manager	07879 434636 01223 715504
Phil Hill	Property Compliance Manager	07771 945185 01223 699120
Ian Trafford	Education Capital Strategy Manager	07759 116529 01223 699803
Stuart Wood	Health and Safety and Wellbeing Manager	01223 699122 07789 397291
Mark Greenall	Insurance and Risk Manager	01223 699112
Transport Issues:		
Sue Eagle	Social & Education Transport Manager	01223 715598 07769 742160
Martin Kemp	Social & Education Transport Quality Manager	01223 715605 07979 703869
Clare Buckingham	Strategic Manager, Place & Planning	01223 699779
Pupil/Staff Issues:		
Sara Rogers	Education Safeguarding Manager	01223 729045 07990 936820
Kirsten Branigan	Principal Education Psychologist	01223 728159
Sarah Tabbitt	Early Help Service (North)	07824 569459 01480 373813
Lisa Riddle	Early Help Service (South)	01223 475903 07785 521391
Emma Fuller	Senior Adviser for Teaching & Learning	07881 852441
Health Assured	Maintained schools Employee Assistance Programme	0800 030 5182
YOUUnited	Emotional wellbeing and mental health support for children and young people	0300 3000 830.
Other/wider issues:		
John Chapman	Head of ICT Service	01223 935552
Annette Brooker	Head of Early Years and Childcare	01223 714743
Duty Officer	Emergency Management Team	01223 718631 (24 hours)
Stewart Thomas	Emergency Planning Manager	01223 727944

APPENDIX 2

CRITICAL INCIDENT PREPARATION CHECKLIST

Coding: **A** - In place
 B - Still needs to be done
 C - Not relevant

Up-to-date information about:	Code
CIRT team contact numbers	A
Emergency contact numbers for partner schools CIRT lead	A
Pupil, staff, governor, MAT/Trust, key holder emergency contact details.	A
LA emergency contact numbers including a Leadership Adviser School or LA Communications Team	A
Education Transport / Bus / Coach/Taxi lists	A
Emergency supply teachers/ support list.	A
Pupil/staff movement data (timetables / registration – who is where and when). Include sickness / day-leave rota	A
Record of which members of the CIRT are local to the school	A
People, groups or organisations that visit or use the school and would need to be informed.	A
People and groups used by the school, e.g. suppliers, contractors and lettings	A
Premises and an up-to-date site plan of the school including critical locations, e.g. chemical storage, key salvage priorities, gas, electric, oil and water mains control positions	A
Location of keys to classrooms, minibus, school safe etc.	A
Copy of Hazard Register and appropriate risk assessments	A
Server back-up arrangements for all administration and student records	A
Educational Visits including Evolve database login details - details of names, location, significant medical information and contact details relating to all pupils and staff off-site	A
Access to VESN (Visit Emergency Support Network) card details	A
First Aider list	A
List of vulnerable pupils and others with significant medical needs or disabilities	A
Evacuation and lockdown/invacuation/return to base procedures – known, visible and practised	A
Telephone lines – private, mobile, emergency access, chargers	A
Small room / quiet area identified for Police statements, counselling or interviews	A
Plan in place for possible off-site location. Contact numbers for key holders recorded	A
Model hoax letters to parents on the school information management system	A
Site for the emergency office identified	A
Knowledge of resources available to deal with the recovery phase and counselling service contacts for staff and pupils	A

Appendix 3

Newnham Croft PS Critical Incident Plan

Date: February 2025

To be reviewed by: February 2026

Note: A version of this document should be developed by each school in association with the Cambridgeshire guidance for handling critical and major incidents. You should use the checklist in Appendix 2 to help ensure you include all the necessary information.

School address and phone number	Newnham Croft Primary School, Chedworth Street, Cambridge, CB3 9JF
<p>Key crises which might become critical incidents for us as a school. Include:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • those which are more likely to occur for you as a school • reference to off-site visit locations and activities • any particular school factors which may make an incident become more critical than it might otherwise be. 	<p>Possible incidents could include, though are not limited to:</p> <p>Storms</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Winds forecast in excess of 70mph or storm force 8 could represent a potential danger to trees. • The Meteorological Office provides a regional weather forecast • Email: www.metoffice.com • Safety of pupils, staff and visitors take priority. Lessons may need to be disrupted and school movement kept to a minimum. • Consideration needs to be given to movement outside of school buildings due to the risk of falling branches/trees (e.g. along fenceline with Owlstone Croft). • It is likely to be necessary to cancel outside activities and other events such as school trips. Consideration must be given to the likelihood of pupils being blown off their feet. <p>Floods/heavy rain</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Flooding may result in local problems within school, making some rooms unuseable. However, of greater significance in terms of health and safety is the potential impact on transport arrangements (see the section headed 'Communication' below). • Heavy rain may also cause flooding through the roof. If severe enough, electrical circuits in the school may be impacted and made dangerous. <p>Cold Weather</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • This may be a problem due to the low temperature in some buildings or may be complicated by heavy snowfalls making access, and movement on site, difficult or dangerous. • If there is a breakdown which puts the heating system out of action for any length of time consideration needs to be given as to whether the building can be heated with emergency heating and continue to be used. School closure may be required. • Adverse weather conditions may result in difficulties for some staff in reaching school resulting in pupil supervision issues. In such circumstances, the overriding priority will be the safety of pupils. <p>Disruption to the school's water supply</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Provided sufficient notice that the water supply is to be disconnected is received, it will be possible to make a decision on whether or not to keep the school open. This decision should be based upon the duration of the disruption. • Newnham Croft has no water storage tanks and consequently there can be no occupation for a significant period of time following the failure of mains supply.

	<p>Other possible areas of concern:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • A major incident on the school site • Gas leak • Arson/fire or laboratory or gas explosion • Public health threats (E.g. Pandemic Influenza) • Pupil sudden death or suicide • Sudden death of a staff member • Abduction/disappearance • An external security risk or incident requiring the lockdown of the school premises • Terrorism or a bomb threat or explosion • An incident which affects access to the school • An incident off site whilst members of the school community are on a school visit • A coach accident on a school visit returning to school, no pupils injured • A terrorism event in London at one site at 7.45 am with a school group on their way into London • An environmental incident, for example, the release of hazardous substances or severe weather • A deliberate act of violence, such as the use of a knife or firearm on site • Civil disturbances • A transport-related incident near to the school. 		
<p>Likely members of the Critical Incident Response Team</p> <p>Those who live close to the school are marked with an asterix.</p>	<p>Head Teacher:</p> <p>Assistant head:</p> <p>Assistant Head:</p> <p>Office Staff :</p> <p>Site Officer:</p> <p>Chair of Governors:</p> <p>Vice Chair:</p> <p>Chair of Eco and Prem.:</p> <p>Chair of Pers. and Fin.:</p>	<p>Edward Ferguson *</p> <p>Razia Mangera</p> <p>Katy Holliday *</p> <p>Helen Bracey</p> <p>Emma Laughlin *</p> <p>Aleksander Jach *</p> <p>Matt Day *</p> <p>Ave Wrigley*</p> <p>Eleanor Toye Scott *</p> <p>Nick Whitehead *</p> <p>Yudan Ren *</p>	<p>07769 703727</p> <p>07787 475947</p> <p>07936 332505</p> <p>07855 323646</p> <p>07882 352683</p> <p>07588 782357</p> <p>07866 366579</p> <p>07713 986247</p> <p>07762 075477</p> <p>07568 458418</p> <p>07758 727370</p>
<p>Other key emergency contact details (eg staff, external agencies).</p> <p>Refer to Appendix 1 for full list of LA contact details.</p>	<p>SENCo:</p> <p>Senior Adviser for Leadership</p> <p>Outdoor Education Adviser</p> <p>Educ. Capital Prog. Manager</p> <p>Property Compliance Mgr</p> <p>Education Safeguarding Mgr</p>	<p>Jo Turner</p> <p>Phil Nash</p> <p>Stephen Brown</p> <p>John Clayton</p> <p>Phil Hill</p> <p>Sara Rogers</p>	<p>07904 678 989</p> <p>01223 699448 07920 270820</p> <p>01480 379677 07879 436541</p> <p>07879 434636 01223 715504</p> <p>07771 945185 01223 699120</p> <p>01223 729045 07990 936820</p>

	Senior Adviser for Teaching & Learning	Emma Fuller	07881 852441
<p>Lockdown procedures / issues to be considered</p> <p>Click here for emergency evacuation and invacuation procedures</p> <p>“Grab pack” to include site plans, contact lists (staff, governors, pupils and external contacts including your education adviser), emergency contacts, incident recording sheets, stationery, Hazard Register, Inventory.</p>	<p>All CIMT members to hold a copy of the plan off site (paper or electronically).</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Manager to lead on site - • Point of contact for the emergency services, the Local Authority, media, insurance, Chair of Governors and other appropriate outside agencies - • Responsibility for obtaining and collating key information and contacting parents and carers of those involved – • Liaison with staff, pupils and parents – • Managing telephone contacts and individuals coming into the school - • Co-ordinating a record of contacts and logging significant actions – • Maintaining the normal running of the school, if appropriate – <p>Where would the CIMT meet if the incident was at school -</p> <p>Emergency assembly point:</p> <p>Pupil records:</p> <p>Computer data:</p> <p>Computer equipment:</p>	<p>Headteacher and site manager</p> <p>Headteacher</p> <p>Office staff (as defined above)</p> <p>Assistant Headteachers</p> <p>Office manager</p> <p>Chair of Eco and Prem</p> <p>Members of SLT</p> <p>Scout hut</p> <p>Outside the cage in the main playground; if needed, Owlstone Croft through coded gate on field (Queen’s college have authorised this)</p> <p>In grab pack and on Central server.</p> <p>All back up except curriculum held by County – as centrally hosted. Curr backed up through Irvine Knight</p> <p>Should the incident involve computer equipment this can be renewed via our suppliers and should take only a matter of days.</p> <p>Should the incident involve the mast and communications for the</p>	

	Staff trained in first aid:	<p>computer equipment this may take longer and ICT service would be the first point of contact.</p> <p>Sarah Blake Edward Ferguson Razia Mangera Lynne Burke Tracy Elbourne Emily Palmer Katy Holliday Nick Goller Selina D'Oyly Aleks Jach</p>
Where/when do we run off-site visits where this plan might be placed under particular strain? Are there any issues we should consider now?		
Key Actions	The school will follow the SAFER principles outlined in the Cambridgeshire guidance for handling critical and major incidents. These may be reproduced here for ease of access if required. The example timeline in Appendix 4 may also be useful here.	
Other key documents (see Appendix 2)		

APPENDIX 4

An example timeline for managing Critical Incidents

Task	Time Scale
Obtain as much factual information as possible at start of crisis and assess what has happened	Immediate
Alert Headteacher or designated substitute. Headteacher to alert the CIRT, Leadership Adviser/LA, emergency services if appropriate and Chair	Immediate
Convene meeting of the CIRT and assign roles, tasks and responsibilities. Formulate a plan and launch the Critical Incident Plan	Immediate
Start the incident log. Always keep a contemporary record of decision-making to explain the context	Immediate
Make arrangements for handling the media in liaison with Leadership Adviser and designated school media support	Immediate
Carry out a quick appreciation of the immediate response required	Immediate
Execute the plan	Ongoing
Reassess and adjust as required	Ongoing
Communicate details of the incident to staff, pupils, governors and parents as appropriate	Within hours if practicable
Inform pupils in a sensitive way – small groups are appropriate	Within hours if practicable
Arrange a debriefing meeting for staff involved in the incident	Before leaving school
Arrange a debriefing for pupils involved in the incident	Before leaving school

Even when the incident has ended, arrangements to return the school to normal could go on for some time as you enter the recovery phase

Identify and agree a range of response and support measures. Facilitate support for high-risk pupils and assess who else requires ongoing support. These have the potential to run for many weeks or months after the critical incident has concluded	Next few days, could go on longer
Consider the overall response of the school. Funerals, rituals and memorials. Consider arrangements following full consultation with all families/carers directly involved	Next few days
Review and revise plans in light of experience	As soon as possible

APPENDIX 5

SCHOOL CRITICAL INCIDENT RECORDING SHEET

DATE:

INCIDENT:

Date/Time	Who	Details / Action Taken

APPENDIX 6

Hoax threat model letters

Model letter A

Letter to be used if a school has not received a threat.

Dear Parent/Carer

You may have been made aware, through the press or social media, that some schools in Cambridgeshire have received a hoax email threat today. I am writing to inform you that (enter name of school here) has not received a threat but has followed the guidance given by the police and the Local Authority.

The police always assess such threats and give specific advice to schools based on the intelligence available.

In this case the school were told to be vigilant and to report any concerns they had immediately to the police. In addition we will have activated our critical incident procedures.

We understand the potential distress and alarm such threats cause parents who understandably are worried about their children. Such threats are designed to cause disruption and worry. However, I can assure you that the police and other authorities have given schools the best possible advice and (enter name of school here) has acted professionally, followed our Critical Incident Plan and followed police advice in the best interests of your child and all members of the school community.

Yours faithfully

Model letter B

Letter to be used if the school receives a hoax threat

Dear Parent/Carer

You may have been made aware, through the press or social media, that some schools in Cambridgeshire have received a hoax email threat today. The email informed the school that a bomb had been placed on the school site.

The school followed its Critical Incident Plan and immediately phoned the police and followed their advice. The school also informed the Local Authority who were in contact with the police control room.

The police always take such threats extremely seriously and have well-rehearsed procedures to assess such threats based on all of the intelligence they have available.

As you would expect, the school leadership has acted professionally and followed police advice. For your information, the advice was that the threat was assessed as a hoax and the school were told to continue as normal. The police assessment was that there was no need to evacuate the school on this occasion. I was told to ensure that there was a sweep of the school to check there was nothing unusual. If anything unusual was spotted then we were told to immediately request police support and to follow their advice about evacuation.

We understand the potential distress and alarm such threats cause parents, who understandably are worried about their children. Such threats are designed to cause disruption and worry. However, I can assure you that the police and other authorities have given schools the best possible advice and (enter name of school here) has acted professionally, followed our Critical Incident Plan and followed police advice in the best interests of your child and all members of the school community.

I would also like to reassure you that as you are probably aware, schools have very secure visitor access control, and it is highly unlikely that an unexpected visitor would be able to access the school unchallenged. Local Authority staff regularly visit schools and are aware of the security that schools have in place. It is also an aspect of our safeguarding reviews of schools.

Yours faithfully

APPENDIX 7

Business continuity templates

School activities

This table helps you identify what your school does.

Complete the Key Activities column to fit the context of your school. Add, change or delete activities as appropriate until you have described what you do. Briefly describe the activity such as when they happen, where they happen and how many stakeholders are involved. Then note if they are statutory or non-statutory.

Key Activities	Brief Description	Statutory/non-statutory
Teaching		
Safeguarding		
Catering		
Assessments / examinations		
ICT		
Extra-curricular activities		
Wrap around care		
Lettings/community use		
Transport		
Site management		

What would be the business continuity impact if a school activity was disrupted?

For each activity assess the impact for each time period. This can either be described in words or you can objectively score the impact using the table on page 25 (1 being low

impact through to 5 being high impact). You can do this for each descriptor, so a cell might have a maximum score of 30 if the impact is extreme for each descriptor.

This will help you identify the impact of being unable to carry out activities over periods of time.

Activity	0 - 24 Hours	24 hours to 1 week	1 week to 1 month
Teaching			
Safeguarding			
Catering			
Assessment / examinations			
ICT			
Extra-curricular Activities			
Wrap around care			
Lettings/community use			
Transport			
Site management			

Impact chart

You can use this chart to complete the impact table

Level	1. Insignificant	2. Minor	3. Moderate	4. Major	5. Extreme
Descriptor					

Service Delivery	Little disruption to school life	Some disruption to school life	Significant disruption to school life	Loss of school for >48 hours but <7 days	Loss of school for > 7 days
Health & Safety	Insignificant Injury	Minor injury	Threat of violence or serious injury	Extensive or multiple injuries	Fatality or multiple major injuries
Financial Loss (incl. budget Overspend)	Loss of < £25K	Loss of £25 - 175K	Loss of £175 - 500K	Loss of £500K - £1m	Loss of > £1m
Performance	Minimal or no effect on school objectives	Little effect on achieving school objective	Partial failure to achieve school objective	Significant impact on achieving school objective	Non delivery of school objective
Reputation	Insignificant damage to reputation	Minimal negative coverage in local press	Significant local or minimal national negative media coverage	Significant negative coverage in national press	Extensive negative national media coverage.
Environment	Insignificant environmental damage	Minor damage to local environment	Moderate damage to local environment	Major damage to local environment	Significant damage to local or national environment

Recovery of time critical activities

Once you have identified and prioritised your time critical activities, you can identify the actions that will need to be taken to restore that activity and the internal and external resources that will be required for the recovery

Time critical activity	Actions that need to be taken to restore the activity	Resources required for recovery

Teaching		
Safeguarding		
Assessment / Examinations		

Reliance impact

This table allows you to identify who your school is reliant upon and who is reliant upon your school. The impact of losing that reliance can then be identified and planned for. More rows can be added as required.

People we are reliant upon	What for?	Impact if lost
People who are reliant upon us	What for?	Impact if lost