



BEACON EDUCATION
AMBITION RESPECT EXCELLENCE

Critical Incident & Business Continuity Management Plan

Date approved:
Approved by:
Frequency of review:
Last review:

The next review is due:
Signed:
By:

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Section 1

Introduction

A critical incident may be defined as any unexpected occurrence which has a major impact upon the school, which is likely to cause serious disruption to the running of the school and/or which is likely to result in significant public or media attention.

The aim of this Plan is to ensure that all schools throughout the Trust are prepared to manage a critical incident in a co-ordinated and consistent manner. It will make the clear roles and responsibilities and lessen the effect of a critical incident on students, staff and parents of our schools.

The Plan is sufficiently flexible to address a range of “unusual” events and planning includes the worst-case scenario.

In responding to an incident it will ensure that:

- rapid and appropriate action is taken
- normal routines are maintained as far as possible
- immediate, sensitive and non-intrusive support is offered

Restricted copies of the Plan (with staff phone numbers) will be kept:

- in the School Office where it is easily accessible
- by all Headteachers and Deputy Headteachers (all to have additional copies at home)
- by the Chair and Vice-Chair of Governors

Public Copies of the Plan (excluding appendices and staff phone numbers) will be kept in the staff room.

A copy of the flowchart and supporting document outlining ‘Threat Response Plan - Key Tasks and Actions’ (Section 3) will be kept on the notice board in the School Office and Staff Room and may be used to respond initially to the incident.

This document is colour coded to clearly identify:

- **Phase 1: Immediate Action - RED**
- **Phase 2: Managed Response - YELLOW**
- **Phase 3: Restoration to Normality - GREEN**

The Trust will be responsible for reviewing and updating the plan, at least annually. The Trust Board and senior management will ensure the updated plan is adopted annually. School based admin staff will be responsible for maintaining the contact details and circulating it promptly.

All school staff will be made aware of the plan and how it is initiated and will be included in the induction process for new staff.

Definition

Critical incidents may occur in school or out of school, but both will have a major impact on staff and children. An incident becomes a critical incident when it constitutes a serious disruption arising with little or no warning on a scale **beyond** the coping capacity of the school operating under normal conditions, and may require assistance of the Emergency Services.

Examples of incidents impacting on schools could include:

- death or serious injury as a result of violence, accident, self-harm and/or sudden/traumatic illness
- major fire or explosion/building collapse
- riot and/or civil disorder
- natural and/or man-made disaster
- terrorism
- missing person(s)/abductions
- an illness such as meningitis within the school or the local community
- a more widespread emergency in the community, for example, the release of hazardous substances, severe weather, etc.
- assault on staff or students by parents or members of the public
- loss of water, heating and power

Incidents can occur:

- on the school site during school hours
- on school transport
- whilst the students are taking part in activities away from the school site
- on school premises as part of after school activities
- within the local community involving students from the school

An incident is deemed critical when it:

- constitutes a serious disruption to the normal operational activities of the school
- is on a scale beyond the coping capacity of the school and requires assistance from Emergency Services or other external agencies

Section 2

Critical Incident Management Team Roles

Role	Responsibility	Position
Incident Manager	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Contacts COO and CEO (COO to contact insurance company if applicable) • Acts as or appoints schools' single point of contact, acting as liaison between schools and emergency planning team (co-ordinating centrally) • Consider the need to alert other colleagues and external agencies • Establish a Critical Incident Management Team • Collate all relevant information relating to the emergency • Co-ordinate the emergency response strategy for the school, liaising with relevant services, LA and school governors as appropriate • Monitor the emergency response • Provide regular staff / team briefings • Authorise any additional expenditure 	Headteacher/Deputy Headteacher or senior staff member
Deputy Incident Manager	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Assists Incident Manager • Co-ordinates and manages staff in the Incident Management Team • Monitors staff welfare and organises staff roster • Co-ordinates evacuation, if necessary • Liaises with the Emergency Services and other organisations as necessary 	Deputy Head or senior staff member
Parent Liaison Officer	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Advises parents and provides information • Provides point of contact • Arranges on-site co-ordination of visiting parents • Maintains regular contact with parents where appropriate 	Senior staff member

Administrator	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Operate telephone lines • Help collate information • Relay incoming and outgoing messages • Provide admin support to the Incident Manager and Deputy 	School based admin staff
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Role	Responsibility	Position
	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Maintain a master log of key events and decisions 	
Communications Officer	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Works with the CEO partner to prepare media statements, ensuring all media enquiries are directed to them preventing Trust staff communicating with the media • Assist with internal communications 	Headteacher/Deputy Headteacher
Pupil Welfare Officer	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Maintain supervision • Ensure the safety and security of pupils • Co-ordinate the roll call register • Provide information and offer reassurance • Monitor pupils' physical and emotional welfare 	Teaching Staff

Trust Contacts

Beacon Education

Minehead Middle School
Ponsford Road
Minehead
TA24 5RH

Phone: 01643 300121

Email: info@beaconedu.uk

Website: <http://www.beaconedu.uk>

Robert Lakin, Chief Executive Officer

Work: 01643 300121

Mobile: 07784 359501

Email: RLakin@beaconedu.uk

Trudy Danby, Chief Operations Officer

Work: 01643 300121

Mobile: 07917 222904

Email: TDanby561@beaconedu.uk

Insurance:

Risk Protection Arrangement (RPA)

Membership Number: t7630164

Urgent Incident phone number: 03300 585566 / 020 3475 5031 Online

Portal: www.rpaclaimforms.co.uk

National Organisations

- Department for Education

Phone: 0370 000 2288

Website: www.gov.uk/government/organisations/department-for-education

- Health & Safety Executive

Phone: 0345 300 9923

Website: www.hse.gov.uk

- Foreign and Commonwealth Office

Phone: 020 7008 1500

www.gov.uk/government/organisations/foreign-commonwealth-office

- Environment Agency

Website: www.gov.uk/government/organisations/environment-agency/services-information

- Met Office

Phone: 0370 900 0100

Website: www.metoffice.gov.uk

- CRUSE – Bereavement Care

Phone: 0844 477 9400 (national rate)

Website: www.crusebereavementcare.org.uk

A Telephone counselling service for those who are bereaved and those who care for bereaved people. It can offer referrals to local Cruse branches and other bereavement and counselling services throughout the UK.

- The Compassionate Friends

Phone: 0845 123 2304 (national rates)

Website: www.tcf.org.uk

Support for bereaved parents who have lost a child of any age from any circumstances.

- Winston's Wish Family Line

Phone: 0845 2030 405 (local rates)

Website: www.winstonwish.org.uk

Information and guidance for families of bereaved children. Can provide contact details for local groups which support bereaved children.

- Child Bereavement Trust

Phone: 01494 568900 (local rates)

Website: www.childbereavement.org.uk

Information line for parents who have been bereaved.

- The Samaritans

Phone: 0845 790 9090 (local rates)

Website: www.samaritans.org

Confidential emotional support for anyone in a crisis.

- Survivors of Bereavement by Suicide

Phone: 01482 610728 (national rate)

Website: www.uk-sobs.org.uk

Can provide details of local self-help groups for those bereaved by suicide.

- ChildLine

Phone: 0800 1111 (free phone)

Website: www.childline.org.uk

National help line for children

School Emergency Pack

A pack containing essential information/equipment that may be required during a critical incident must be established and located as specified by the school locally in Appendix B. Suggested contents are given below.

1. Copy of the Plan and Appendices
2. Details of how to access pupil details and parent contact details, e.g. MCAS
3. Details of how to access staff details.
4. Plans of the school, where available
5. Torch
6. First Aid Kit
7. Pens and paper for updating log
8. Hi-Viz Tabards with specified roles as identified within the plan

For off-site visits and residential trips

Please prepare an emergency pack to be taken on each trip which will include items as above, plus:

1. List and photo of all staff and pupils involved in the trip (printed list from Evolve
2. Emergency school contact telephone numbers. For residential trips contact needs to be available 24 hours each day.
3. Transport operator contact details.
4. Trip location contact details.

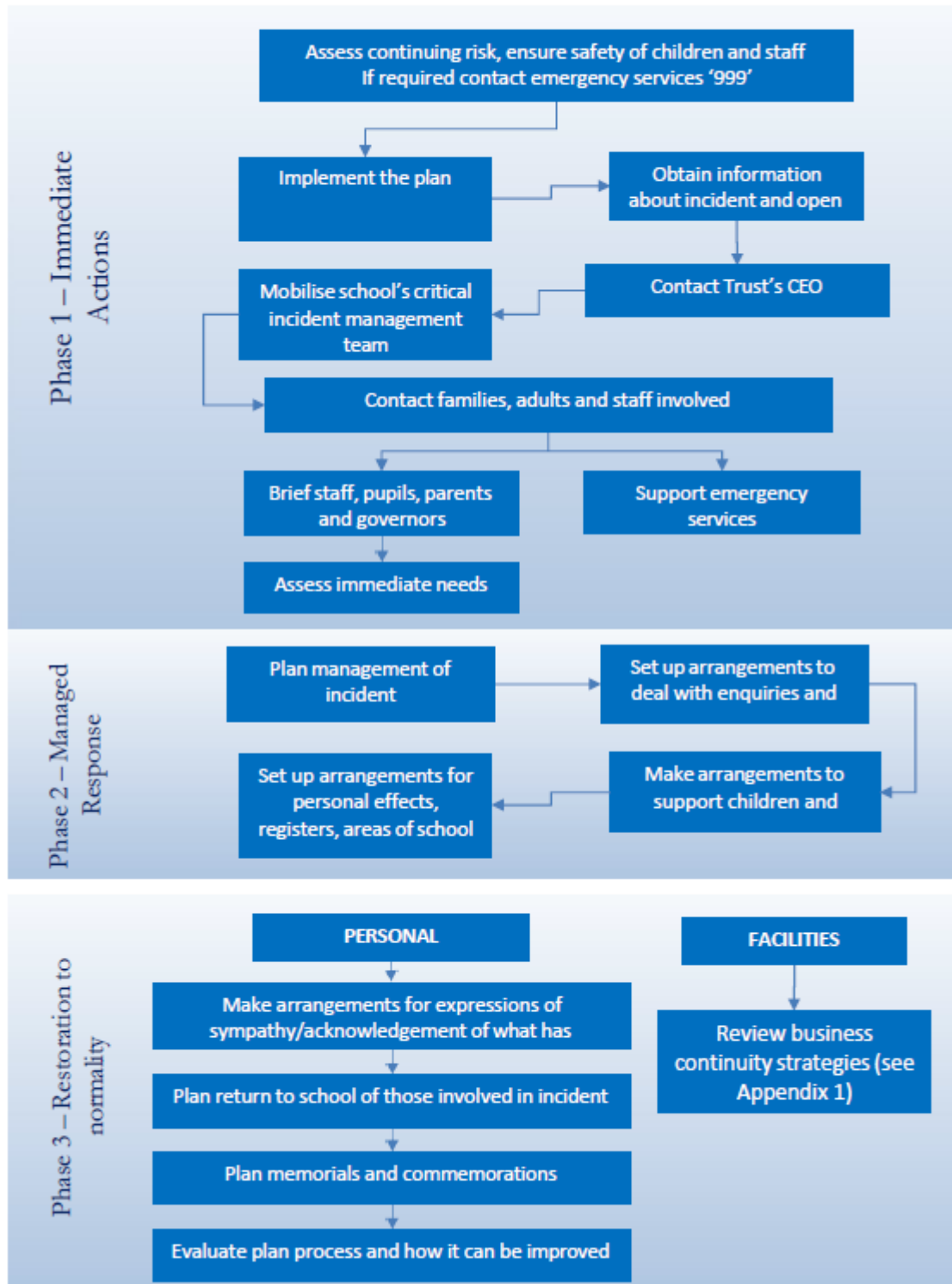
For trips overseas

As for off-site visits and residential trips, plus:

1. Contact details of British Embassy, High Commission or consulate of country visited.

Section 3

Threat Response Plan – key tasks and actions



PHASE 1: IMMEDIATE ACTION

Actions 1 - 7 should be undertaken straight away. The order in which these actions are noted is for guidance only and should be undertaken according to the specific needs of the situation.

Action 1

ASSESS CONTINUING RISK, ENSURE SAFETY OF ALL CHILDREN & ADULTS, IF REQUIRED CONTACT EMERGENCY SERVICES 'DIAL 999'

- Deploy first aiders, if necessary.
- Account for all pupils and staff.
- Report anyone missing to the Police or other emergency services.

Action 2

IMPLEMENT THE PLAN

- Person(s) with lead responsibility to be released from all other duties.
- Collect the Plan and Emergency Pack (see page 9).
- Set up an operations room for the co-ordination of the incident.
- Establish an independent telephone line (e.g. mobile, borrowing a phone line in a nearby building, etc).
- Remind the critical incident management team of the need for confidentiality and not to communicate with the media or post on social media regarding the incident.

Action 3

OBTAIN INFORMATION ABOUT INCIDENT AND OPEN A LOG

Collate as much information as possible in the log. Information should include the following:

- Overview of incident/description.
- When and where incident occurred.
- Names of children and adults involved in the incident including those who witnessed it.
- If the incident is a crime scene, consider preserving the scene and identify witnesses and/or potential offenders.
- Nature of any injuries/fatalities sustained.
- Hospitals where injured have been taken.
- Names of adults with injured children/adults.
- Actions undertaken by emergency services, including arrangements for caring for children/adults who do not require hospital treatment.
- Locations of the uninjured.
- Remaining hazards at the scene.
- Collect relevant pupil/staff lists and contact numbers as appropriate.
- Control the escape of inappropriate / inaccurate information via mobile / public phones from within the group.

Not all this information may be available; however, this should not cause a delay in moving to the next action.

Action 4

CONTACT THE TRUST'S CHIEF OPERATIONS OFFICER (COO)

- Phone the COO, providing the information collated under action 2.
- The COO to notify insurance company, where appropriate
- Advise the COO of any specific requirements of assistance or support that are known.
- Confirm the contact details of the single point of contact at the school and the Trust.
- The Trust will inform associated schools that could be directly affected by the incident.

Action 5

MOBILISE THE SCHOOL'S CRITICAL INCIDENT MANAGEMENT TEAM

- Brief the team.
- Clarify tasks, make plans and assign roles (refer to Critical Incident Management Team roles on pages 5 and 6).
- Set up timetable of meetings to review management of incident.
- Police and the Chief Operations Officer, if necessary, to be part of the management team.
- Set out first meeting (refer to Resource Sheet 2: Critical Incident Management Team Agenda)
- Identify how senior staff, including the Headteacher/Head of School, will be supported.
- Designate key member(s) of staff to liaise with the Police/emergency services.

Action 6

CONTACT FAMILIES, ADULTS AND STAFF INVOLVED

- Ensure that persons making contacts are fully briefed with written guidance on the situation, which should be agreed by critical incident team (refer to resource sheet 2 for guidance).
- If this is a Police led incident then the nature of contact with families should be agreed with both parties.
- Maintain a record of contacts to avoid confusion and distress through duplication of contacts and to ensure that nobody is missed out.
- Establish and offer useful telephone numbers, either for support or for more information.
- Check that families/parents are not left alone in distress, suggest that they make contact with other relative/neighbours.
- Where appropriate, give advice to parents and families (in line with the Trust's Crisis Communications Plan for Schools).
- Where appropriate, give information about arrangements for uniting or putting in contact children, adults and staff with their parents/families.

It may be necessary, particularly in a small school, to enlist the help of Trust staff to contact families. Requests for assistance to contact families concerned should be made via the Trust.

Action 7

BRIEF STAFF, GOVERNORS, PUPILS, PARENTS/CARERS AND OTHER MEMBERS OF THE SCHOOL COMMUNITY (using the resource pack for guidance)

- Contact and brief Chair of Governors and Chair of Trustees, request that he/she inform all other governors/Trustees.
- Hold briefing meetings for all teaching and non-teaching staff, set up a schedule to keep staff informed and updated.
- Issue a prepared statement for all parents – use school website, letter or text whichever seems most appropriate to the situation.
- Inform all pupils in the most appropriate way.
- Identify pupils, adults and staff who are absent. Make appropriate arrangements for them to be briefed.

If a press statement is required, request assistance via the Chief Executive Officer.

Ensure that staff tasked with telling children are able to undertake this task. Make special arrangements to protect and support staff, adults and children who were close in any way to those affected. (refer to Resource Sheet 5: Pupil meetings – informing pupils)

Action 8

ASSESS IMMEDIATE NEEDS

- If incident is likely to impact exams, decide how the impact can be minimised.

PHASE 2: MANAGED RESPONSE

Action 9

PLAN MANAGEMENT OF INCIDENT

- The school's Critical Incident Management Team should liaise with the Chief Operations Officer, the Police and other agencies as appropriate. (*refer to Resource Sheet 2: Critical Incident Management Team Agenda*)
- Review actions so far, clarify tasks, assign roles and make further actions accordingly.
- Ensure that the school and other agencies' actions are properly co-ordinated.
- Establish timetable of meetings to review the management of the incident.
- Clarify criteria for withdrawal of outside agencies at appropriate stage.
- Access further advice from the emergency services if required.

Names of those involved in the incident should not be released or confirmed to the media or other callers until the statutory authorities (eg, police) have confirmed the identity and the parents and families have been informed and have given permission.

Action 10

SET UP ARRANGEMENTS TO DEAL WITH ENQUIRIES AND MEDIA

- All media contacts should be directed to or dealt with in line with advice from the CEO.
- Contact the Chief Executive Officer if you require any assistance or advice.
- Consider providing those answering the phone with a written statement as to what it is appropriate for them to say and use resource pack for guidance.
- Remind all staff about not talking to the media and posting on social media.
- Organise additional staff to deal with phone enquiries and people coming to the school as necessary, Trust staff may be able to help and support.
- Designate areas for parents, media, others. (This could be off site depending on the nature of the emergency – see note below).
- Ensure that the incident log includes a record of all telephone calls made and received and any actions taken.

A Friends and Family Reception Centre is a place where relatives and friends of the victims of an incident can gather in order to share information or to arrange to visit the scene or to view a body. This will be set up by the Chief Operations Officer/Headteacher and the Police. Depending on the situation this may be the designated area for parents to gather.

Action 11

MAKE ARRANGEMENTS TO SUPPORT CHILDREN AND ADULTS

- Identify those children, adults and staff who are most likely to be in need of support.
- Arrange for school staff/support agencies, via the Incident Manager, to provide support. *(refer to Resource Sheet 6: Emotional distress – supporting the individual pupil)*
- It is good practice to inform and/or seek consent from parents/carers where there may be interaction with an outside agency. *(refer to Resource Sheet 7: Sample letter to parents – arrangements for counselling children)*
- Ensure that pupils, adults, staff and parent/carers are aware of the support arrangements the school is making and how these are accessed.
- Consider setting aside and staffing an appropriate area for children who are becoming too distressed to continue with their lessons.
- Consider setting aside and staffing a further area for people coming into school who are distressed.

In addition to the individuals directly affected, children and adults who are most likely to suffer distress as a consequence of an incident are those who:

- are uninjured, but were at greatest risk
 - directly witnessed death/injury/violence as part of the incident
 - are siblings
 - have any possible perceived culpability for what has happened however indirect or incorrect (ie those who may blame themselves and/or those who may be blamed by others)
 - are experiencing instability at home
 - have learning difficulties
 - have pre-existing emotional and behavioural/mental health difficulties
 - are vulnerable due to cultural and/or language difficulties
 - have previously suffered bereavement or loss.
- Try to maintain normal school routines wherever possible.

If the school has to close, ensure all staff and parents are briefed on the arrangements for the collection of children. Supervise children being collected and make arrangements for those who are not able to be collected. Ensure that staff and parents are clear as to the arrangements for re-opening the school.

- Consider holding a staff briefing with support agencies to discuss appropriate management strategies for distressed children.
- Plan how to manage distress that may be caused by ongoing police/legal proceedings and media attention.
- Give children permission individually and collectively to discuss what has happened and their reactions.

Deal sensitively with open expressions of distress. Allow children to discuss what has happened in lessons where they clearly wish to do this. Do not discourage them from

- Consider putting on a special class session to give pupils information about the grieving process and to enable them to talk through their experiences.
- Plan appropriate support for staff to enable them to cope with children's questions and discussion.
- Ensure that all staff including those co-ordinating the school's response do not neglect their own need for support.
- Schedule time for the staff co-ordinating the school's response to be 'off duty'.
- Ensure staff are alert to physical and/or emotional change or any other signals of distress among staff as well as children (***refer to Resource Sheet 9: emotional distress – signs and symptoms***)
- Refer staff, adults and, with parental consent, children to outside agencies for support.

Action 12

MAKE ARRANGEMENTS FOR PERSONAL EFFECTS, REGISTERS AND AREA OF SCHOOL AFFECTED

- In discussion with parents/families, and, if necessary, the Police, decide what to do with the personal effects of the individuals who have been affected.
- Consider discussing with relevant class members what would be appropriate to be done with the work (including work as part of any displays), desks, books, lockers, belonging to individuals who have been affected.
- Make arrangements to adjust class registers, rotas, any other pupil listings accordingly.
- Make appropriate arrangements for the part of a school where the incident occurred.

PHASE 3: RESTORATION TO NORMALITY

Action 13

- **REVIEW BUSINESS CONTINUITY STRATEGIES** (refer to Appendix 1) Make arrangements to:
 - manage a loss or shortage of staff or skills
 - manage denial of access to premises or loss of utilities
 - manage loss of technology, telephony, data or power
 - mitigate the loss of key suppliers, third parties or partners

Action 14

MAKE ARRANGEMENTS FOR EXPRESSIONS OF SYMPATHY AND/OR ACKNOWLEDGEMENT OF WHAT HAS HAPPENED

- Make arrangements to express support/sympathy to families, children and adults who have been affected.
- Make arrangements to support the plans that the family may have for a memorial.
- Make plans for attendance at funerals. Find out if school representatives are welcome. Ensure that school representatives feel able to cope with these tasks.
- Make arrangements for someone from school to visit those who have been affected.
- Consider sending cards and messages from children and staff to children, adults and staff affected.
- Consider organising a special assembly/service to collectively acknowledge what has happened and how the school is coming to terms with this. Consider involving local religious leaders. Consult with families of individuals affected.
- Consider setting up an area in the school where writing, art work or other mementos can be dedicated to individuals affected.
- Access further advice from the emergency services if required.

Action 15

PLAN FOR RETURN TO SCHOOL OF THOSE INVOLVED IN THE INCIDENT

- Home visit by class teacher/member of staff to discuss arrangements for return, eg visits, part time attendance, etc.
- Planned support for emotional needs, eg how to cope with the comments and questions of other pupils, permission to remove themselves from lessons to go to an agreed place if they are becoming distressed, etc.
- Support for possible physical needs, eg mobility difficulties, disfigurements, etc.
- Rota of home visits from school friends.
- Where appropriate, organise work to be sent home prior to return.
- Brief staff and children on how best to support individuals returning to school.
- Arrangements to differentiate work, manage missed class work, special arrangements for exams.
- Adjust working arrangements for staff returning to school.

Action 16**PLAN MEMORIALS AND COMMEMORATIONS**

- Consider an appropriate memorial, taking into account the wishes of those who were involved or bereaved eg special garden, tree, furniture, painting, sculpture, photograph, memorial prize.
- Discuss how to mark anniversaries, eg commemorative service/assembly, concert, display, etc.
- Brief staff who subsequently join the school about the incident, also about the long term

Incident Form and Incident Management Situation Form

Use this form to record initial information received on the incident and to log situation updates. This form should be started as soon as possible, and all boxes completed.

New or updated information on this form should be entered in **RED** so those receiving a copy will know what is new or changed.

INFORMATION		
Date:	Time:	Your name:
School name:		
INCIDENT DETAILS		
<p>Description: detail nature of incident; names of any pupil(s) involved, including age; names of siblings attending or having just left the school; if individuals affected are adults, note the time they have been at the school, links to other schools and any precursors (e.g. illness, absence from work and length of time).</p>		
How were you made aware of the incident?		
Are there any casualties or fatalities?		
Have the emergency services been called?		
Is the incident currently affecting school activities? If so, which areas		
What is the estimated duration of the incident?		

Has access to the whole site been denied? If so, for how long? (Provide estimate if not known)

Which work areas have been destroyed, damaged or made unusable?

Is there evidence of structural damage?

Which work areas are inaccessible but intact?

Are systems and other resources unavailable? (Include computer systems, telecoms, other assets)

If so, which staff are affected by the ICT disruption and how?

Have any utilities (oil, gas, electricity or water) been affected?

Is there media interest in the incident? (Likely or actual)

Does the incident have the potential to damage the school's reputation?

Other relevant information

Enter any further information on the incident to be entered on the log on the following pages.

INCIDENT MANAGEMENT ACTION/DECISION LOG

Date	Time	Situation update

Please use extra sheets of plain paper as necessary

Critical Incident Management Team

Sample Meeting Agenda

The following sample Critical Incident Management Team agenda can be adapted to fit the needs of the school.

- 1. Share information with the team regarding the facts of the critical incident.** No information should be shared with anyone else until a decision is made about what information is to be shared and the process for notifying staff and students.
- 2. Determine the impact of this particular incident on individual members of the school in order to ensure that all members can function objectively.** Assess the likely impact of the critical incident on classes and individuals. Consider the impact for anyone in the school community who may have recently experienced a significant death or loss. Are there staff members who may require assistance in leading the classroom discussion?
- 3. Determine whether there are the cultural or religious implications surrounding the incident.** How should they be addressed?
- 4. Identify school resources.** Are there other staff members who might be helpful additions to the team in this situation?
- 5. Update from other agencies and partners** – confirm co-ordination issues
- 6. Determine whether additional counsellors are required to provide support to the team and work with students.** Assess the extent of the need for additional resources.
- 7. Confirm the overall strategy and the specific roles of the Critical Incident Management Team members for this particular crisis.**
- 8. Develop an agenda for the general staff meeting and prepare a written statement for the meeting about the critical incident. (Resource Sheet 3)**
- 9. Decide whether it would be appropriate to send home a brief announcement about the critical incident or to write a phone script to inform parents and co-ordinate the task of calling parents. (Resource Sheet 4)**

Resource Sheet 3 General Staff

Sample Meeting Agenda (post event)

The following sample staff meeting agenda can be adapted by the Critical Incident Management Team to fit the needs of the school. The Critical Incident Management Team can facilitate the meeting.

1. Attendance – anyone who is not present should be informed of the critical incident as soon as possible following the meeting.
2. Provide as much accurate information as possible, including:
 - names of the students or staff members directly involved,
 - time and place of the event,
 - any additional information surrounding the event, and
 - names and grades of the siblings of those directly affected who are also in the school.
3. Introduce the Critical Incident Management Team, and any additional support staff or community resource people who are present and explain their roles.
4. Briefly review the Plan. Provide extra copies.
 - Prepare teachers to deal effectively with informing their students of the critical incident.
 - Give out a script and model how students should be told.
 - Encourage teachers to allow time for classroom discussion.
 - Provide all staff with a copy of the protocol for class discussion. See resource sheet 8 for guidelines on leading a classroom discussion.
 - Clarify procedures for handling students who want to leave the classroom.
 - Students who are highly emotional should be accompanied to the designated area.
 - Students who wish to leave the school should only be released to a parent, guardian or their designate.
 - Inform teachers of support plans.
 - Identify staff who will run the support and the appropriate procedure for sending students for the support.
 - Advise staff to be aware of their feelings and support each other.
 - Clarify the way to get counselling assistance for staff members.
 - Inform staff of any outside agencies involved in student or staff support.
 - Ask for staff help to identify students who may be at risk or need extra support.
 - Make counselling plans for all students who are potentially at risk for suicide or other serious emotional responses to the critical incident.
 - Direct staff to refer students who appear to be emotionally unstable to the counsellors.
 - Review the Trust's Crisis Comms Plan for Schools and remind all staff not to talk to the media about the event or to post on social media.

- Inform all staff of any changes to the regular school schedule or cancellation of normal school events.
5. Set the date and time of a follow-up meeting.
- Assure staff that they will be kept informed of any relevant information in this update meeting.
 - Follow up meeting will provide an opportunity for staff members to discuss classroom experiences and report information back to the group.

Resource Sheet 4
Sample Letter Informing Parents

Dear Parents/Carers,

You may have heard...../ It is with sadness and regret that I have to inform you.....

(known facts of the incident)

As a school community, we are all deeply affected by this tragedy/I am sure that you will wish to join me and my staff in offering our condolences and sympathy to those affected/to

.....

(refer to individuals/families affected only where it is appropriate to release this information)

I have now spoken to all pupils and staff in school about what has happened and you will need to be aware of the following arrangements that we have now made:

(Details about:

- *school closure,*
- *changes to timings of school day*
- *transport*
- *lunch time arrangements*
- *changes to staffing*
- *arrangements for specific classes/year groups*
- *counselling support [see resource sheet 7: sample letter to parents re counselling]*
- *provision of further information as relevant)*

(If appropriate, advice about media contacts)

I think it is very important that we all take the time to talk with and reassure children about what has happened. This is likely to be a very difficult time for us as a school community and we will all need to support each other.

We appreciate the expressions of concern we have received, however it would be helpful if parents did not telephone the school during this time so we can keep phones and staff free to manage the situation.

Yours sincerely

[Name]

[Job title]

Areas to consider when planning to inform pupils

- Pupils should be told simply and truthfully what has happened, in small groups if possible, e.g., class, tutor, year, etc. In some circumstances, it may be appropriate to bring pupils together as a whole school. Where this is the arrangement, ensure that pupils have an opportunity to ask questions and talk through what they have heard with class teachers in smaller groupings afterwards.
- Begin by preparing the pupils for some very difficult/sad news.
- Taking account of children's needs and backgrounds, give simple, factual information using language and concepts appropriate to the age of the children.
- Avoid using euphemisms. Be direct and use words like 'dead' and 'died', etc.
- Pass on facts only; do not speculate on causes or consequences.
- If questions cannot be answered this should be acknowledged.
- Address and deal with rumours.
- Try to give expression to the emotions that individuals may be experiencing (e.g., shock/disbelief, etc) and explain that strong and difficult feelings are a normal part of the process of coming to terms with this sort of experience.
- Do not refrain from referring to the deceased by name, perhaps highlighting some positive aspect(s) of their lives.
- Finally, explain what arrangements the school has in hand for coming to terms with what has happened.

"I've got some very sad news to tell you today that might upset you. There is a serious illness called meningitis. Sometimes people with meningitis get better but sometimes people die from it. Some of you will have known that Jane Smith in year 4 was suddenly taken ill last week. I have to tell you that Jane died in hospital yesterday.

Like me, many of you will find it hard to believe that this has happened. It is obviously a very big shock for us all. Jane was such a happy girl who got on well with everybody. We will all miss her.

It is important for you to know that strong and perhaps difficult feelings are part of the normal process of coping with this sort of situation. It will help to talk about what has happened and about your thoughts and feelings. Please do take the opportunity to talk to your family, friends, teachers and adults in school. This is likely to be a difficult time for us as a school community and we should all try to support each other. Please come and talk with me if you have any questions or if you just want to talk."

Resource Sheet 6 Emotional distress

Areas to consider when supporting the individual pupil

- Be accepting and allow the pupil to express their emotions. Ask open ended questions (e.g., “How are you today?”) or just sit with them if this is what you feel is appropriate. Avoid touching or hugging but try to be as natural and unembarrassed as possible. Have some tissues to hand. It might be appropriate to use reflective listening (i.e., repeating back to the child what they have said) and/or summarise what they have said. This gives an opportunity for the child to elaborate and/or modify what they have said as well as an opportunity to hear a perspective on their own experiences. Sometimes it is helpful to give a name to the emotion that you are hearing being expressed (e.g., “That sounds very sad”, “Did you feel angry then?”, etc.).
- You might have to explain your limits of confidentiality (i.e., confidentiality can be maintained except where you believe that the pupil is at risk or there are issues relating to a possible criminal act).
- Don’t forget that knowing what to say is far less important than being able to listen in a sympathetic and supportive manner. If it seems appropriate to offer advice, then strategies you might want to suggest could include:
 - Talking to their family and friends.
 - Crying and expressing their emotions in a suitable safe context.
 - Maintaining normal routines.
 - Eating normally.
 - Taking physical exercise.
 - Maintaining normal sleep patterns.
 - Carrying on seeing and being with friends.
 - Listening and playing music.
 - Being creative through art, drama, music, etc.
 - Maintaining interests and pastimes.
- As part of such sensitive support, it will be important to ensure that the pupil can continue to seek support from you but without them becoming dependent. If appropriate, agree to a set number of sessions at a set time and place where you can be confident of not being disturbed (in terms of your own safety and accountability ensure that parents and relevant staff are aware of any such arrangements).
- Using a visual aid such as an outline of a hand, ask the pupil to identify 5 individuals (e.g., staff, peers, family, other adults) who they feel they could approach as part of their support network to help them feel safe. Ask them to test it out. If all else fails, what else could they always have ‘up their sleeve’ (e.g., ChildLine, etc.)?
- Liaise with parents/carers as appropriate.

- Consider liaising with colleagues to differentiate work outcomes/homework, etc. or arrangements for managing the pupil's emotional distress in class.
- Be aware that holidays, Christmas, birthdays and the anniversary of the event that has caused distressed can mark points of particular emotional vulnerability.
- Taking into account other agencies or professionals who may be involved, consider providing pupils with information about youth counselling and information services/other community support as appropriate.
- Where an individual pupil is experiencing persistent and intrusive thoughts, dreams or flashbacks and avoidance of features associated with the distressing event in conjunction with the physical, cognitive, emotional/behavioural symptoms described in Resource Sheet 9 for at least 1 month, then serious consideration should be given to accessing specialist child mental health services. Referral can be made to Child and Adolescent Family Services by the family via their GP or by the Educational Psychologist linked to the school or indeed by the school nurse or doctor.

Finally, do not underestimate the emotional demands of this sort of work or the confusion that might arise from any of your own unresolved issues. Ensure that you have the opportunity to talk through any form of support that you provide for an individual pupil with a trusted colleague.

Resource Sheet 7
Sample Letter to Parents Arrangements for
Counselling Children

Dear Parents/Carers

As a school community, we have all been affected by the recent tragedy involving

As part of our care and support for the children, we have been able to make arrangements involving outside agencies to provide counselling and support for children in school. We would like to make this available to your child.

This support is likely to consist of staff and professionals from outside agencies talking to pupils in small groups and offering advice and reassurance as appropriate. Please contact me if you have any queries regarding this.

Yours sincerely

[Name]

[Job Title]

Areas for staff to consider in classroom management

- Maintain normal routines and care.
- Be prepared to be more tolerant and accepting of children who might be more restless, distractible, irritable, emotionally volatile and or difficult to engage than would usually be the case.
- Where possible and where this is something that the pupils clearly need, be prepared to deviate from your lesson plan to allow them to talk and ask questions.
- When in discussion with children, do not be afraid of referring to deceased person(s) by name.
- Be honest when answering questions. Do not be afraid of saying that you do not know the answer or that the question is one that is too difficult for you to answer. Taking account of children's needs and backgrounds, give simple, factual information using language and concepts appropriate to the age of the children (avoid using euphemisms).
- Consider setting up a 'questions post box'. Consider how best to follow up questions raised.
- Allow children to talk about their feelings including difficult, confusing and complex feelings. Give them the message that it is OK to talk and that their feelings are a normal experience given the situation.
- In the same way, allow younger children to express themselves through their play. They are likely to feel the need to 'work out' difficult and confusing experiences and play gives them the opportunities to act out some of the issues. Adults may feel uncomfortable witnessing children's excitable 'playing out' of what has happened and may feel the need to intervene. Try to be accepting and permissive, except where this is clearly unhelpful and/or distressing for other children.
- Allow children to support each other
- Manage discussion in a calm and reassuring manner. Allow the expression of feeling but try to manage the emotional temperature. Try to help the children to achieve a sense of perspective. Reassure children about anxieties that they may be experiencing.
- Consider setting up a display area for art work, writing, mementos that the children may wish to contribute.

- Calmly and, where possible, discreetly intervene if it is the case that individual pupils are clearly too distressed to remain in class. Ask if they want to remain in class but in an area away from the main body of children. Make sure that they are supported by a friend. If appropriate, send them with a friend to whatever pastoral support arrangements are available in school. Inform parents.
- Be aware of other children in your classes who may not be so visible but who nevertheless may be struggling to cope. Make times and opportunities for them to talk. If you continue to have concerns, refer them through the school's pastoral system. Inform parents.
- Make opportunities to talk to children on an individual or small group basis as part of your social contact with the children. Even if the children are not very communicative, just being available can be very supportive.
- In line with the school's policies and procedures for dealing with racial harassment and bullying, intervene where you are aware of any signs of name calling, abuse and bullying.
- **Finally, ensure that you are caring for yourselves.**

Resource Sheet 9 Emotional Distress – signs and symptoms

A crisis may cause different reactions in different children in different ways. Some of the more common reactions include:

Physical:

- Wetting / soiling 'accidents'
- Disturbed sleep, bad dreams, fatigue
- Lack of energy, listlessness
- Headaches, tummy aches, muscle aches
- Change in appetite/weight
- Lowered resistance to illness
- Alcohol/drug abuse

Cognitive:

- Difficulties in concentrating, forgetfulness, increased distractibility
- Loss of previously acquired skills
- Deterioration in standards of work
- Being more accident prone
- Reduced interest in usual activities and interests
- Appearing preoccupied

Emotional/Behavioural:

- Numbness
- Feeling of irritability, anger, aggressive behaviour
- Nervousness, jumpiness, panic feelings
- Raised levels of anxiety, fear of dark/confined spaces
- Feeling overwhelmed or confused
- Feeling insecure/clinging behaviour
- Regression to behaviour of a younger child
- Repetitive 'acting out' through play/drawing, etc.
- Crying spells
- Mood swings
- Apathy, hopelessness, depression
- Guilt
- Withdrawal from relationships
- Suicidal thoughts

Be alert to delayed reactions which may occur sometime after the actual incident.

When to refer on

Where an individual is experiencing:

- persistent and intrusive thoughts, dreams or flashbacks to do with the distressing event;
- avoidance of features associated with the distressing event; and / or
- physical, cognitive, emotional/behavioural symptoms as noted above, for at least 1 month then serious consideration should be given to accessing specialist child mental health services. You will obviously want to discuss this with the family and referral can be made to Child and Adolescent Family Services by the family via their GP. Referral can also be made by the Educational Psychologist linked to the school or indeed by the school nurse or doctor.

Resource Sheet 10
Critical Incident Management team Suggested
format for debrief meeting agenda

No	Agenda item
1	Introductions
2	Objectives
3	Walk through the incident using the timeline – incident notification, response, managed and stand down.
4	Review individual(s)/organisations incident logs
5	Identify any problems/issues experienced and their causes
6	Identify what went well and what did not
7	Identify any actions to address any of the issues
8	Closure

Internal School Incident Evaluation Form

To be completed by the Critical Incident Manager following discussion with the Critical Incident Team and forwarded to the Trust upon completion

School:	Date of Incident:
Brief Description of Incident	
Emergency services contacted: Yes / No Critical Incident Management Team involved: Yes / No	Incident deemed critical: Yes / No Police involved: Yes / No
Key actions taken by school:	
Description of any external support accessed:	
What worked well:	
What worked less well:	
How could things have been done better:	
Comment on the Plan and Trust guidance and suggested areas of improvement	

Name:..... Date:.....

**Resource Sheet 12 Recovery
and Resumption Phase**

The purpose of the recovery and resumption phase is to resume ‘business as usual’ working practises for the School as quickly as possible. Where the impact of the incident is prolonged, ‘normal’ operations may need to be delivered under new circumstances eg from a different location.

	ACTION	FUTHER INFO/DETAILS	ACTIONED? (tick/cross as appropriat e)
1.	Agree and plan the actions required to enable recovery and resumption of normal working practises	Agreed actions will be detailed in an action plan and set against timescales with responsibility for completion clearly indicated.	<input type="checkbox"/>
2.	Respond to any ongoing and long term support needs of Staff and Pupils	Depending on the nature of the incident, the School Critical Incident Team may need to consider the use of Counselling Services	<input type="checkbox"/>
3.	Once recovery and resumption actions are complete, communicate the return to ‘business as usual’.	Ensure all staff are aware that the critical incident plan is no longer in effect. [Insert how this will be done eg website/telephone etc. Consider who needs to know that normal working practises have been resumed eg Parents/Carers, Local Authority etc]	<input type="checkbox"/>

4.	<p>Carry out a 'debrief' of the incident with Staff (and possibly with Pupils).</p> <p>Complete a report to document opportunities for improvement and any lessons identified</p>	<p>The incident de-brief report should be reviewed by all members of the School Critical Incident Team and in particular looking at the Business Continuity arrangements to ensure key actions resulting from the incident are implemented within designated timescales. Governors may also have a role in monitoring progress in completing agreed actions to further develop the resilience of the School. Use the Incident Evaluation Form and documents (Resource Sheet 11) to support you with this.</p>	<input type="checkbox"/>
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	ACTION	FUTHER INFO/DETAILS	ACTIONED? (tick/cross as appropriate)
5.	<p>Review this Critical Incidents Plan in light of lessons learned from incident and the response to it</p>	<p>Implement recommendations for improvement and update this Plan. Ensure any revised versions of the Plan is read by all members of the Critical Incident Team</p>	<input type="checkbox"/>

Business Continuity Strategies

ARRANGEMENTS TO MANAGE A LOSS OR SHORTAGE OF STAFF OR SKILLS

	<i>Please add/amend/delete as appropriate</i>	Further Information (eg Key contacts, details of arrangements, checklists)
1.	Use of temporary staff eg Supply Teachers, Office Staff etc	
2.	Multi-skilling and cross-training to ensure staff are capable of undertaking different roles and responsibilities, this may involve identifying deputies, job shadowing, succession planning and handover periods for planned (already known) staff absence eg maternity leave	
3.	<p>Using different ways of working to allow for reduced workforce, this may include:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Larger class sizes (subject to adult and child ratios) • Use of Teaching Assistants, Student Teachers, Learning Mentors etc • Virtual Learning Environment opportunities • Pre-prepared educational materials that allow for independent learning • Team activities and sports to accommodate larger numbers of pupils at once 	
4.	Suspending 'non critical' activities and focusing on your priorities	
5.	Using mutual support agreements with other Schools	
6.	Ensuring Staff management issues are considered i.e. managing attendance policies, job description flexibility and contractual requirements etc	

ARRANGEMENTS TO MANAGE DENIAL OF ACCESS TO YOUR PREMISES OR LOSS OF UTILITIES

	<i>Please add/amend/delete as appropriate</i>	Further Information (eg Key contacts, details of arrangements, checklists)
1.	Using mutual support agreements with other Schools	
2.	Pre-agreed arrangements with other premises in the community i.e. Libraries, Leisure Centres, Colleges, University premises	
3.	Virtual Learning Environment opportunities	
4.	Localising the incident eg isolating the problem and utilising different sites or areas within the School premises portfolio	
5.	Off-site activities eg swimming, physical activities, school trips	

ARRANGEMENTS TO MANAGE LOSS OF TECHNOLOGY / TELEPHONY / DATA / POWER

	<i>Please add/amend/delete as appropriate</i>	Further Information (eg Key contacts, details of arrangements, checklists)
1.	Back-ups of key school data	
2.	Reverting to paper-based systems eg paper registers, whiteboards etc	
3.	Flexible lesson plans	
4.	Emergency generator eg Uninterruptible Power Supply (UPS)	
5.	Emergency lighting	

**ARRANGEMENTS TO MITIGATE THE LOSS OF KEY SUPPLIERS, THIRD PARTIES
OR PARTNERS**

	<i>Please add/amend/delete as appropriate</i>	Further Information (eg Key contacts, details of arrangements, checklists)
1.	Pre-identified alternative suppliers	
2.	Ensuring all external providers have business continuity plans in place as part of contract terms	
3.	Insurance cover	
4.	Using mutual support agreements with other Schools	
5.	Using alternative ways of working to mitigate the loss eg suspending activities, adapting to the situation and working around it	