



# ST DAVID'S PREP

## CRITICAL INCIDENT MANAGEMENT POLICY

*This policy applies to the entire setting, including EYFS.*

Date of Policy	1 <sup>ST</sup> September 2023
Member of staff responsible	Andrew Webster
Role	Head of Compliance

### RECORD OF REVIEW

DATE	AMENDMENTS
Sept 2023	<ul style="list-style-type: none"><li>Updated September 2023</li></ul>

# CRITICAL INCIDENT MANAGEMENT POLICY

## 1. Policy Scope

This policy offers general guidance on dealing with a critical incident and more specific guidance on dealing with sudden death/bereavement (appendix 5). In isolation, therefore, this policy does not fully prepare staff for managing a critical incident and so staff must also have training on the following policies:

- The Driver's Handbook.
- The Education Visits/Trips policy.
- Missing Child Procedure
- Safeguarding Policy
- The Health & Safety Policy.
- First Aid Policy
- The Fire Prevention/Procedures policy.

For the purposes of this policy, a critical incident is a sudden, unexpected incident causing actual (or potential) death and/or significant trauma to members of a school's community and/or significant damage to a school's property. A critical incident is likely to have a significant and lasting impact on a school's community and reputation and may significantly disrupt school routine and business. A critical incident might include:

- A death/major injury (pupil/staff) on-site/close to site.
- A death/major injury (pupil/staff) on a school trip/fixture.
- The sudden death of a parent/close family member on-site/during a school activity.
- The sudden death of a parent/close family member without pupils/staff present.
- Report of a suspicious individual in the area.
- An intruder on the school grounds.
- An intruder inside the school building.
- A terror alert.
- A stray dog on-site.
- Poisonous clouds/severe lightning storm/flooding.
- Fire, gas explosion, science chemical explosion.
- A major accident on a boundary road.
- Pupil/staff/parent assault/altercation on/near site.
- Pupil/staff/parent arrested.
- Pupil/staff/parent kidnapped/taken hostage.
- Historic/current reputational/legal threat/accusation.

A poor response to a critical incident could cause continued/significant harm to others and/or damage a school's operation and reputation. Our schools' Critical Incident Management Teams (CIMT) must therefore be prepared to respond immediately and effectively. Each CIMT must train themselves and wider staff for critical incidents by regularly (at least annually) running and reviewing critical incident scenarios and logging the event; redrafting policy and procedure whenever necessary.

The template for this policy is reviewed centrally at least every three years or sooner, if legislation dictates.

All Wishford schools should follow this guidance alongside their local procedures. Prevention is key and staff should have training on this policy and other related policies on induction and updates at least annually. **Schools should create a hard-copy paper folder of at least 10 copies of each of the relevant information sheets/forms throughout the appendices of this policy and have it readily to hand at all times.**

## 2. Phase 1: Crisis Management

The specific response to any critical incident must be decided upon in the moment by the school's CIMT (with support from the emergency services and Wishford). Nevertheless, regardless of the nature of the event, all staff should be aware of the following aspects of any initial response:

**REMEMBER:**                      **SAFETY**                                            **ACTION**                                            **COMMUNICATION**

- a) **Safety:** The immediate priority of any critical incident is the safety and well-being of all involved. This could involve evacuating (to one of a number of potential 'safe zones') or securing/isolating large groups of people. All staff must have adequate training on procedures (i.e. evacuation routes, lockdown procedures, first aid procedures, missing child procedures, risk assessment etc) to allow them to support this immediate priority and for the emergency services and Wishford to be called without delay. This first response might also include first aid trained staff supporting anyone who might be injured, including setting up a first aid station. Site access might need to be restricted and utility supplies cut off.
- b) **Action:** Available members of the school's CIMT must communicate and initiate an action plan (see appendix 2) as soon as possible following the incident. Members of the CIMT should make their personal contacts easily accessible to staff (and the Fire Brigade) and be contactable out of hours. Members of the CIMT should initially:
  - i. Establish the availability of members of the CIMT and appoint the most senior person as the decision-making lead (N.B. the Proprietor will assume this role if no members of the CIMT are available).
  - ii. Ensure the emergency services and Wishford have been called.
  - iii. Ensure the safety and well-being of all involved has been actioned as far as possible. Is there anyone still at risk from harm?
  - iv. Establish the facts: what, where, when, who?
  - v. Create an action plan (appendix 2) which prioritises members of the community most in need of support, including union support and specialist support for trauma.
  - vi. Establish liability (if any) and secure/preserve evidence for subsequent investigations. Take written witness statements as soon as possible.
- c) **Communication:** Effective communication is vital following a critical incident. The CIMT lead will delegate communication responsibilities across the CIMT. The first priority is to establish an effective communication channel for the staff. This should be planned in advance with more than one option available as different scenarios might require different methods.

It must be made clear to all staff that ALL external communication (parents, media, etc) must be factual and worded/approved by the CIMT lead (with Wishford support), sent via the school office email only. As soon as possible, the CIMT lead will contact Director of Operations, [mark.dingle@wishford.co.uk](mailto:mark.dingle@wishford.co.uk) (01249 479070/07866 438489) to get support with the Critical Incident Plan and dealing with insurers and Head of Marketing and Admissions [kate.ross@wishford.co.uk](mailto:kate.ross@wishford.co.uk) (01249 479070/07795 633434) for support with external/media communication. **The Wishford team must be contacted at the earliest possible convenience and before any external communication.**

The CIMT may also need to establish communication channels with the emergency services. They may require an emergency response centre to be set up (either on-site or off-site) and the police will advise if the CIMT need to preserve evidence/follow their guidance.

The CIMT must communicate with staff regularly during the aftermath and give special consideration for those directly involved in the incident. Parents, staff and pupils will need to be regularly appraised on developments. It would not be unusual to hold daily briefings with daily information letters during the period in which the incident is considered critical.

### 3. Phase 2: Recovery Management

There is no definitive timeframe for phase 1 or definitive moment when phase 2 begins, however, there will come a time when focus shifts from a sense of daily crisis management to the more medium/long term focus of managing the school back to a sense of normality whilst continuing to offer support to all those affected. Again, each incident will require a nuanced approach but, in general terms, the CIMT will:

- a) Aim for pupils to return to their normal routine as soon as possible and as appropriate.
- b) Consider the immediate and ongoing logistical concerns in getting the school 'back to normal' which might include:
  - i. Assessing physical damage and creating new risk assessments.
  - ii. Deciding to fully or partially close the school.
  - iii. Finding alternative, temporary accommodation.
  - iv. Dealing with contractors, local services and insurers to get the site safe and usable.
  - v. Creating new shift patterns for staff to help accelerate the progress back to normal.
  - vi. Establishing an electronic record of the incident on SharePoint and scanning in any hand-written documentation completed during phase 1.
  - vii. **Ensuring all telephone conversations are logged and any email communication is saved within the incident folder.**
- c) Consider the ongoing support needed for pupils involved in the incident. This might include:
  - i. arranging a home visit to discuss plans for returning to school even on a phased basis;
  - ii. helping arrange a rota of support from school friends;
  - iii. arranging for school work to be sent home where appropriate;
  - iv. briefing staff and pupils on how best to support individuals returning to school;
  - v. arranging support for temporary or permanent mobility difficulties or disfigurement;
  - vi. planning support for emotional needs eg leaving class when distressed.
  - vii. Involving bespoke external agencies/specialist support.
  - viii. Logging safeguarding concerns.
  - ix. Making examining boards aware (if relevant).
- d) Be aware also that, particularly as time passes, staff may become increasingly affected by the heightened emotions of a traumatic period. Consideration may be given to counselling and/or a short break away from school for those in need (including the provision of cover where necessary).
- e) For all of the above, schools should rely on the support of the Wishford network. The support office can arrange for staff from other Wishford schools to help support the school in a range of capacities.
- f) Following a sudden death, the CIMT should refer to appendix 5 of this policy to plan for ongoing support with bereavement.
- g) Undertake a review of the incident, generating lessons learned and consequent action points and potentially training for staff.
- h) For all of the above, the CIMT should use Appendix 2 of this policy to record all action and reflection.

## Appendix 1: (CIMT) The Critical Incident Management Team

### Role & Composition

The CIMT's role is to provide leadership and direction for the planning, duration and aftermath of critical incidents.

Core Members of the CIMT are listed in the table below along with their deputies, should they be unavailable during a critical incident. At least one member of the CIMT should be on-site at all times during normal school opening hours and at least one contactable at all times out of hours/during school holidays (the CIMT will inform staff if there is a rota of the person 'on-call').

St David's Prep Critical Incident Management Team			
CIMT		Deputies	
Name (Role)	Contact	Name (Role)	Contact
The Head	Julia Foulger 0208 777 5852/ 07790 417746 <a href="mailto:Julia.foulger@stdavidsprep.com">Julia.foulger@stdavidsprep.com</a>	School Business Manager	Sarah Handy 0208 777 5852/ 07786 915909
School Business Manager	Sarah Handy 0208 777 5852/ 07786 915909 <a href="mailto:Sarah.handy@stdavidsprep.com">Sarah.handy@stdavidsprep.com</a>	Site Manager	Chris King 0208 777 5852/ 07970 930271 <a href="mailto:chris.king@stdavidsprep.com">chris.king@stdavidsprep.com</a>
Deputy Head Pastoral	Amber O'Sullivan 0208 777 5852/ 07590 756029 <a href="mailto:Amber.osullivan@stdavidsprep.com">Amber.osullivan@stdavidsprep.com</a>	School Business Manager	Sarah Handy 0208 777 5852/ 07786 915909
Deputy Head Academic	Abigail Thackray 0208 777 5852 <a href="mailto:Abigail.thackray@stdavidsprep.com">Abigail.thackray@stdavidsprep.com</a>	Head of EYFS	Lauren Weaver 0208 777 5852 <a href="mailto:Lauren.weaver@stdavidsprep.com">Lauren.weaver@stdavidsprep.com</a>

Co-opted Members - Co-opted members could be drawn from any of those listed below, dependent upon the situation:

St David's Prep Critical Incident Management Team: Co-opted Members	
Name (Role)	Contact
Mark Dingle (Director of Operations)	<a href="mailto:mark.dingle@wishford.co.uk">mark.dingle@wishford.co.uk</a> (01249 479070/07866 438489)
Gary Vaughan (Head of Estates)	<a href="mailto:Gary.vaughan@wishford.co.uk">Gary.vaughan@wishford.co.uk</a> (01249 479070/07769449232)
Sam Antrobus (Executive Chairman)	<a href="mailto:sam.antrobus@wishford.co.uk">sam.antrobus@wishford.co.uk</a> (01249 479070/07971259428)
Paul Easterbrook (Director of Education & Compliance)	<a href="mailto:paul.easterbrook@wishford.co.uk">paul.easterbrook@wishford.co.uk</a> (01249 479070/07769449081)
Andrew Webster (Head of Compliance)	<a href="mailto:Andrew.webster@wishford.co.uk">Andrew.webster@wishford.co.uk</a> (01249 479070/07446520025)
Kate Ross (Head of Marketing)	<a href="mailto:kate.ross@wishford.co.uk">kate.ross@wishford.co.uk</a> (01249 479070/07795 633434)
(Representative of the School's Insurers)	
David Jones, Vicar of local Parish	<a href="mailto:david@stjohnsbeckenham.org">david@stjohnsbeckenham.org</a> 07720 949393

The CIMT will use the following rallying points and communication channels in priority order. They must quickly meet/communicate to establish answers to the ‘first response’ questions at the top of the critical incident plan (appendix 2)

	Rallying Point for CIMT members	Communication channel for staff
1 <sup>st</sup> Priority	Head’s Office	Email
2 <sup>nd</sup> Priority	Site Managers Office	Teams
3 <sup>rd</sup> Priority	Off-site location	Mobile phone/WhatsApp

## Appendix 2: The Critical Incident Plan

This Critical Information Plan template comes in three parts. Enough spacing has been given so that multiple hard copies of the entire template can be printed, stapled and kept in a paper folder. A record of the response can therefore be carried out ‘by-hand’ and scanned at a later date.

The Critical Incident Plan		
Part 1: Initial Information Capture Form		
Completed by (full name & role)		
Person notifying (if relevant)		
Date		
Time		
Location of incident		
Type of incident		
Year group(s) involved		
Lead member of staff in-situ		
Contact details of lead member of staff		
Do the emergency services need to be called?	Yes/No (N.B. If needed, please direct another member of staff to call the appropriate emergency services with the location before continuing)	
For all following questions, add detail below whenever further action is necessary...		
Any fatalities?	Yes	No
Is there ongoing risk?	Yes	No
Has everyone been accounted for?	Yes	No
Injured pupils?	Yes	No
Injured staff?	Yes	No
Are the non-injured in a safe space?	Yes	No
Are staffing levels sufficient?	Yes	No
Anyone other than staff or pupils involved?	Yes	No
Are the media involved?	Yes	No

Further detail:
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Part 2: Crisis Management			
CIMT lead			
Other CIMT members for this incident			
CIMT Rallying Point/Meeting Room (on-site or off-site?)			
Resources needed for the meeting room (consider contact details, communication devices, internet/ email/SharePoint access...)			
How will the CIMT communicate?			
Communication channel to direct staff/pupils			
CIMT member responsible for internal communication			
CIMT member responsible for external communication			
Is/was the incident deemed critical by the CIMT?	Yes	No	N/A
Emergency services contacted	Yes	No	N/A
Wishford contacted	Yes	No	N/A
Are all buildings structurally sound?	Yes	No	N/A
Do utilities need to be switched off?	Yes	No	N/A
Has any further risk been isolated as far as possible?	Yes	No	N/A
Is everyone accounted for?	Yes	No	N/A
Has a First Aid lead been appointed?	Yes	No	N/A
Has a First Aid Hub been established?	Yes	No	N/A
Are any hazardous materials involved?	Yes	No	N/A

Do all normal school activities need to cease?	Yes	No	N/A
Do some normal school activities need to cease?	Yes	No	N/A
Is a full lockdown needed? (hide, lock doors, pull blinds?)	Yes	No	N/A
Is a partial lockdown needed? (continue internal/external activity?)	Yes	No	N/A
Is a full evacuation needed? (Exit points? Rallying point? Comms?)	Yes	No	N/A
Is a partial evacuation needed? (Which zones? Exit/rallying/comms?)	Yes	No	N/A
Is an off-site rallying point needed?	Yes	No	N/A
Are the media involved? (if yes, please liaise with Wishford)	Yes	No	N/A
Do any individuals with SEND/IHCPs need additional support?	Yes	No	N/A
Does the CIMT have all of the necessary resources & information?	Yes	No	N/A
Any statutory reporting requirements?	Yes	No	N/A

**Overview of the initial response plan:**

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**Part 3: Recovery Management**

Action Point	Staff Initial	Date
CIMT Meeting room/base established		
CIMT logistics (Is phase 1 over? How do we know? Setting up a central electronic folder, External support, Communication channels, contact details needed, delegation of responsibilities, timeframes, food, resources etc)		



<p>Legal &amp; insurance related considerations. Is there liability? Is there a police investigation? Do witness statements need to be taken? Does the incident need to be reported externally? (seek Wishford support for all issues)</p>			
<p>Staff communication (timeframes, factual accuracy, fielding questions, structure and regularity of briefings, ongoing communication channels)</p>			
<p>Pupil communication Plan (how, by whom, size and ages of groups, language (age appropriate but factual with no euphemisms), fielding questions, creating a space for support, dispelling rumour.</p>			
<p>Parent Communication Plan (Clear channels, clear responsibilities, factual and regular information, offer timeframes for the next update, dispel rumour, be present during key moments of the day i.e. drop off and pick up, file emails and logs of phone conversations in the incident folder). <b>N.B. All written external communication and any communication with the media needs Wishford collaboration.</b></p>			
<p>Pupils/staff/parents in need of special consideration, including any specialist/legal advice/support (please refer to appendix 5 of this policy if there has been a bereavement).</p>			

<p>Actions needed to return the school to normal routines: e.g. Staffing/cover, Timetable/rooming changes, Break-out spaces/pastoral support, Consider sensitive/inappropriate areas of the curriculum, Ongoing first aid, Support for staff, Food and drink, Ongoing communication, Ongoing emotional/mental recovery</p>			
<p>Incident Review/Longer term considerations</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Ongoing support</li> <li>• Planning for reconciliation/remembrance</li> </ul>			

### Appendix 3: Telephone Log

This form should be used by any member of CIMT making or receiving a phonecall relating to the critical incident. Copies of this form should be printed and kept in the CIMT room. During Phase 1, paper copies can be kept in a paper folder in the team room but they should be scanned and saved into the incident's electronic folder at the earliest possible convenience. A member of the school's admin team should be given the responsibility of thereafter checking the hard-copy folder and uploading any completed forms.

Critical Incident Telephone Log	
Date	
Time	
Call made by:	
Received by:	

Conversation summary:

Any action points:

#### Appendix 4: Evacuation & Shut-down Procedures:

The below text is available to every member of staff and in each room as a 1-pager to refer in the event they are teaching within a space they are unfamiliar with. Yellow highlighting for evacuation, green for shutdown. Regarding terminology, we have moved away from lockdown, to shut-down, as due to the coronavirus pandemic, children associated the word lockdown with this rather than a security threat. A bracketed initial indicates the current class teacher within each space.

#### St David's Prep – Emergency Evacuation Roles and Responsibilities

*Written under the assumption that each room would only have one member of staff present at any given time.*

Reception – Collect registers, absences, student in/out, visitors and contractors' sheets. Confirm Count.

Heads Office – 1 of SBM/HT/SLT: Sweep Northern end of upper floor. Ensure fire brigade has been called  
(last one out – Main Building Upper).

Site Manager – Announce emergency over radio, plus message on Teams/Whatsapp.

Year 1 (FC) – Evacuate your children/room.

Year 1 (SH/JJ) – Evacuate your children/room.

Year 4 (AT/BOS) – Evacuate your children/room.

Year 3 (BM) – Evacuate your children/room.

Year 3 (HB) – Evacuate your children/room. Sweep Southern end of upper floor.

Year 4 (NS) – Evacuate your children/room. Ensure the Hub has been evacuated (as you pass).

Kitchen – Ensure Kitchen is clear. If exit to front then proceed to assembly point. If exit to rear - sweep lower floor toilets (last one out – Main Building Lower).

Hall/Cloakroom – If you are in a lesson or changing in cloakroom, ensure the space you are in is evacuated.

The Hub – Evacuate your children/room.

Music Cabin – Evacuate your children/room.

Year 2 (BH) – Evacuate your children/room. Ensure Music Cabin has been evacuated (as you pass).

Year 3 (AOS/SH) – Evacuate your children/room. Sweep building (last one out: Cabin Classrooms).

Pre-Reception (LS) – Evacuate your children/room.

Pre Teaching Assist. – Sweep building / toilets (last one out: EYFS).

Reception (HB) – Evacuate your children/room. Ensure STEAM has been evacuated (as you pass).

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Next update: September 2025

<u>Reception (LW)</u> –	Evacuate your children/room.
<u>STEAM</u> –	Evacuate your children/room. Check <u>toilets</u> . (last one out: STEAM).
<u>Year 5 (CH)</u> –	Evacuate your children/room.
<u>Year 6 (BS)</u> –	Evacuate your children/room. Sweep <u>toilets</u> (last one out: Portakabin).
<u>Field</u> –	On observation of evacuation, stop lesson and move to assembly point. Ensure children are with their correct class.

**Once at the Assembly point, ensure your class count is correct. EC/IK to confirm absences.**

### **St Davids Prep – Emergency SHUTDOWN Roles and Responsibilities**

*Written under the assumption that each room would only have one member of staff present at any given time.*

**Any staff member can action a shutdown. Please use Air-Horn (located in front office, site office, Cabin classrooms, EYFS office, Portakabins). Please announce over radio, Teams & WhatsApp where possible.**

<u>Reception</u> –	Lock sign-in window, lights off, lock door or if time, move to heads office.
<u>Heads Office</u> –	Stay in place, lock door, lights off, drop blinds.
<u>Site Manager</u> –	Stay in place, lock door, lights off, drop blinds.
<u>Year 1 (FC)</u> –	Stay in place, lock door, lights off, drop blinds.
<u>Year 1 (SH/JJ)</u> –	Stay in place, lock door, lights off, drop blinds.
<u>Year 4 (AT/BOS)</u> –	Stay in place, lock door, lights off, drop blinds.
<u>Year 3 (BM)</u> –	Stay in place, lock door, lights off, drop blinds.
<u>Year 3 (HB)</u> –	Stay in place, lock door, lights off, drop blinds.
<u>Year 4 (NS)</u> –	Stay in place, lock door, lights off, drop blinds.
<u>Kitchen</u> –	Stay in place, lights off, lock both doors.
<u>Cloakroom</u> –	Stay in place, lights off, lock both doors.

<u>Hall</u> –	Stay in place, ensure fire escape closed, bolt swing doors, lights off, drawer curtains
<u>The Hub</u> –	Stay in place, lock door, lights off, drop blinds.
<u>Music Cabin</u> –	Stay in place, lock door, lights off, drop blinds.
<u>Year 2 (BH)</u> –	Stay in place, lock door, lights off, drop blinds.
<u>Year 2 (AOS/SH)</u> –	Stay in place, lock door, lights off, drop blinds.
<u>Pre Reception (LS)</u> –	Stay in place, lock door, lights off, drop blinds.
<u>Reception (HB)</u> –	Stay in place, lock door, lights off, drop blinds.
<u>Reception (LW)</u> –	Stay in place, lock door, lights off, drop blinds.
<u>STEAM</u> –	Stay in place, lock door, lights off, drop blinds.
<u>Year 5 (CH)</u> –	Stay in place, lights off, lock door.
<u>Year 6 (BS)</u> –	Stay in place, lights off, lock door.
<u>Field</u> –	Attempt to reach Portakabins. Alternative is to utilise tarmac netball court or evacuate via gate to woods. Call SLT, judgement call on muster point. Options: Oak Lodge School, Blakes Rec, West Wickham Swimming Baths, St Johns Church.

**Ensure count of children is undertaken and sent via teams/WhatsApp to SLT.**

## Appendix 5: Managing Bereavement

### 1. Guidelines for breaking news about a death to staff and the wider community.

- a. Arrange a staff meeting which should take place as soon as possible.
- b. Impart factual information. Never make assumptions or repeat what has been said by rumour.
- c. Give news sensitively and empathetically, being aware that people may react in different ways.
- d. Be cognisant of the relationships staff may have had with the person who has died.
- e. Ensure that there is someone responsible for telling people who are unable to attend the staff meeting i.e. part time staff, peripatetic staff, lunch time supervisors. Consider the best way of imparting the information to those absent e.g. by doing home visit, by telephone, text or e-mail etc.
- f. Identify individual members of staff who feel able to support staff and/or children. The most appropriate person to support the children should be well known to them and trusted.
- g. Identify a member of staff who will liaise with the individual's family, to deal with staff condolences and any funeral arrangements (if necessary).
- h. Identify an appropriate member of staff who will take 'phone calls and/or direct them as appropriate. Try to establish a "protected" telephone line to ensure free flow of accurate information. Telephone line providers may provide an additional line if the situation requires one.
- i. Identify a member of staff who will compose a letter for parents which should be sent the same day.
- j. Arrange a staff meeting at the end of the day to ensure staff are coping with the situation.
- k. Identify any unresolved problems or ongoing issues.
- l. Ensure that those staff that live alone have contact numbers of friends in case of need.
- m. Identify sources of advice and support to access for help in coming to terms with the bereavement (see bereavement toolkit).

### 2. Guidelines for breaking news of a death to children/young people

- a. Ensure all staff are informed beforehand and have the support they need to support the children. Identify staff who are too vulnerable to support the children and remove them from this responsibility. Ensure that parents have been informed before any child goes home that day so that parents are aware before meeting their child at the school gate/at home.
- b. Inform the children/young people as soon as possible about the death.
- c. Where possible, the pupils should be informed in small groups i.e. class or tutor groups.
- d. Identify those children who had a long term and/or close relationship with the person who has died so they can be told separately.
- e. If appropriate, a special assembly could be held at a later time in the day to remember the person who has died.
- f. Allow the children/young people to ask questions and answer them honestly and factually in terms that they will understand.
- g. Allow the children/young people to verbalise their feelings.
- h. Allow the children/young people to discuss the situation and share their experiences of death.
- i. Be honest about your own feelings and talk about your relationship with the person.
- j. Avoid using euphemisms.
- k. Those children/young people who have had more involvement with the person should be given the opportunity to share their feelings and experiences either within the group or on a one-to-one situation.
- l. Ensure the children/young people understand that the death is nothing to do with anything they have said or done. It is in **no** way their fault.
- m. Reassure them that not all people who are ill or have had an accident will die and that many people get better.
- n. Put an appropriate time limit on the discussion. It is preferable to resume normal school activities as soon as possible thus ensuring minimal disruption within the school.
- o. Conclude the discussion with a prayer or special poem to remember the person who has died and their family.
- p. Be available for any child/young person who needs additional help and support.
- q. Refer to the bereavement toolkit (below) for further guidance.

### 3. Things to consider in the days following the news of the death

- a. It is important to consider any cultural or religious implications and seek advice if necessary.
- b. Ensure nominated staff with responsibilities for supporting staff and children are available to do so.
- c. It may be necessary temporarily to provide staff cover for their normal activities.
- d. Identify an allocated quiet place where children, young people and staff can go if necessary.
- e. It is preferable for there to be minimum disruption to the timetable but some flexibility may be required.
- f. Try to engender an awareness of when people need help and support, particularly those who worked closely with the person who has died and secretaries/administrative staff who are taking telephone calls, dealing with parents etc.
- g. Through the nominated staff member who has responsibilities for liaising with the individual's family, ascertain their wishes about the school's involvement in the funeral, if any.
- h. Consider practical issues like: -
  - i. Remembrance book for children and staff to sign and place for outward display of remembrance (flowers, toys etc.)
  - ii. Putting an obituary in the paper, sending flowers to the home or to the funeral, making a collection etc.
  - iii. Who will attend the funeral, making a collection etc.
  - iv. Cover for any staff that may be going to the funeral.
  - v. Transport to and from the funeral.
  - vi. Informing the parents of those pupils who will be involved.
  - vii. Possible closure of the school. If this is the case remember to tell appropriate staff in advance.
- i. Further down the line, it's important to consider long term remembrance. Anniversaries will be difficult for all involved and the school should consider whether a memorial would be appropriate.

### 4. Supporting a child with bereavement

It is implicit within this section that staff suffering from bereavement will also need care and support. Much of the guidance outlined below is applicable to adults and the Head of each school must action whatever measures are necessary to support team members through difficult periods in their lives.

Staff supporting children with bereavement should refer to the [Bereavement in Schools Toolkit](#) (linked) which offers resources and additional guidance to the guidelines outline below. Staff should also refer to Annex A of this policy which offers a child-friendly reading list. [The Child Death Helpline](#) is also a good source of support.

- a. In the past, people have sometimes underestimated the impact of death upon young children. While it is true that their understanding of death develops over a prolonged period of time, it is clear that young children can suffer deeply as a result of the death of someone close to them. This suffering is more intense when they do not have opportunities to talk or to grieve openly, and do not feel that those close to them recognise their feelings - even though they themselves may not yet have the words to express them.
- b. A child's reactions to bereavement can include withdrawal, open distress, tears, panic, aggression, anxiety, fear or other signs of stress. Bereaved children may act out this stress in unexpected ways, such as nervous giggling, stoical bravery, untypical aggression, becoming the class clown, or total denial - all these are normal grief reactions. They may also become extremely tired, to the point of exhaustion, as so much emotional energy goes into dealing with the loss and the stress of the changes in the family. For some children, there may be additional terrors; if the death has been referred to as 'falling asleep' or 'being taken', then it is sometimes the case that children become afraid of going to bed or to sleep. Words like 'loss' or 'lost' can put fear into a young child's mind, too.
- c. In addition, the death of a terminally ill pupil or member of staff can be planned for with full support being given before the actual event. Often pupils will want to create a memory board to allow their emotions to be shared with others and a book of condolence where they feel that they are writing a message to the deceased person all help. Open discussion and realistic language are often the best way to deal with issues that arise. Once the pupil or member of staff dies then it is important that all emotional support is given and the need to mourn is recognised. If it is possible over a



- prolonged illness, it can help to have a message from the member of staff which is about living life to the full and an opportunity to raise funds for that member of staff's favourite cause.
- d. When a pupil who is attending the school, experiences bereavement the following issues should be considered:
- i. The pupil's family should be asked how much and what the child already knows and how they have been involved.
  - ii. The relevant member(s) of staff should maintain strong channels of communication with the family to ensure that the child may be best supported when at school.
  - iii. The importance of both school and the pupil's parents or carers in reporting changes in behaviour. (Eating and sleeping patterns may change or behaviour in school may deteriorate or the pupil may become withdrawn.)
  - iv. If necessary, outside agencies may need to be contacted as appropriate.
  - v. It is important to stress the importance of communication between school and home. Without it ultimately both parties will fail the child.
  - vi. When a child who has suffered bereavement returns to school, it will probably be necessary for the relevant member of staff to reassure them you know what has happened.
- e. The following are a useful set of guidelines for handling a bereaved and grieving child:
- i. Explain you know 'what has happened' and that 'you are there' if they need you or want to talk.
  - ii. Provide a special place for time alone in case they need it.
  - iii. Watch for changes in behaviour - never be cross.
  - iv. When they want to talk - find time to listen.
  - v. Listen, show you care and encourage them.
  - vi. Be ready - there are always questions.
  - vii. Always be honest - don't be afraid of saying 'I don't know'.
  - viii. Don't say: 'You'll feel better soon' (changing the subject will only make things worse).
  - ix. Show them that when someone they loved has died it is good to keep all the happy memories alive by talking about them.
  - x. Explain 'I care how you feel and we don't understand why they had to die, we only know that they loved you and that you'll never ever forget them'
- f. It will take time and compassion - often with steps backwards and hurdles to jump- but only then can the healing begin. When the school is informed of the death of a child or member of staff, the following action should be considered;
- i. Discussion should take place with the family and their wishes considered before decisions are taken on how and what to tell the children in school.
  - ii. Counselling should be available if necessary e.g. in cases of sudden or violent death (outside agencies should be involved with this such as [Cruse](#) or [Marie Curie](#)).
  - iii. Staff and children should be supported throughout the grieving period; anyone displaying signs of stress should be offered appropriate support.
- g. When the report of the death first comes to school, it may be appropriate for the form teacher (of each bereaved sibling), to talk to the class, to create opportunities for them to ask questions and discuss how they can help their bereaved classmate. On the child's return to school, even close friends may need encouragement to voice difficult feelings, to say, "I'm sorry your brother died". One of the key 'hurts' which bereaved children recall is the feeling that few people, if any, acknowledged their loss.
- h. Most children welcome the opportunity to talk privately to an adult about their loss. Even if the child cannot verbalise his or her feelings, it is helpful for a trusted teacher to show sympathy (without saying "I know how you feel"), and to use words like sad, lonely, upset, afraid, so that the child realises the school knows about the death. The family may be so overwhelmed by the trauma that little individual acknowledgement is given to the child's feelings when they are at home.
- i. Some children need a retreat when grief overtakes them, and it helps if the school accepts a pupil's need to express their grief, providing a 'safe place' and a trusted adult to be with them. Once the bereaved child returns to school routine, it is helpful to share concerns with parents so that they

- know how he or she is coping in school. Most families appreciate some sort of direct communication from the school, especially if the child who has died was a former pupil.
- i. Be prepared to create exceptional circumstances for particular children who need particular help. Set up clear boundaries and make it clear that you have allowed certain behaviours to happen. When the child is ready you can reverse these arrangements. A bereaved child for example may well need to be allowed to behave in a special way according to how they are dealing with the situation. The key is to try to create a normal environment for them by asking what they want to do. Drawing is a very common form of expression. It is always best to talk this through and share ideas the relevant pastoral team or the Safeguarding Officer. They will help you to decide what to share with other children.
  - j. Books, stories, music and art can be very helpful in exploring loss, both with the class and with the bereaved child. There are many excellent books written on bereavement for different ages of children, both in the fact and fiction sections, now available from shops, libraries or the web, and many school libraries have a selection of such recommended publications. Sensitivity is needed so that deep grief is not triggered at an inappropriate time. For example, a school assembly using the book *Badger's Parting Gifts* might help the school to explore grief and loss, but not when a newly-bereaved child is present. The Scholastic book '100 Assemblies' contains some good ideas on assemblies dealing with loss and change (p.66 - 80).
  - k. The grief caused by the death will be long-lasting, and schools need to recognise that anniversaries and celebrations will be difficult - especially the first birthday and Christmas or other religious festivals. It will help if key dates and times are noted and passed on to the next class teacher or next school, along with other records and information. As children mature, the death is felt and questioned at new levels, both emotionally and intellectually, often causing renewed grief and distress.
  - l. Classmates, especially close friends of the bereaved boy or girl, or of the child who has died, will suffer varying grief reactions. Their teachers will probably need the support of colleagues at this time; they might need to be reassured that their ideas for giving comfort to the children are wise, and that they will be of benefit to those in their care. Many younger teachers themselves may not have experienced bereavement, especially of this kind, before.
  - m. This is a long-term issue. You can help a school recover through a memorial service or assembly and through the use of counsellors. Recognise that those who go to counsellors may well not be those whose need is greatest. A brother or sister may well have intense needs that appear later. It is very difficult for the school to know when to stop making allowances.
  - n. The school should also be aware of the emotional impact the death of a family pet might have on a pupil or a member of staff. Emotional support can be offered through the normal channels of teachers, form teachers, HoYs/KS leads, the Head and peers and again discussion and honesty are vital. Terminology is again important as children may associate 'falling asleep' etc with the death. Again, pupils and staff should be encouraged to be honest with their emotions and talk about their memories of their pets. Whilst much of the Bereavement Policy deals with the death of people we should not underestimate how important the death of a pet to pupils and staff can be.

## 5. Suggested Reading

### Pre-Prep/Years 3 + 4

*Am I still a sister?* Alicia Sims  
Big A & Co, 1986. ISBN 0-9618995-0-6  
*Badger's parting gifts* Susan Varley  
HarperCollins, 1992. ISBN 000 664 3175  
Remembering my brother Ginny Perkins  
A&C Black, 1996 ISBN 0-7136-4541-5  
*Waterbugs and dragonflies* Doris Stickney  
Mowbray, 1997. ISBN 0 264 66904 5  
*Muddles, Puddles and Sunshine* Diana Crossley  
Hawthorn Press (2 Oct. 2000) ISBN 1869890582

### Years 3 - 8

*Charlotte's web* E. B. White  
Penguin, 1993. ISBN 014 036 4498

*My brother Joey died* Gloria Houston  
TCF (USA), 1982. ISBN 0-671-42401-7  
*When someone dies: help for young people coping with grief* Dwaine Steffes  
Cruse Bereavement Care, 1997 (student edition). ISBN 0 900 321 113  
*Your friend, Rebecca* Linda Hoy  
Heinemann Educational, 1992. ISBN 043 512 3882  
*The Scar* Charlotte Moundlic  
Walker (7 Feb. 2013) ISBN 140634415X  
Year 7 and 8 pupils -- *Vicky Angel* by Jacqueline Wilson (for the loss of a friend)  
Year 5 and 6 pupils - *The Heart and the Bottle* by Oliver Jeffers

## Teachers

*Forgotten mourners, The: Susan Smith  
guidelines for working with bereaved children*  
Jessica Kingsley, 1999 (2<sup>nd</sup> edition). ISBN 1 85302 758 8  
*Good Grief - No. 2: Over 11s and adults* Barbara Ward  
Jessica Kingsley, 1995 (2<sup>nd</sup> edition). ISBN 1 85302 340 X  
*Homemade books to help kids cope: Robert Ziegler  
an easy to learn technique for parents and professionals*  
Magination Press (USA), 1992. ISBN 0-945354-50-9  
*Talking with children and young people about death and dying* Mary Turner  
Jessica Kingsley, 1999. ISBN 1 85302 563 1  
*When someone dies: how schools can help bereaved students* Dwaine Steffes  
Cruse Bereavement Care, 1997 (teachers' edition). ISBN 0 900321 10 5

*Supporting Bereaved Students in Primary and Secondary Schools – practical advice for staff* is a booklet that has been developed by King's College London and the National Council for Hospice and Specialist Palliative Care Services, now the National Council for Palliative Care (NCPC). It offers advice and support to school staff and includes tips from teachers who have had experience with bereaved children. An extensive resource list is included for those who wish to look further into the issues explored or enlist further support. The booklet can be ordered from NCPC by contacting Nick Hayes by email [n.hayes@ncpc.org.uk](mailto:n.hayes@ncpc.org.uk) or by telephone 020 7697 1520. [winstonswish.org](http://winstonswish.org) is the UK's childhood bereavement charity that supports children and their families on the death of a child. They offer support to parents and schools as well and have a variety of publications to support.

## Appendix 6: Aide memoires for specific incidents

The following information is colour coded and should be linked to the Activation Process Flowchart and is related to ensuring the immediate safety and welfare of staff and pupils.

### Flooding

- **Building Related:**
  - Switch off stop cock.
  - Call Site Team.
  - Call water supplier if necessary.
  - Monitor the situation.
  - If necessary, evacuate the area.
  - If flood worsens evacuate the whole building.
- **Environmental Flooding**
  - Assess the situation and keep in touch with the Environmental Agency and Local Authority.
  - Tune in to local radio or [sign up for flood warnings](#).
  - Consider removing equipment, pupils, staff and pets from the area of risk.
  - If safe to do so turn off the gas, electricity and water supplies before flood water enters the premises.
  - Keep dry and out of flood water if possible.
  - Do not evacuate if you are uncertain about the continuing safety of staff and pupils - please note that 80% of flood deaths occur in vehicles.
  - If it is necessary to walk through shallow flood water, take care for hidden holes, obstacles and other hazards.
  - If flooding causes partial loss of power, consider moving communications hub (by moving office telephones) to another part of the school.
  - If flooding causes total loss of power, relocate communications hub to somewhere with mobile phone reception, and consider relocating office staff to somewhere with power. Consider closing school until power returns.

### Fire

This is an overview; full details are in Fire Prevention Policy.

- Activate the fire alarm.
- Do not tackle the fire yourself.
- Call 999 Fire Service.
- Follow fire drill procedures.
- Fire extinguishers are there to enable staff and pupils to exit buildings as safely as possible - do not try to put a major fire out that is the job of the Fire & Rescue Service.
- Ensure everyone is out and clear of the building.
- Report missing persons to the CIMT.
- Consider the locations of the Assembly Points in relation to any smoke drift and weather conditions. Pupils may need to be moved to a more suitable area.
- If the fire worsens remove the pupils immediately from the area or site and as far away as logistically safe/practical as possible.
- If the site has been evacuated make sure someone has been nominated by the CIMT to meet the Fire & Rescue Service
- Given the 'All Clear' make sure no pupils are missing on re-entering the building

### Lightning storm

- If pupils and staff are outdoors avoid water, hilltops and trees. Stay away from any metal objects and avoid contact with others.
- If you think your pupils are at risk of being struck, inform them to drop to their knees and bend forward. DO NOT LIE FLAT.

- If in a building instruct pupils to move away from windows and do not touch the metal structures, phones or computers.
- If in a building stay inside, encourage visitors to shelter in the school.

### Earthquake

A major earthquake is not likely to happen in the UK but small tremors have occurred so here are some important points to consider:

- If one or two people are in the room the safest place to be is under the door frame.
- With a class of children ask them to take cover under their desks and cover their faces with their arms to protect against falling objects.
- Once the initial shocks have ceased and there is major damage to the building, evacuate. If not, carry out a risk assessment and consider moving out of some of the building.
- Contact a property surveyor for advice if unsure about the structural integrity of the building.

### Industrial emergency near school

- Pupils and staff should remain in the school building and await further instruction from the LA and council emergency teams and/or emergency services.
- This may include closing all doors and windows and covering extractor fans to minimise inhalation of fumes or smoke.
- Schools may wish to consider the best place in the building to shelter depending on the circumstances. For example, sheltering on the leeward side of the building in case of toxic release.
- Stay tuned to local radio - consider switching to a battery-operated radio in the event of loss of power.
- School should remain in shelter mode until the emergency services and/or local authority give the all clear.
- Encourage visitors to shelter in the school building.

### Attack on a student or member of staff

- At the scene students should know to seek assistance from a member of staff.
- If staff witness the assault they should try and distract the assailant without risking themselves: do not engage physical contact, do not further agitate the assailant, maintain eye contact, be courteous and patient, use the word "stop" and the names of the people involved to promote familiarity.
- Staff should disperse spectators and therefore eradicate the risk of further injury.
- Staff should contact emergency services as appropriate.

### Fights between pupils

- In deciding upon what action you take consider the safety of the pupils concerned and the safety of any other pupils.
- Assess seriousness of situation and if necessary tell a reliable pupil to get immediate assistance from another member of staff.
- A teacher should always remain at the scene.
- Take control and give clear and assertive directions to stop.
- Arrange for first aid if appropriate.
- Escort both parties to main office.
- Call the parents and/or police if necessary.

## Hostage situation

- Do not try to intervene or be a hero.
- Co-operate and follow the instructions of the hostage taker.
- Try to remain calm and spread calmness. The children are likely to try and copy your behaviour.
- If in school:
  - Isolate hostage area by evacuating other pupils or through lockdown procedure - see D07 Security (Lockdown) Policy.
  - On arrival of emergency services, provide them with a map of the school.

## Missing child / abduction / runaway

- Report to the Headmaster.
- The timing of when you do each of these steps will depend upon the situation. If there is a possibility the child has been abducted the police should be called immediately.
- Arrange search parties.
- Search the school or area of off-site visit working from last known sighting point.
- Call family and friends to see whether he/she is with them ensure no undue consternation or worry is caused by this call.

## Attempted Abduction

- Ensure that pupils have the 'tools' for dealing with an attempted abduction, and re-enforce this with parents.
- Suggest that parents and child have a code word that only they and their child know for emergency situations when someone else is collecting the child.

## Threatening person in a school building

- Assess threat.
- Call Police.
- Keep classroom/students secure.
- Initiate lockdown procedure if necessary, in line with D05 Security (Lockdown) Policy.
- If no one is in danger observe the intruder until the police arrive.
- If people are threatened, staff should consider attempting to draw the attention of the intruder away from those affected. When appropriate escape to a more secure area.

## Threatening person in or close to school grounds

- Assess threat.
- Call Police
- Ensure all children are moved within the school building, if required.
- Headteacher will carry out lockdown procedures if necessary.
- Remain in classrooms until the all clear has been given or evacuate as a result of instructions from the authorities.

## **Marauding Terrorism Firearms Attack (MTFA)**

- If shots are heard instruct everyone to take cover if appropriate (i.e. on the floor or under desks).
- Assemble in a secure location or, if more appropriate than moving pupils across site, activate the lockdown procedure in accordance with D07 Security (Lockdown) Procedure.
- Call Police.
- Check for injuries and missing pupils/staff by use of phone calls to rooms in turn (if lockdown in force)

## **Bomb Threat**

- DO NOT turn anything electrical on or off, except the fire alarm.
- Quickly survey your room for any unusual items or packages. DO NOT TOUCH THESE ITEMS.
- Report anything suspicious or unusual.
- Evacuate using the fire drill procedure. The assembly point should be far away from the school as possible e.g. furthest point on the school fields taking account of the exit route so as not to transit past the indicated hazard area.
- Take register. Report missing students to the Director of Operations.
- The person taking a call issuing a bomb threat should not interrupt the caller except to ask the following questions:
  - When is the bomb going to explode?
  - Where is the bomb?
  - What does it look like?
  - What kind of bomb is it?
  - What will cause it to explode?
  - Why are you doing this?
  - Who are you?
  - Where are you calling from?
  - Are there any further hazards outside?
  - Note the caller's voice and background sounds such as:
    - Male or female?
    - Estimate of age (young, middle age, old)
    - Indication of accent/dialect, ethnicity, level of education
    - Other voice characteristics: stutter, nasal sound.
    - Did the caller seem familiar with the facility?
    - Was there any background noise?
    - Log all information.

## **Unsafe Structures**

- Evacuate the school or building if necessary, moving out by a safe route identified at the time.
- Move away from the building if very serious.
- Contact Property Surveyor to report concerns.

## **Utility Failure**

- Teachers should stay in the classroom with the children until further instructions are given.
- Teachers who are not teaching should immediately report to the main office.
- The company of the power source must be telephoned and a time established for resolving the problem.

## School Trips/ Offsite Incidents (also see Educational Visits/Trips Policy)

If an emergency occurs on a school visit the group leader should maintain or resume control of the group overall. The factors to consider include:

- Establish the nature and extent of the emergency as quickly as possible.
- Ensure all other group members are safe and looked after.
- Establish the names of any casualties and get immediate medical attention.
- Ensure that a teacher goes with casualties to hospital with any relevant medical information and that the rest of the group is adequately supervised at all times and kept together.
- Notify the police if necessary.
- Ensure that all group members who need to know are aware of the incident.
- Ensure that all group members are following the emergency procedures and roles are allocated as necessary.
- Inform the school contact and provider/tour operator (as appropriate). The school contact name and number should be accessible at all times during the visit.

Details of the incident to pass on to the school should include:

- Nature.
- Date and time of incident.
- Location of incident.
- Names of casualties.
- Details of their injuries.
- Names of others involved so that parents can be reassured.
- Action taken so far.
- Action yet to be taken (and by whom).

The school contact should:

- Notify parents providing a full factual account of the incident as possible.
- Notify insurers especially if medical assistance is required (this may be done by the school contact).
- If the emergency happens abroad notify the British Embassy/Consulate.
- Ascertain phone numbers for future calls; try not to rely only on mobile phones.
- Write down accurately and as soon as possible all relevant facts and witness details and preserve any vital evidence.
- Keep an incident log of all events, times and contacts after the incident
- Complete an accident report form as soon as possible and contact the District Council's Health and Safety Advisor and HSE if appropriate.
- No one in the group should speak to the media. Names of those involved in the incident should not be given to the media as this could cause further distress to their families.
- All media enquires must go through the school Marketing Manager.
- No one in the group should discuss legal liability with other parties; nothing should be signed relating to the accident liability without clear advice from the Head, Chair of Governors or designated deputy.
- Keep receipts for any expenses incurred, as insurers will require these.

## Death or serious injury

The death of someone associated with your school may not be considered to be a Critical Incident, especially if it was expected, but nevertheless can be very upsetting for a large number of people. Therefore, we advise that the Critical Incident guidelines are followed as appropriate.

Once key consideration is the notification process for either informing pupil that their parents' have or informing parents that their children have died or been seriously injured.

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### **Death of a pupil**

Where possible, this should be done by somebody detached from the school, such as the local police. However, a judgement call should be made as to whether they are accompanied by somebody from the school. However, note experience from the military that resentment can sometimes foster against the individual who informed them of the incident; using an outside agency alone therefore displaces that risk away from the school. However, the school should be in touch shortly thereafter to offer support.

### **Serious injury of a pupil**

Parents would be notified by the school in the event of a serious injury, which should be done so quickly and sensitively. Prepare what to say with care. Give the facts and express sympathy and concern. Inform parents of the action being taken and, if possible, indicate when further information will be made available. Do not mention fatalities specifically. Avoid references to blame and liability. Remember the media are likely to elaborate this statement. It may be appropriate to invite parents into the school in readiness for further information. Some people may need immediate emotional support at this stage. Parents will need to know whether to go to the scene of the incident, come into school, or travel to another location. If parents cannot be reached directly, then leave a brief message asking them to call a particular number, making the message simple. Again, prepare what to say in the event that you have to leave a message.

### **Death or serious injury of a parent or close relative of a pupil**

Where possible, it should be left to a parent or close relative to inform the pupil. However, this may not be possible, particularly in the case of a boarder. In this case, the wishes of the family should be sought and considered where possible as to who informs this child. The instinct is that the responsibility will fall to the Headmaster if he is available. However, some parents may request a more 'mothering' individual to inform them, such as a House Parent or the House Mother.

### **Follow up after serious injury**

If injured/unwell person has been admitted to hospital, the Head (or Deputy in his absence) should email the parents or next of kin to enquire how they are and offer to make contact by phone if they would like to speak to someone. Keep email short and concise, offering sympathy and thoughts. Provide a number with which they can make contact if they so wish.