Newham Community Learning - Emergency Planning and Critical Incident Guide

Last updated: April 2024

Applies to: Newham Community Learning

Approved by: Trust Board, December 2023 [with amends made in April 2024 approved by the COO]

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1. Overview of the Policy Management Process

1.1. Document history

Date	Revision	Version number (substantive revisions are allocated a new whole number; minor revisions are designated by the addition of a consecutive decimal point)
Feb 2023	The Trust has developed this emergency planning and critical incident guide to inform and support our whole community. The Trust hereby acknowledges that materials published by Ealing Grid for Learning (updated in December 2022) have been used in the preparation of this document (critical incident guidance). The detailed arrangements that together comprise our individual school emergency planning arrangements are held by individual schools. The Trust hereby acknowledges that the Emergency Plan template (held at school level) and overview (included as part of this policy) is provided by Nottinghamshire County Council. The Trust confirms that it will not be making use of these materials for commercial purposes.	v1.0
Dec 2023	Approved by the Trust Board. Board noted that this policy will be supported by individual school emergency response plans, which are in place.	v1.0
April 2024	Updates as suggested by Claire Stewart, Trust Director of Safeguarding, following review subsequent to incident at the Trust Office. Named personnel updated.	v1.1

1.2. Review and approval

This Emergency Planning and Critical Incident Guide applies to the whole Trust. It is reviewed by the Executive Team (and/or their delegates) and is then presented to the Trust Board for approval (via a relevant board committee if appropriate).

Individual plans are completed and held at school level.

It is reviewed in line with the Trust Policy Review Schedule.

2. Newham Community Learning - Emergency Planning

2.1. Overview of legal requirements

Trusts and their schools *are not* legally required to have a security policy (which may include procedures for managing critical incidents, responding to a bomb threat (in-vacuation), managing evacuation from the premises (for any number of reasons), implementing an on-site lockdown in response to an internal or external threat and managing a terrorist threat.

However, the DfE school and college security guidance states that *'it is important for schools and colleges to have a policy and plan in place to manage and respond to security related incidents'*. In addition, health and safety law (both Health and Safety at Work Act 1974 (HASAWA) and the Management of Health and Safety at Work Regulations 1999 (MHSWR)) mandate the duties of school leaders, staff and children and young people to ensure their safety at work/school at all times.

The DfE guidance states that: '*staff and, where appropriate, students should take personal responsibility for both their own security and the security of those they work and learn alongside. This, along with the effective management and handling of security related matters, should help to ensure that staff and students are able to work and be taught in a safe and secure environment, including the online environment*'.

Ultimately, the Trust Board of Newham Community Learning is responsible for ensuring the health and safety of all children, young people, staff and visitors - as stated in our Health and Safety Principles Statement, published on the Policies Page of the Trust website. Similarly, the Trust Board is responsible for safeguarding the children and young people in their care, attending any one of our schools - our detailed policy is published on the same page of the website.

This policy thus includes both an overview of our Trust's emergency planning arrangements (this section) - noting that detailed Emergency Plans are held at school level - and our Trust-wide protocol for managing our response to critical incidents (Section 3).

2.2. Overview of Trust and school security arrangements

We are committed to ensuring that all staff and students are able to work in/attend school in a safe and secure environment. Furthermore, we recognise that whilst schools continue to be amongst the safest places, they are still subject to a number of potential threats, both external and in some cases internal. As a Trust, we recognise the potential threat of, and impact arising from, security related issues, such as vandalism, an intruder on site, arson, cyber-attack, a serious incident involving a weapon or terrorist attacks.

Whilst Section 3 of this policy details the arrangements we have in place specifically to manage a critical incident (defined in the introduction as '*an incident or situation involving trauma, fatality or serious injury to an individual or serious damage to property*', the purpose of this section is broader, and covers the Trust's management of all security threats.

DfE guidance includes following elements which form part of the organisation's ability to manage a range of identified security threats:

- Having an Emergency Plan in place - which should include up to date contact details, an area to record all details during activation and roles and responsibilities of all key personnel involved;
- Having a Business Continuity Plan in place;
- Having an Evacuation Plan in place;
- Having a agreed protocol to manage any bomb threats;
- Having a Shelter-in-place/In-vacuation protocol in place; and
- Having a Lockdown protocol in place.

2.3. Management of emergency situations across Newham Community Learning

As the ultimate body responsible for the safety and security of all students, staff and visitors, the Trust Board ensures that the executive of the Trust notifies it immediately regarding any emergencies or critical incidents.

This is achieved through the completion of the Emergency Plan procedure in place at every school. A summary of what is included in the plans is noted in the 'Contents' snip from the full document which follows below.

All schools have a bespoke Plan in place, which is owned by the Headteacher, who may delegate this to the School Business Manager/Deputy/Assistant Headteacher. The Plan is available for inspection at all Trust schools.

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3. Newham Community Learning - Critical Incident Guide

3.1. Introduction and purpose

A critical incident may be defined as an incident or situation involving trauma, fatality or serious injury to an individual or serious damage to property.

By its very nature such an incident is sudden, unpredictable and outside the range of normal human experience. Such events are normally very distressing to pupils and school staff. The Trust Board and Executive Leadership Team across Newham Community Learning recognise the significant impact that such an event may have on the whole school community; this guide helps us ensure that clear information is available and the consistent procedures are followed. It also allows us to ensure that learning is documented and shared across all schools within our Trust.

Newham Community Learning's governance arrangements ensure that our schools are accountable to a group of local stakeholders: our local governing bodies. However, our arrangements also ensure that all our schools are supported - both by each other, and by the Trust Central Team - which extends to support to our governing bodies from the Trust Board.

This guidance also covers situations where a serious crisis affects any one of our schools / any number of our schools. We recognise that such crises can happen on the premises or may involve pupils and / or staff when they are away (eg. on a school trip). We further recognise that sometimes, an incident affecting the wider community may have a significant effect on our school community / the Newham Community Learning community[1].

3.2. Dealing with critical incidents

A critical incident may be defined as an incident or situation involving trauma, fatality or serious injury to an individual or serious damage to property. By its very nature such an incident is sudden, unpredictable and outside the range of normal human experience.

In the event of a crisis like this there can be three aspects to deal with at once:

- the critical incident itself;
- the impact on the school as a community; and
- the public impact of the incident, including (potentially) how it is reported in the media.

This guidance will ensure that Headteachers and their leadership teams are clear regarding the actions to take, and that the Trust has an overarching critical incident plan. In all cases, the Headteacher will immediately be made aware of the incident. The CEO of the Trust should be

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[1] All our schools are located in the west of the borough of Newham; thus a crisis in the community will most likely affect a number of our schools.

informed as soon as possible; thereafter, the Chair of Trustees (who will communicate with the Trust Board) as well as the Chair of Governors at the school at which the incident has taken place will be informed.

The guidance recognises that there are a number of types of critical incidents. Where the incident occurs at school, and affects one of our pupils, a Critical Incident Review form (provided as Annex A) is completed. This Review is shared with the Executive Group of Headteachers, members of the Trust's Central Team as appropriate and with the Trust Board. All such incidents MUST be entered on the Trust's Critical Incident Log by the COO.

Where critical incidents either (a) do not occur on the school premises OR (b) where they concern an adult rather than a pupil, the Trust's Critical Incident Log MUST similarly be completed by the COO.

The Critical Incident Log is used to share learning and to inform future practice across all Trust schools. The information contained within it is fed back to the Trust Board.

3.3. Who to contact in the event of a critical incident occurring at school

3.3.1. Immediate contacts on learning of the critical incident at school

The table below lists key services/individuals who MUST be contacted immediately on discovery of a critical incident at school. First responders to an incident at school will always include a first aider and the school's DSL (Designated Safeguarding Lead). The Headteacher (or Deputy in their absence) must also be informed immediately.

Service	Named individual (where applicable)	Email and phone number
Ambulance service	n/a	999
Police service (will be triggered by the 999 ambulance call)	n/a	999
LADO, Newham Deputy LADO	Nick Pratt - 0203 3733803 Alex Mihu - 0203 3736706	nick.pratt@newham.gov.uk alex.mihu@newham.gov.uk
Director of Education, Inclusion and Achievement, Newham	Annabel Bates	annabel.bates@newham.gov.uk 07814 646 203
Education Safeguarding Lead, Newham	Sophie Groenvynck	sophie.groenvynck@newham.gov.uk

Service	Named individual (where applicable)	Email and phone number
Newham's Media Team	n/a	cex-media@newham.gov.uk

3.3.2. As soon as possible post the occurrence of the critical incident

As part of Newham Community Learning, Headteachers at all our schools MUST report any critical incident to the senior leaders working in the Central Team.

Title	Named individual (where applicable)	Email and phone number
CEO, Newham Community Learning	Anthony Wilson	anthony.wilson@ncltrust.net 07958 380377
Primary Executive Leader, Newham Community Learning	Emma Nicholls	emma.nicholls@ncltrust.net
COO, Newham Community Learning	Jacqui Waine	jacqui.waine@ncltrust.net 0330 0534810

3.4. Checklist for Headteachers to be used in the immediate aftermath of a critical incident (noting that specific action will depend on the nature of the incident)

Headteachers must ensure that a full log is kept of all actions taken as they happen as well as a log of all information received. This will ensure that all the necessary information is held to support any investigation post the incident.

The list below covers all critical incidents; note that ('where applicable') is used in a number of cases given the range of possible incidents.

- Ensure that all staff and pupils are in a place of safety and security
- Have emergency services been called?
  - fire
  - police
  - ambulance

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- Inform Newham's Director of Education, Inclusion and Achievement or, in his/her absence, one of his team
- Inform the Trust Office (CEO / COO); Newham Community Learning trustees will be informed by the Central Team personnel
- Ensure that all staff and pupils are accounted for (where applicable)
- Inform the Chair of Governors and other governors as soon as possible
- Set up a critical incident support team
- Seek urgent advice from the borough's Communications Unit and arrange who will deal with the media, give interviews and prepare press statements (where applicable)
- Arrange how parents will be contacted (where applicable)
- Ensure that there are suitable phones available for outgoing calls e.g. mobile
- Decide if there is a need to contact community or religious leaders
- Decide if counselling support is needed
- Consider, as soon as possible, a schedule for recovery
- Ensure that there is constant and consistent communication with staff
- Consider arrangements for school meals (where applicable)
- Consider whether transport arrangements need to be altered (where applicable)
- If appropriate, determine the funeral arrangements and decide which staff and pupils will attend

3.5. Crisis Management

3.5.1. Stage 1 Initial response

Managing a critical incident is, by its nature, a challenging and stressful task. One of the key actions to be taken is to ensure that a log of all information and steps taken in the immediate aftermath of the incident is maintained. This must include all factual information received, actions taken and the time and date of these events. This is good practice but is essential for many reasons, including the need to give parents, pupils, staff and the media accurate information and to have an accurate record for further investigations that might take place.

Immediately after a critical incident the Headteacher or Deputy Headteacher should gather as much information as possible. This should include:

- Clear details of exactly what happened
- Where and when (date and time the incident occurred)
- Which emergency services have been contacted and, if this has not happened, whether they need to be. Clearly, if the emergency services have not been contact but are required this is an absolute priority
- Whether there is continuing danger and, if the incident occurred off site, what help is required from the LA
- The names of those injured and the extent of the injuries

- The current location of those injured with the names and contact numbers of the adults present
- The names and location of any pupils who were involved but not injured with the names and contact numbers of the adults present.

As part of a Trust, the Trust Central Team should be contacted as soon as possible after the incident so that additional support can be provided to the Headteacher and their team. The Team will ensure that the CEO (or the Deputy in his/her absence) is made aware of what has happened as soon as possible, and that the Chair of Trustees (or Deputy in his/her absence) is informed.

Either the Headteacher of a member of the Central Team will contact the Chair of Governors of the school concerned. The Chair will also be supported by the Trust Board.

The Trust maintains detailed records of all such incidents securely on file.

3.5.2. Stage 2 Assess continuing risk

If there is any continuing risk the priority must be to safeguard the welfare of the children, young people and adults. It is important to ensure that any immediate action to protect people or property does not give rise to any further risk.

This is another area where immediate action and support can be provided by the Trust's Central Team.

3.5.3. Stage 3 The critical incident support team

As part of a Trust, all our schools have access to immediate support further to the occurrence of a critical incident of any nature. Dependent on the nature of the incident, Central Team members can be called on to support as required.

It may be appropriate to form a Critical Incident Support Team. Working as a family of schools in a Trust, this team might include colleagues from schools where there is prior experience of such a critical incident.

The composition of the team is open to different permutations depending on the circumstances. The team will not necessarily only be made up of the senior management team, but might usefully involve representatives of the wider school community.

The following may be amongst the roles considered - again, as appropriate to the circumstances:

- Liaison with the sites of the incident
- Public information

- Press Liaison
- School Continuity
- Management Support

The operation of the team will be decided as necessary under the circumstances, given the breadth of possible events.

3.5.4. Support

Support is available from various sources. In some sorts of emergencies police specialists may become centrally involved with the school. The Trust Central Team provides schools with support, and also has the ability to call in specialists.

3.5.5. Communications

The needs of the crisis may place a great strain on existing communication. Our existing IT and telephone arrangements mean that there is significant redundancy built into the system, ensuring that it is able to respond to increased volume.

Public information

The Headteacher and school staff, in conjunction with the Central Team (as and when required), will ensure that information concerning the incident which is provided to staff, parents and other relevant parties should be accurate and consistent. We will also ensure a coordinated release of information to parents, general enquiries and the media. Consideration will also be given to external communication via the school website.

Sensitivity issues

We recognise that in some cases, special steps may be appropriate for dealing with affected parents. A member of staff who is knowledgeable about the family/ies concerned will, ideally, undertake the task. The school / Trust will ensure that offers of help are included in such communications. A religious leader may be asked to lend support in particular cases. If a large number of families are involved, the Trust will work with the school to procure other sources of assistance for consideration.

Counselling

Any critical incident may bring about long-term trauma for those involved, either directly or indirectly. Our schools and our Trust have existing relationships with a number of counselling services, which we will draw on.

Recovery schedule

Dependent on the nature of the incident, it may be helpful for a recovery schedule to be agreed at an early stage by the Headteacher and the Trust Central Team. So far as possible, this will establish dates and times of key events. This schedule may include times of media briefings, decisions on school closure (if applicable), a schedule for re-opening, working with parents etc. Even though some items may initially be tentative, such a schedule offers reassurance to the school community.

3.6. Annex A - Newham Community Learning - Critical Incident Review template

This template should be used to support the review of a serious incident with significant safeguarding implications. It is not a substitute for or alternative to the requirements for other reporting, e.g. completing an accident report form, referring an incident to the LADO, etc.

Its purpose is to provide Trustees and Trust leaders with an overview of key elements of a serious incident, such as an accident, violent incident or attempt at self-harm in school or closely linked to a member of the school community. This is to enable an assessment of whether the Trust's Safeguarding and Health and Safety processes have operated effectively, and whether there is any need for changes to them. The report is not a substitute for detailed investigation, and the CEO and Headteacher will discuss whether further action needs to be taken after completion of the report.

Any questions on the use of this form should be referred to the COO or CEO.

NCL Review of Serious Incident

Person/s involved		Time & date		Location	
Description of incident					
Has the incident been reported promptly to relevant agencies LADO, police with details of time/date/who to					
Were there any warning signs in advance of the incident that could have been acted on to reduce risk of harm?					

What has been learned since the incident about the particular circumstances/factors contributing to the incident	
Are any other members of the school community significantly affected, and if so what action has been taken in relation to them?	
Learning from post incident meetings e.g. MASH, LADO	
Any additional information	

Completed by: _____(Headteacher)   Date: _____

CEO comments	

Completed by: _____(CEO)   Date: _____

Who else will this report be shared with and when	