

LYNGFORD PARK PRIMARY SCHOOL CRITICAL INCIDENT CONTINGENCY PLAN 2025

CRITICAL INCIDENT MANAGEMENT TEAM

ROLE	RESPONSIBILITIES IN CRITICAL INCIDENT
Headteacher	<ul style="list-style-type: none">• Contacting / liaising with RHT team, emergency services.• Dealing with the media including social media
Senior Office Administrator	<ul style="list-style-type: none">• Organising and supporting office staff
SLT	<ul style="list-style-type: none">• Ensure normality for rest where possible.• Arrange rooms for counselling/ support work and a meeting room for parents.

Review annually

Visitors to the school

SMHL / SLT will be responsible for dealing with distressed visitors to the school.

Information gathering

Office staff - responsible for sorting and collating information.

Confidentiality is key

Admin staff must be clear on facts - only share with Incident Management Team.

Head Teacher to monitor staff to make sure they take breaks when necessary and other SLT are on hand should they be needed to take over.

School Trips Offsite

- Keep an accurate list of all staff and pupils involved
- Teacher in charge should also have a copy of this list
- Keep list of contact telephone numbers
- Teacher in charge should have up-to-date medical information about pupils

School Evacuation

Evacuation will be to the site of Nerrols Primary School. Staff to take ipads / laptops.

Contact for Critical Incident Team 01823 792655

If the direction of Nerrols is not appropriate, use an alternative route, but still head to Nerrols.

Information Management

Responses to media via RHT / Headteacher working with advice from LA Press Officer.

Staff must not post information regarding the incident on social media.

Informing Parents

Handout will be sent via dojo on normal reactions to trauma and shock.

In the event of a suicide

Protocol for dealing with a suicide in a school setting.

School will follow The Samaritans site [Help When We Needed It Most](#) (How to prepare and respond to suicide in schools).

In the event of a major incident or disaster the emergency services (police, fire and ambulance) will take the lead role and Social Care have a statutory duty to manage and co-ordinate the situation in line with SCC Emergency Planning.

Managing a Critical Incident

SIMPLE VERSION - REMAIN CALM

1. Headteacher/SLT contact 999, RHT & CoG.

2. Gather information by Senior Office Administrator

- What happened? Where and when?
- Extent of injuries, numbers and names.

3. SLT to decide immediate next steps:

- Close school, ask parents to collect.
- Continue but close off immediate area of site.
- Evacuate to Nerrols (call Nerrols).
- Other arrangements depending on incident.

4. SLT decide how information to be shared.

- Liaise with Emergency Services.

5. Inform Staff – may be necessary to hold short staff meeting.

6. Inform Parents – of those children directly involved.

- Make notes to avoid duplicate messages.

7. Set up Parent's Room if required – Staffroom

8. Inform Parents of children not directly involved

- Brief details of the incident without names.
- Explanation of support for pupils and staff.
- Reassure parents but ask not to speculate.

9. Inform Pupils

- Pupils should be told simply and honestly what has happened, in the smallest groups possible – classes.

Management arrangements – with increased details...

Dealing with the Enquiries

School may be inundated with telephone calls. People will need to staff the telephone which can be a stressful task.

- The confidential nature of the task should be emphasised to all operators.
- clear guidance given on what it is appropriate to say.
- Agreed factual statement for the telephone operators, which includes reassurance about the action being taken at the school/incident site.
- Those answering the phones should keep notes and have them checked against school records so there is certainty about who has telephoned in and who should still be contacted. This should include media, governors, etc.

Dealing with the Media

- Take advice from CPO at RHT. Headteacher to liaise with the media.
- Prepare a brief written statement which can be read out or handed to reporters. Stick to the facts. Avoid speculation.
- Tell reporters when they can expect further information and aim to work cooperatively with the press.
- In the event of a death prepare some positive comments about the pupils/staff who have died and expressions of sympathy for the bereaved family.

Dealing with Social Media

The RHT / Communications Team (Press Office) can advise and give practical help to Headteachers on dealing with the media – tel: 01823 355020.

- Identify a member of staff to take responsibility for dealing with social media
- Staff should be informed in accordance with the Teaching Standards and the school e-safety policy they should not make any comment on any social media without the permission of the Headteacher
- A message should be placed on the school website and within any school social media accounts. The message could follow these lines:

'You may be aware of a recent event within the school community. We ask you to respect the relevant family's privacy and sensitivities by considering if you should post any comments, especially on Social Media. We will inform you through the normal channels of any relevant developments.'

Guidance on Providing Support

Support from the Educational Psychology Service The Educational Psychologists who respond to the school's request for help in dealing with a Critical Incident work alongside the Headteacher and Senior Management. This support is aimed at helping school staff manage

and cope, both professionally and personally, with the impact of the incident on their school and local community. It is designed to be flexible and responsive to the school's needs at all times. The team will be able to offer a range of support including:

- Advice and help for staff in dealing with distressed pupils, parents and colleagues.
- Psychological support for those pupils most closely affected by the incident.
- Advice on issues such as "marking the event" and "getting back to normal".
- Schools will have already given careful thought about which members of staff may be best suited to particular jobs and responsibilities.
- There should be recognition of the differing needs of each affected individual.
- Teachers need to consider their own feelings related to either the present incident or past experiences, so they can feel comfortable in dealing with children's distress.
- Some teachers may wish to take a less active role in supporting others.
- School staff need to be supportive of each other at this time, e.g. staff may wish to schedule staff meetings in order to receive advice how to support bereaved children.
- All staff need to be aware of possible delayed reactions, particularly those involved.
- Staff who are co-ordinating the school's response should be supported and scheduled for relief periods.
- Arrangements may need to be made for staff to see a counsellor or talk with an outside agency/support worker, either singly or as a group.
- Some staff may find it helpful to make a personal gesture, such as by sending cards/flowers, letter of condolence, attending the funeral. Supporting Pupils in the Event of a Critical Incident *Pupils need access to clear and concise information*
- Teachers should stick to the facts and avoid speculation.
- Act promptly to dispel rumours which can cause unnecessary distress
- Be explicit in acknowledgement of the event.
- Give opportunities for pupils to talk through personal reactions whilst wherever possible maintaining school routines and timetables.
- It is helpful to provide a quiet, private place for pupils to go to during unstructured times of the school day which should be appropriately staffed.
- It is important to help pupils realise grief is natural and normal reaction to loss.
- Children with previous bereavement/loss/separation experiences and those with special educational needs may need extra support.
- Be alert to the possible occurrence of unhelpful grief responses such as anger, bullying and scapegoating - act promptly and positively to defuse.
- Give opportunities for pupils to write and draw, send cards or flowers, letters of condolence, attend funerals, plant a tree, etc. A special assembly or memorial service may be appropriate.

- Ensure you are prepared for flowers being brought into the school. Identify a safe area where these can be left and inform pupils when they will be removed.
- School is the normal place for a child to be and offers security at a time of insecurity.
- Children will look to teachers for role models of how to deal with death and crisis.
- Trauma = normal reactions; best helped in a normal and familiar environment.
- Returning to the normal routine of school also reinforces a feeling of security.
- Encourage and support the return of school of pupils and staff most affected.
- Recognise emotions and feelings may differ from pupil to pupil.
- Strong feelings and emotions are perfectly normal reactions in the immediate aftermath. Supporting Parents in the Event of a Critical Incident
- Whether the incident has occurred at the school or off site, parents are likely to look to the school for information, advice and support.
- Prepare a room with tea/coffee-making facilities where parents can congregate.
- Allocate a member of staff to be available to talk parents and keep them up to-date with information as it becomes available.
- Provide information about the types of support that are available to them and their children both in school and within their local community (this information can also form part of the Contingency planning process. Responding to Suicide It is particularly important school responds to a suicide within 48 hours. This is necessary to maintain the structure and order of the school routine, while facilitating the expression of grief, and reducing the risk of imitative suicide. It is also important within the immediate aftermath people develop helpful narratives about the suicide.

Sources of support for schools following suicide through:

- Educational Psychology Service will be able provide a first response to support SLTs. Support can also be provided on the development of a post-vention protocol.
- Suicide Prevention Strategy (Public Health) currently offers support direct to schools following a suicide. Contact Louise Finnis by email at lfinnis@somerset.gov.uk
- Samaritans currently offer practical advice and support service for a school community following a suicide (is available online here: [Help When We Needed It Most](https://www.samaritans.org/help-when-we-needed-it-most)). In the time immediately following an incident the local Samaritans branch can offer emotional support for staff and parents on the phone on Freephone 116 123, by email at jo@samaritans.org or by arrangement, face to face on school premises.
- Somerset Suicide Bereavement Service for anyone bereaved by Suicide. Tel 0300 330 5463 bereaved@mindtws.org.uk
- PAPYRUS – Prevention of Young Suicide. Tel 0800 068 4141 Text Service 07786 209697 Email pat@papyrus-uk.org www.papyrus-uk.org Responding to Terrorism

Talking To Children About Terrorism And War

Although difficult, these conversations are vital. They give adults an opportunity to help children feel more secure and understand the world in which they live.

Listen to Children:

- Create a time and place for children to ask their questions.
- Don't force children to talk about things until they're ready.
- Children tend to personalise situations - they may worry about friends or relatives who live in a city or country associated with incidents or events.
- Help children find ways to express themselves. Some children may not be able to talk about their thoughts, feelings, or fears - prefer drawing / playing with toys.

Answer Children's Questions:

- Use words and concepts the child can understand.
- Give children honest answers and information.
- Be prepared to repeat explanations or have several conversations.
- Acknowledge and support the child's thoughts, feelings, and reactions.
- Be consistent and reassuring, but don't make unrealistic promises.
- Use the opportunity to teach tolerance and explain prejudice.
- Children learn from watching their parents and teachers, be calm.
- Let children know how you are feeling. It's OK for them to know if you are anxious or worried about events. However, don't burden them with your concerns.
- Don't confront the child's way of handling events. If a child feels reassured by saying things are happening very far away, it's usually best not to disagree.
- Help children establish a predictable routine and schedule. Children are reassured by structure and familiarity.
- Coordinate information between home and school. Parents should know about activities and discussions at school.
 - Children who have experienced trauma or losses may show more intense reactions to tragedies or news of war or terrorist incidents. Extra care needed.
- Watch for physical symptoms related to stress. Many children show anxiety and stress through complaints of physical aches and pains.
- Watch for possible preoccupation with violent movies or war theme games.
- Children who seem preoccupied or very stressed about war, fighting, or terrorism should be evaluated by a qualified mental health professional. Other signs that a child may need professional help include on-going trouble sleeping, persistent upsetting thoughts, fearful images, intense fears about death, and trouble leaving their parents or going to school. The child's physician can assist with appropriate referrals.
- Help children communicate with others and express themselves at home.

- Let children be children. They may not want to think or talk a lot about these events.
- War / terrorism are not easy for anyone to comprehend / accept. Many young children feel confused, upset, and anxious. Parents, teachers, and caring adults can help by listening and responding in an honest, consistent, and supportive manner. Most children, even those exposed to trauma, are quite resilient. Like most adults, they can and do get through difficult times and go on with their lives. By creating an open environment where they feel free to ask questions, adults can help them cope and reduce the possibility of emotional difficulties.

Health Warning

- ❖ You may do no more than your best.
- ❖ Expect to feel a range of emotions, e.g. anxious, guilty, frightened, and upset.
- ❖ Mistakes may happen - we are only human.
- ❖ Do not expect instant results.
- ❖ Do not expect to please everyone.
- ❖ Learn from what has happened.

NB: You will be affected - remember to ask for help if needed.

Reflecting Considerations after the Critical Incident

- Self-care and care for staff; be aware of delayed responses and provide opportunities to reflect on resiliency of the community and individuals.
- Be mindful of significant dates and how these may take on new meaning for individuals and the community.
- Holding a memorial/setting up a special place; be careful this does not prevent the school community from moving on from the Critical Incident.
- Revisit knowledge and understanding of the nature of grief; recognise this in the school community and notice signs that individuals may be struggling
- Reflect on what the school has learned from the Incident and what would be done differently if there was another. Update the Critical Incident Plan if needed.
- What skills need to be developed in our staff and students?
- In what ways could we commemorate the Critical Incident that acknowledge the emotion of the event but look forward to a more hopeful future and our resiliency?

- 6 months following a suicide (through the Suicide Prevention Strategy, Somerset Public Health) places are offered to schools on the ASIST training (Applied Suicide Intervention Skills Training). This course is designed for caregivers to provide suicide first aid to persons at risk of suicide and for schools it would be part of their longer-term planning to support students at risk.