

Webheath Academy Primary School

Critical Incident Policy



Approved, ratified and adopted by the Local Governing Body on 24th June 2024.

Chair: David Sullivan

This policy will be reviewed annually or when circumstances or advice and guidance changes.

1. Critical Incident Event

A critical incident is an event (usually sudden), which involves the experience of significant personal distress or trauma to a level that can potentially overwhelm individuals such as:

- Serious injury, illness, accident or death of an adult or child, which affects the school community.
- Serious damage to property
- Any incident charged with profound emotion.
- Any incident attracting unusual attention from the news media.
- Any incident involving serious threat.
- Any incident with extremely unusual circumstances, which produces a high level of immediate or delayed emotional reaction, surpassing the individual's normal coping mechanisms.
- Any incident which involves a criminal act including terrorism.

The causes of such incidents are many and varied, could be on site or off site, in the community or on a school educational visit. These could include instances of severe vandalism, fire, explosion or violence including hostage taking; health related matters from ones, which cause severe illness, injury or fatality to an individual to the whole school being affected by the rapid spread of a viral infection; national tragedies which affect pupils and personnel or negative publicity about the school or individuals being made public.

2. Rationale for a Critical Incident Plan

2.1. Schools are vibrant communities that serve and must be responsive to the local community. As such, Webheath Academy needs to be prepared to serve the community by laying plans to deal with critical incidents before they take place. This will enable our responses to be measured and appropriate to the incident, with procedures in place to cope with each unique incident; though we cannot hope to plan for every eventuality.

The most important part of the plan is to quickly establish an Incident Management Team, based if feasible in the Head's office as this is the most discreet room with access to the communications and data required.

2.2 The Incident Management Team will comprise of:

Person/s	Role
Headteacher	Lead, contact for emergency services, external authorities, LA, media and staff, children & families involved
Deputy and Assistant Head	Internal school liaison; making decisions about whether teaching can continue, keeping staff informed and generally keeping disruption to a minimum. To speak to children & staff in an appropriate and sensitive way as needed

Person/s	Role
School Business Manager	Support admin staff and co-ordinate: First aid / compiling details of casualties, provision of class and individual pupil data, detailed written log of events (see Appendix 3)
Site Manager	Ensure site is safe and clear. Co-ordinate any emergency teams on arrival and help secure the building
Phase leaders	Support Deputy and Assistant Head with organising own phase teams. Ensure reporting between teams and back to SLT is effective and enabled
Teachers	Responsible for pupils in care and liaising with team
CEO, Chair of Governors and Chair of Trustees	Support and consultation

It will be very important to manage media attention and advice for this will need to be sought from the

2.3 Emergency Contacts at County Hall 01905 766189/766646. (See also Appendix 1)

2.4 Actions to be Taken Immediately following notification of an Incident:

- Establish factual information
- Critical Incident Team to meet to discuss action roles as above
- Clarify roles:
 - To swiftly telephone parents directly affected to prevent misinformation (Head)
 - To invite distressed parents into school and serve tea/coffee and offer comfort & a discreet place to wait, as appropriate (Deputy)
 - To deal with any appropriate enquiries (Head)
- Have several class lists, individual pupil detail records and staff lists available (Admin Staff)
- Have list of persons affected available, with contact numbers (Admin Staff)
- Call in extra experienced staff, Governors or regular volunteers as needed and designate role (Deputy). Ensure that only DBS checked personnel are summoned.
- Inform Governors and appropriate authorities (Head)
- Have two telephone lines and school's phone for parents etc to ring in (general phone to be staffed by member of SLT or second member of admin staff)
- **NO** information relating to the incident must be given to ANY party telephoning the school other than by the Headteacher – all appropriate enquires relating to the incident **MUST** be put through immediately to the Head's office
- Head's phone line for use by Critical Incident Team only
- Record who went with whom and with whose permission (Admin Staff)
- Decide on an interim factual statement – (Team supported by LA officials including Legal Services & Chair of Governors)
- Inform the staff & children sensitively (DH -see Appendix 2)

2.5 Ensure:

- That accurate information can get in and out of school

- Incident Team have access to next of kin list
- NO other members of staff or voluntary helpers should make calls or communicate information to ANY other parties
- Persons involved, including parents are requested not to communicate information through social media or the press.
- A list of useful phone numbers is prepared and kept in the School Office e.g., Hospital, Coach company, LA contact (Admin Staff)
- Inform parents carefully and with sensitivity (Head or SLT only)
- Attempt to stick to normal school routines (DH and teachers)
- Make plans for following day & weeks (SLT & Team)
- All adults have regular breaks and access to refreshments (Support staff)

2.6 Short term plan

- Send two senior members of staff to location of incident, if off site (if appropriate)
- Organise discreet reunion of children and parents
- Make contact with outside professionals e.g. media liaison officer, legal services, psychologist, social workers, nurses and counsellors via County Hall 01905 763 763
- Arrange briefing with staff groups
- Arrange interim debriefing meeting with directly affected staff
- Check that procedures for monitoring pupils and staff are in place
- Activate strategies for allowing children to express their feelings about the incident if they wish. Help rest of class/year group/school to come to terms with feelings
- Contact families of those hurt or bereaved and express sympathy & ask them to contact the Head/DH if they would like any support or help. Head to visit in person if appropriate.

2.7 Medium term plan

- Conduct a thorough debrief and co-operate with any external investigations or enquiries
- Provide pastoral support for all staff and volunteers involved
- Ensure that a senior member of staff makes contact with children at home or in hospital – visit if appropriate
- Make sensitive arrangements for their return to school
- Arrange alternative teaching or accommodation if necessary – through LA
- Arrange consultation & counselling so that staff can better support children
- Ensure clear understanding of consultation, especially it's confidentiality
- Clarify procedures for referring children for individual help or counselling
- Liaise with parents to include the sending of bulletins and media statements
- Consult the family about attendance at funerals or memorials
- Share the planning of the special assembly or memorial service, if appropriate
- Check that the monitoring procedures are in place and are being followed

2.8 Long term action

- Review relevant practices, policies and procedures with the Governing Body
- Introduce strategies for helping staff continue with the monitoring of vulnerable pupils and staff
- Consult and decide on how and whether to mark anniversaries
- Ensure that new staff are aware of which pupils were affected, and in what way, and that they know how to obtain further help if necessary

- Remember that legal processes, enquiries and even news stories may bring back distressing memories and cause temporary upset within school
- Provide long term support and professional help for all those affected e.g. counselling

3. Incidents relating to the administration of the school

School holds insurance for a range of emergency situations including fidelity insurance should anyone embezzle the school.

All electronic data from the administration system is backed up weekly via electronic means

Curriculum data is backed up weekly via tapes.

4. Incidents Relating to the Spread of Disease or Infection

School will follow the advice of the County and Government in the instance of a pandemic such as a viral flu outbreak. The school will remain open, unless instructed to close or if there are such severe staff shortages that it cannot safely function. The decision to close will be made by the Headteacher in consultation with the Chair of Governors and after liaison with the LA or School Health. Processes and protocols put in place for the COVID19 pandemic will be followed as per instructions. These will be displayed in prominent places around the school as per our Risk Assessment and saved onto One Drive - COVID.

A full Risk assessment will be written as per the government guidance, staff trained and governors plus Trustees approve to ensure effective. This will be shared on the website and updated with changing guidance.

In such cases the cleaners will be instructed to focus more closely on taps, handles and surfaces children and staff use. All Staff should reinforce good hand-washing procedures regularly and children should not be asked to share items such as pencils and crayons to prevent the spreading of germs. Extra vigilance is needed to prevent the spread of germs. A deep clean will be arranged if appropriate and as set out in guidance and on the school risk assessment.

The Head Teacher, Deputy, SENDco, Assistant Head and Admin Staff are authorised to contact supply teachers from our usual list or agencies to cover shortages. If current guidance allows, larger than normal classes may need to be managed in the short term by the remaining teaching staff of Teaching Assistants who are suitably experienced.

5. Action in the event of a Major Incident in school:

5.1 Two Teachers or Teaching Assistants will go to the main entrance to:

- Unlock the playground gates (if required) – emergency key in Class 6 and all SLT have keys worn on lanyards
- Direct any emergency vehicles through the appropriate gate and to the location of the incident
- Arrange for any obstructions e.g. cars to be moved
- Greet any parent/carer who may have been asked to come to school

- 5.2 Two members of the SLT will go to the two playgrounds or the area close to the incident to arrange for all of the children not involved to be moved to a safe location and to be supervised by other staff.
- 5.3 Normal emergency evacuation procedures will be actioned (if appropriate)
- 5.4 If it is necessary to close the school following the incident then parents/carers will be contacted using the telephone information line arrangements and by direct contact.
- 5.5 If required and after a period of time (decided by the Headteacher) any uncollected children will be taken to a place of safety (e.g. Mount Carmel School)

NB The Headteacher or Deputy will decide if the site requires immediate and complete evacuation. The Emergency Services may also make this decision.

If this is the case children will be taken to Mount Carmel School and contacts with parents/carers will be made from there. Administration staff are responsible for taking the childrens' emergency contact details files and staff next of kin records.

In the event of children being required to be retained securely in the building:

- If they are out at play/PE then usual procedure (bell, whistle, voice) to bring children inside as quickly and quietly as possible (don't stop to line up!)
- Once/if inside ensure all doors and windows are locked & secured and children are away from windows, draw blinds if appropriate etc.

6. HELICOPTER LANDING AREA - School field or large playground – grid reference 667 022

Other policies linked to this policy:

- 1: Policy for Emergency Evacuation of Premises
- 2: Educational Visits Policy
- 3: First Aid Policy

APPENDICES

Appendix 1 - Press interviews

Under NO circumstances should any member of staff, voluntary helper or Governor make contact with the media including using social media; unless authorised to do so by the Headteacher. Members of the school community may feel pressured into giving interviews or making statements to the press; however the school has two designated people for this: the Headteacher and Chair of Governors unless the nature of the incident means that the police or LA press officer/legal services becomes the contact person, in which case they will liaise with the school. A brief interview with someone authoritative at the scene of an incident can be a powerful way of defusing rumour and panic, which may otherwise spread quickly.

This does not mean that the press may not try to contact members of staff, volunteers, Governors or other members of the school community. Parents will be advised to contact the school if they are approached & discouraged from using social media. However, it will be up to the individual parent to decide what is appropriate. If staff or Governors are approached, they MUST refer any inquiries to the Headteacher and/or Critical Incident Team who will aim to follow the guidelines below:

- Do NOT speak to the media until the LA media officer/legal services or a senior officer has authorised you to do so and given advice on the interview.
- If possible, agree an interview format and establish what the interviewer wants to ask. Have another person with you from the Critical Incident Team to monitor the interview.
- Be clear in your own mind what you want to say, and talk it through with the LA in advance. But you will also need to be prepared to think on your feet.
- Get written statements checked by legal advisors from the LA.
- Remember, you could be quoted on anything you say to a journalist, even if it is not a formal part of the interview.
- If you do not know the answer, say so.
- Stick to the facts and do not be drawn into speculation.
- Don't overelaborate your answers.
- Do express your sympathies and don't be afraid of showing a little emotion if appropriate. But try not to get angry, especially if it is for television.
- Refuse requests for names, personal details, photographs or schoolwork of children or staff involved.
- Do not allow journalists to enter school premises unescorted.

Appendix 2 – Bereavement

Pupils and staff should be told as soon as possible of a person's death. This is to prevent them learning from some other, possibly inappropriate, source.

Whenever possible they should hear the news from someone close to them, in familiar surroundings.

It is very important to tell the truth as far as it is known. Even 'white lies' will have to be renegotiated later on.

Children may not take everything in at this stage. They will go over and over the facts later, asking more questions and gradually assimilating the information. Do not worry about having to keep on giving the same answers.

These points encapsulate the overall message in helping bereaved children:

- Try to maintain feelings of security, of being cared for and loved.
- Maintain all the necessary practical care.
- Be honest at the child's level of understanding.
- Use the same language with a child that their family is using wherever possible
- Continue to talk and communicate in different formats including pictorially.
- Do not pretend to believe what you don't believe.
- Try to understand the child's feelings and reassure where possible.
- Don't be afraid to say 'I don't know'.
- Don't be afraid to share your own feelings.
- Remember there are others who can help.
- Don't be afraid to admit to colleagues and family that you can't cope at any particular time. Seek advice and support and take regular breaks.
- Seek advice from external bereavement support services & our educational psychologist as appropriate

Parents, Governors and regular volunteers should be informed briefly of the person's death if this is deemed appropriate. This may enable them to support the children or members of staff. Information should be restricted to brief facts and not comments.

Psychological support and counselling will be available in matters of major incidents via the LA and our Educational Psychologist.

All staff to have access to Bereavement training as an annual entitlement.

Appendix 3 – Critical Incident Management Team

Stage 1 – Initial Actions

- Obtain full facts of Incident from Head who should have undertaken an initial assessment and fact-finding exercise.
- Open and continue to maintain a personal log of information received, actions taken and the time of those events. This should be dated and signed
- Assist, where appropriate, in assessing the emotional needs of the pupils, staff, volunteers and Governors. Co-ordinate rapid action to sensitively inform staff and pupils and to provide appropriate support
- Assist class teachers who will undertake classroom briefings
- Arrange special groups for very distressed pupils or staff.

Stage 2 – Once Established

- Assist Head
- Work with LA Support Team and the Head

Stage 3 – Period Following Close of the Incident

- As above
- Take an honest and active part in the debrief and review of the incident, procedures and policies

Appendix 4 – Administrative Staff Action List

Stage 1 – Initial Actions

- Obtain full facts of Incident from Headteacher
- Open and continue to maintain a personal log of information received, actions taken and the time of those events. This should be dated and signed.
- If coming in from home, remember to bring useful items, such as any keys or a mobile phone, which may be needed.

Stage 2 – Once established

- Assist the Headteacher, under the guidance of an on-site coordinator if outside personnel such as police liaison officer are involved
- Work with LA Support Team, the Headteacher and School On-Site Team as directed.
- Remember the School Office is likely to be the first point of contact for visitors, so exercise caution and DO NOT make any comments
- Redirect any urgent and relevant telephone calls to the Incident Team and ‘field’ any unwelcome or un-necessary calls – keep the phone lines and main entrance to school clear
- Do not let anyone onto the school premises without checking their identity. Do not let press onto the site without the permission of the Head
- Concerning incoming telephone calls
 - take especial care when answering telephone calls – take a number and ring them back if you are unsure of their identity
 - maintain a record of calls received
 - only give out information from prepared statements that will be made available and only if authorised by the Head to do so
 - remember that some calls could be bogus or from the press

Stage 3 – Period Following Close of the Incident

- As above

Appendix 5 - Contact List

The names and telephone numbers of organisations and individuals who may be useful to the School in an emergency:

Organisation	Name	Telephone No.
Webheath Academy Primary School	Mrs J Burton	01527 544820
Flu Line	County	01905 728848
Family Front Door		01905 822666
LA Media Advice	Lee Shrimpton	01905 766646
LA Legal Services	David Elliott	01905 766674
LA Health & Safety	Clive Werrett	01905 766189
Police		08457 444 888 or
		0300 333 3000
		999
Chair of Governors	David Sullivan	
Mount Carmel RC School		01527 546398
LORT (Local Outbreak Response Team)		
Public Health Worcestershire		
Public Health England		
Chair of Trustees	Mike Thake	
CEO	Lee Grey	

Appendix 6 – Staff Incident Report Form

Staff Incident Report Form

Incidents including trespass, nuisance or disturbance on school premises, verbal abuse, sexual or racial abuse, threats, aggression, criminal acts, physical violence and intentional damage to personal property.

This form should be completed as fully as possible (please use a continuation sheet if necessary). For an incident involving or witnessed by a pupil, a member of staff should complete the form on their behalf. However, any discussion between one witness and another should not precede completion of the form, at this might lead to allegations of collusion.

Date of incident:

Day of week:

Time:.....

1. Member of staff reporting incident and your role

Name:.....Role:.....

Work address (if different from school address):

.....

.....

Personal details of person assaulted/verbally abused (if appropriate)

Name:.....

Work address (if different from school address)/home address (if pupil)

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Job/Position (if member of staff):.....

Age (approx): Sex: M /F

3. Details of trespasser/assailant(s) (if known)

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.....
.....

4. Witness(es) if any

Name:.....

Address:

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Age (approx): Sex: M /F

Other information

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Relationship between member of staff/pupil and trespasser/assailant, if any

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