



Gedney Church End and Lutton St Nicholas Federated Primary Schools

Critical Incident Management Policy

Contents:

- Introduction
- Critical Incident Management Team
- Potential Critical Incidents
- Reaction to a Critical Incident:
 - Immediate Action
 - Short-term Action
 - Medium-Term Action
 - Long-Term Action
- Conclusion
- Useful Additional Reading
- Appendix A:
 - Emergency Contact List

Gedney Church End and Lutton St. Nicholas Federated Primary Schools

Introduction

The handling of a crisis is a normal part of Federation life, but some incidents are of a critical, more overwhelming nature, and sadly in recent years incidents, previously deemed unthinkable, have occurred in schools in the UK.

This policy is our Federation's contingency plan designed to provide a framework for handling a critical incident. The formulation of this policy is intended to define clearly the roles, responsibilities and procedures to follow for Federation staff dealing with such an incident. Each critical incident is unique, and it is not possible to plan for every eventuality, but similarly each critical incident can be shocking and disorientating, and therefore a prepared procedure is essential to ensure that the Federation's reaction is effective and efficient.

The details contained within this document will form the basis of the Federation's approach to such a crisis.

Co-ordinated support will be available to the Federation from the Local Authority, and it will be practical to contact the Local Authority immediately.

If the incident involves the police, they will take control of certain management issues.

Critical Incident Management Team

The Critical Incident Management Team will consist of the following staff:

- the Head Teacher;
- the School Administrator;
- the Chair of Governors;
- the caretakers at each respective school;
- a senior member of staff.

Appendix A contains an emergency contacts list. This will be reviewed annually and updated where necessary.

Potential Critical Incidents

Potential critical incidents which could affect Gedney Church End and Lutton St Nicholas Federated Primary Schools are considered to be:

- fire/flood;
- health risk, such as an outbreak of contagious illness/disease like meningitis;
- major arson attack;
- fatal road traffic accident;
- serious injury on out-of-school visits;
- computer failure, e.g. risk of virus/hacker/parasite invasion from internet with additional implications for data protection;

- death of a pupil or member of staff;
- natural disaster within the community;
- consequences of terrorist or criminal activity;
- low flying military aircraft;
- abduction of child or member of staff.

Reaction to a Critical Incident

The Federation's reaction to a critical incident can be divided into the following categories:

- immediate action;
- short term action;
- medium term action;
- long term action.

Immediate Action, i.e. within hours of the incident occurring:

- Obtain and collate information relating to the incident. Remember that uncertainty encourages rumour and accurate information is therefore essential.
- Gather and brief the CIMT (Critical Incident Management Team). Brief the team, and allocate roles and responsibilities.
- Trigger support from the LEA and other contacts on the emergency contact list. Establish clearly who is going to contact whom.
- Set up an incident management room and a dedicated phone line to deal with calls from anxious parents etc. CIMT should agree a factual statement and thus avoid speculation.
- Contact families affected. This must be done quickly and with sensitivity. Consistency of information is vital. It may be appropriate for families to come to school and immediate emotional support could be a possibility.
- Make arrangements to inform other parents. You may need to take advice from the Police and Local Authority, especially if there is the possibility of legal liability. CIMT may wish to send a letter to parents, or prepare a leaflet.
- Inform teaching and other staff. Staff need to be cautioned about talking to the media or responding to questions from reporters. It is vital that all staff in contact with pupils are kept well-informed and feel secure in handling comments or questions from pupils. Where possible, the Head Teacher will manage this aspect of the process.
- Inform pupils. This can be done in small or large groups depending on which is most appropriate. Care needs to be exercised to protect both children and adults closely involved in the incident. It is important that children receive a consistent account of the incident allowing for differences in their ability to understand.

- Encourage people involved to talk. The incident may need to be discussed before children go home for the day, for both pupils and adults.
- Deal with the media. It is most important to seek advice from the Police and County Office before agreeing to speak to or be interviewed by the media. If this is not an option then an agreed text for release should be prepared by the CIMT and a designated spokesperson briefed and prepared to respond on the Federation's behalf. Under normal circumstances, this will be the Head Teacher.
- Devise a plan for handling the reactions and feelings of people affected. The most common reactions will include denial, distress, guilt, anger and helplessness. CIMT need to consider outside professionals to support and debrief staff and pupils affected by the incident. Those providing support also need support. At this point the CIMT will need to plan their short-term reaction to the incident.

Short-Term Action:

- Reunion of children with their families, especially where the incident occurs outside the Federation. Mostly children will need to be brought home, but sometimes parents and families need to visit the scene of the incident to understand how to deal with the repercussions in terms of children's fears etc.
- Managing staff. Support will need organising for all staff, preferably from within the Federation, but using outside agencies if appropriate. Staff monitoring should be a priority, including members of the CIMT. If a crisis persists over many hours, staff will become tired, weary and upset and this will affect their powers to make sensible decisions.
- Encourage pupils to talk. Activate strategies for enabling young people to talk about the incident, and their feelings, using outside agencies if appropriate. Staff will need briefing about ways to help the children affected by the incident, and how to identify patterns of behaviour etc. This may have implications for the wider curriculum i.e. training in bereavement counselling for staff, provision of a range of books, PSHE discussions etc.
- Debriefing meeting. It may be appropriate to hold a debriefing meeting for staff, children and parents to:
 - clarify what has happened;
 - allow for sharing reactions;
 - reassure people that reactions are normal;
 - mobilise resources e.g. parental support groups.
- An experienced person, possibly someone from outside the Federation community, should lead this meeting.

- Formal and informal recognition of rituals. It is important to remember to express sympathy to families of the hurt or bereaved. Visits to children/staff in hospital may be appropriate. Pupils may wish to send cards and letters. The Federation may also need to consider attendance at funerals, and/or the desirability of holding special assemblies or memorial services. Anniversaries are also key times when support and sensitivity are required. As with most aspects of this policy, the Head Teacher will take a lead responsibility in this respect.
- Re-establishing routines. Every attempt should be made to provide continuity for the children. The return to school of staff or pupils directly affected by the crisis will need to be managed carefully and with sensitivity but the re-establishment of routine is an important stage in emotional recovery.

Medium-Term Action:

- Return to school for staff or children after long absence can be a challenging process. Reintegration will need to be planned carefully, and may involve home visits prior to return, part time attendance initially, reducing workloads, putting in place mentoring processes etc.
- Consult professionals as and when required. Consideration should be given to consulting the Educational Psychology Service for support and guidance, especially to help those showing unusual or prolonged reactions to the incident.
- Keeping parents informed is essential as it makes a direct contribution to how such matters are dealt with. It may be appropriate to produce a leaflet for parents giving guidance on the possible delayed reactions of children to an incident and making suggestions to help them deal with these. There are a number of outside agencies who can provide guidance and resources in this respect.
- Support for staff is an obligation. Ongoing monitoring and support for staff is a major consideration. CIMT especially will not be immune to reaction from their ordeal.

Long-Term Action:

- Monitor the vulnerable in so far as this is possible, but persevere at all times. The effects of a crisis can reverberate for years, and it is especially important that new staff and children are briefed as to how the Federation has dealt with the incident as this will help them understand and deal with potential repercussions, especially at anniversary times.
- Mark anniversaries with sensitivity. These difficult times need to be treated with utmost care and concern. Some suggestions to mark anniversaries are by annual concerts, memorial services, memorial prize-giving ceremonies, memorial gardens etc.

- Legal processes can place a significant and additional burden/concern on all staff involved. The length of time taken over some legal processes can prolong the recovery process following a critical incident. CIMT may need to plan for this especially where staff may be involved attending legal processes, and facing extended emotional trauma.
- Curriculum implications must be incorporated into teaching and embraced by all staff. It may be appropriate to schedule INSET training for staff in loss counselling, bereavement etc.

Conclusion

The prime objective, shared between the Federation and the Local Authority, is to serve the best interests of pupils and staff in coping with an incident, collectively and individually. Schools that have made contingency plans for responding to a critical incident are likely to cope better and recover more fully.

This policy has been compiled to provide guidance, in the hope that it will never be necessary to refer to it in the context in which it has been written. It is impossible to plan for every eventuality and by their nature, critical incidents will disorientate and overwhelm those involved. A format for a whole Federation response to such an incident will provide focus for those with whom the responsibility will rest.

Useful Additional Reading

Wise before the Event	William Yule and Anne Gould
Grief in Children	A Dyregrov
On the Death of a Child	C Hindmarch
The Forgotten Mourners	M Pennells and S Smith
Helping Children Cope with Grief	R Wells
Death and Loss – Compassionate Approaches	
In the Classroom	O Leaman
Good Grief 1 – Exploring Feelings, Loss and	
Death for under 11's	B Ward and Associates
Video – The Morning I went to School	available from Sue Smith, Social Work Dept, Northampton General Hospital

Signed by Head Teacher:

Ratified by Governors: May 2012

Last Updated: November 2015

Appendix A

Emergency Contact List

NAME	TELEPHONE NUMBER
Director of Children's Services	01522 552222
Emergency liaison Officers	Contact LA as above
Emergency Services - Police, Fire, Ambulance	999 / 112
Chair of Governors	01406 364447
Head Teacher	0116 2401844 / 07955263175
Senior Teacher (Gedney Church End)	
Senior Teacher (Lutton St. Nicholas)	
Staff	In Critical Incident Kit
Pupils	In Critical Incident Kit
School Doctors/Nurse	01205 360880 Dr Germer
Education Psychologist	01529 414144 / 07747068022
Local Hospitals	01205 364801/01553 613613
Education Welfare Officer	01522 553484 Heather Baxter
Social Services	01775 725751 / 01529 413366
Counselling Services	01522 552222
Local Religious Groups	Interregnum (Gedney) Father Jonathan (Lutton)
The Samaritans	08457 909090
Insurance Company	01522 552222
Local Schools	01406 363392 Lutton 01406 363392 Gedney 01406 423351 Fleet 01406 364831 Long Sutton 01406 363381 Peele
Media	01775 725021 press/ 01522 511061 radio
Recovery team	Various
Governors	In Critical Incident Kit
Citizens Advice Bureau	0870 122 4422
Child Line	0800 1111