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St George's School, Bourton

Critical Incident Policy 2022

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CRITICAL INCIDENT POLICY

INTRODUCTION

In responding to an incident the aim should always be to ensure:

- Rapid and appropriate action is taken
- accurate information is provided
- normal school routines are maintained as far as possible, giving continuity to pupils;
- immediate, sensitive, and non-intrusive support is offered.

DEFINITION OF A CRITICAL INCIDENT

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 requiring the assistance of the Emergency Services and/or Dorset Council and others.

Examples of such incidents could include

- death or serious injury as a result of violence, accident, self-harm and/or sudden/traumatic illness
- major fire
- building collapse
- riot and/or civil disorder
- natural and/or man-made disaster
- terrorism
- missing person(s)/abductions

These incidents might occur:

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

Using this definition as a basis for decision making, an incident is declared to be a critical incident following consultation between the person(s) managing the incident within the school (normally the Headteacher and/or the senior management team) and the senior officer in Education Services Partnership and Planning. If there is doubt it is always better to consult and err on the side of caution and declare an incident critical.

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GOOD PREVENTATIVE PRACTICE

Curriculum

We will address sensitive issues such as death, bereavement, and serious injury as appropriate within the general curriculum. Therefore, pupils will not have to address these issues for the first time following a critical incident. These issues may be covered through studies in R.E, Geography, History and PSHCE.

Pastoral support

We will develop an atmosphere of support and trust amongst our pupils and parents and provide opportunities for them to talk and share their feelings.

Behaviour policy

As a positive measure to ensure our pupils' safety, our well-established behaviour policy applies off-site as well as within the school boundaries.

Whilst careful pre-planning and effective risk management will minimise our pupils' exposure to dangerous situations, unforeseen hazards may well occur. In these situations, we will immediately brief children about how to proceed and require their compliance with any rulings we make.

Training

We will, from time to time, brief or train all relevant staff groups on their role in the prevention, management, and response to incidents.

Security

We will employ effective security measures to prevent unwelcome visitors entering the school to reduce the potential for damage and vandalism.

Administrative practices

We will maintain a list of all pupils and staff with next of kin contact details held centrally at the school both on the admin computer and as hard copies in the contact folder in the office. Access will also be available on the school MIS system for access out of school hours. At least four members of staff will know how to access these lists.

We will complete registers promptly at the beginning of each morning and afternoon session. Names of pupils who are late or leave school early will be recorded.

We will maintain an inventory of equipment held on site in accordance with LA guidelines. The inventory will be regularly updated.

We will operate a signing in and out procedure for all staff, visitors and volunteers in school.

We will display details of emergency evacuation procedures in all areas of the school site.

Planning for Trips and Visits

We will follow DfES and Dorset Council guidance when planning and organising school visits (see our separate educational visits policy).

All supervising adults will carry details of the members of the party and a list of contact numbers (including the other adults' mobile phones and school/LA emergency contact numbers).

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Health and Safety

All relevant school policies will include reference to health and safety procedures and how these relate to the teaching and organisation of the subject. This is particularly pertinent for physical education, design and technology, and science.

We will follow Dorset Council guidelines on the testing and maintenance of equipment, fixtures, and fittings. All electrical, PE and fire fighting equipment will be inspected and tested annually. We will follow regulations for the storage and security of potentially hazardous substances and chemicals.

We will conduct regular health and safety and fire checks on the buildings and site, with any potential dangers being reported and dealt with.

DEALING WITH AN INCIDENT

- The emergency services should be contacted immediately.
- At this stage, it may be most appropriate to take whatever urgent action is needed to ensure the safety of others.

NOTE: If the school building and grounds are not safe for children and staff, they should be taken to St George's Church.

- As soon as possible, the Headteacher (or next-most senior person) will start to keep a simple log of all events and actions.
- The Headteacher should communicate with the LA, emergency services, etc. via the school's mobile phone or via a private mobile phone. This will leave the school's main phone line free for incoming calls from parents, etc. (The same procedure should be used for keeping contact with off-site parties if they have been involved in a critical incident.)
- The Headteacher (or next-most senior person) will deploy staff as necessary to manage the situation and ensure the safety of all concerned. This may involve the senior management team being relieved of their classroom duties, and their classes being covered by other colleagues.
- The Chair of Governors will be informed as quickly as possible.
- In many cases, the LA may appoint an officer and his/her team will take over much of the management of the incident, leaving the Headteacher free to deal with pupils, parents, and colleagues.
- The school administrator will generally answer all calls from anxious parents. They should keep a log of callers and check this against school records to determine who might still need to be contacted.
- Parents will need to be contacted promptly, but the way in which this is done will depend on the nature and scale of the incident. Contact may be made in person or by phone. In very serious circumstances, it may be appropriate for the police to make the initial contact.

Before contacting parents:

- The Headteacher will confer with those who will be making contact about what to say, possibly rehearsing the message first. We will limit our comments to the known facts, and not speculate on the causes or responsibility for the crisis.
- The administrator or other colleagues will keep a strict log of those parents who have been contacted, noting date and time of call, the number called and the person who was spoken to (or if

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there was no answer). This list should be cross-referenced with those who have contacted us.

- We will ascertain if there are any colleagues who might offer help with transport to the school if required.
- We will endeavour to delegate these calls to those not actually involved in managing the incident.

When calling:

- We will check that parents are not left alone in distress, perhaps making suggestions for making contact with relatives or neighbours.
- We will offer any important phone numbers such as hospitals.
- An important task is to protect children, parents and staff from publicity. Press and television will not be given permission to enter the school premises or be given access to staff or children.

One of the headteacher's first tasks on hearing of a crisis will be to contact the LA's support services. All enquiries by the media will be directed to the officer, who will give factual information to the media whilst maintaining the privacy of staff, children, and their families.

In any event, the only other persons to speak to the media would be the Headteacher or Chair of Governors.

- Pupils should be told simply and without fabrication what has happened, in the smallest group possible – usually within their class. Questions should be answered as straightforwardly as possible. Children and parents should be informed (preferably by letter) by the end of the day if the school has to be closed. As far as possible the school's normal routine should be followed to maintain security and continuity for the children.
- In the event of deaths or serious injuries, the Headteacher will maintain close contact with the families involved and make arrangements for the school's representation at funerals, respecting the view, customs and wishes of parents.
- If an incident happens off-site, the Headteacher will arrange for all contact with the party to go via the school. Therefore, we will contact parents, the LA et al on behalf of the party leader. It is also highly probable that the best course of action will be for children to be re-united with their families as soon as possible. The Headteacher, with advice and help from the police and the LA, will arrange to bring the children home. In some instances, it may be appropriate to arrange for parents to be taken to the children.
- The leader of an off-site party may need to act 'in loco parentis' to authorise emergency medical treatment. However, they may only do this if every reasonable effort has been made to contact the parents.
- The whole school will be affected by a tragedy. The Headteacher will arrange de-briefing sessions for directly affected staff, check that procedures are in place for monitoring staff and pupils, and activate strategies for allowing all involved to express their feelings if they wish.

In the case of prolonged absences of anyone injured in an incident, the Headteacher will ensure that a member of staff makes contact with the child or colleague at home or in hospital, and subsequently make sensitive arrangements for their return to school, and thereafter check that monitoring procedures are in place. Consideration must also be given to arrangements for a special assembly or memorial service.

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In the longer term, the Headteacher may need to introduce strategies to continue to monitor vulnerable pupils and staff, consult and decide on whether, and how, to mark anniversaries, and to ensure that new staff are aware of which pupils/staff were affected and in what way.

SUMMARY OF ACTION PLAN

Task	Responsibility	When
1. Obtain immediate information at the start of the crisis	HT	Immediately
2. Call the emergency services	HT/admin	Immediately
3. Take whatever urgent action is needed to ensure the safety of others	HT	Immediately
4. Senior management team and office staff meet to decide on key actions to be taken.	HT	Within 1hr
5. Establish links with the LA and chair of governors	HT/admin	Within 1hr
6. Contact families	HT/DHT	ASAP
7. Call staff meeting	HT	Same day
8. Inform children in class	CT	When appropriate
9. Arrange de-briefing for children involved	HT/DHT	ASAP
10. Arrange de-briefing for staff involved	HT/DHT	ASAP
11. Identify high risk children and staff	HT/DHT	ASAP
12. Identify the need for group or individual support.	All	As required
13. Arrange memorials, etc	HT	As required

N.B. It has been agreed that should the Air Ambulance be needed the most suitable landing spot is the school playing field.

Emergency Lockdown (Stay Safe) Procedure

All schools should consider the need for robust and tested school lock down procedures. Lock down procedures should be seen as a sensible and proportionate response to any external or internal incident which has the potential to pose a threat to the safety of staff and pupils in the school.

Procedures should aim to minimise disruption to the learning environment whilst ensuring the safety of all pupils and staff. On very rare occasions it may be necessary to seal off the school so that it cannot be entered from the outside. This will ensure that pupils, staff and visitors are safe in situations where there is a hazard in the school grounds or outside the school in the near vicinity. A lockdown is implemented when there are serious security risks for the premises due to, for example, near-by chemical spillage, proximity of

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dangerous dogs, serious weather conditions or attempted access by unauthorised persons' intent in causing harm/damage.

Notification of Lockdown

Staff will be notified that lock down procedures are to take place immediately on hearing "Mrs Red is Visiting" via the school Walkie Talkie and email system. The hand bell in the corridor will also be rung. Staff in the classrooms are to ensure the walkie talkie is always on.

Procedures

Follow the **CLOSE** procedure:

- Close all windows and doors
- Lock up
- Drop the blinds
- Out of sight and minimise movement.
- Stay silent and avoid drawing attention as much as is possible.
- Endure. Be aware you may be in lock down for some time

1. The above signal will activate a process of children being ushered into the school building as quickly as possible if they are outside. Locking all the external doors, dropping the blinds if safe to do so. Please be aware there may be a corridor door, near to your class which needs checking. Please don't assume someone else will check. Better that several people check, rather than no one.

2. Office staff will also send an email to all staff explaining school is now in lockdown and everyone is to stay in room until told otherwise by Headteacher or School Admin Officer.

3. At the given signal, the children remain in the room (or hall) they are in and the staff will ensure the windows and doors are closed/locked and blinds closed where possible and children are positioned away from possible sightlines from external windows/doors. Lights, Smart boards and computer monitors to be turned off. Walkie talkies turned down to a minimum volume so that you can just hear it.

4. Children, adults (e.g. volunteers.) or staff not in class for any reason will proceed to the nearest occupied classroom and remain with that class and class teacher eg/ interventions

5. Individual teachers/TAs - lock/close classroom door(s) and windows. Foxes adult to close link corridor doors. Admin to close/lock corridor doors library and corridor to Foxes.

6. No adult or child to leave the room for any reason whilst in lock down. (Toilets are also out of use).

7. Staff on PPA to lock down in the staff room, music room or nearest classroom; remaining quiet.

8. Catering Staff to close the shutter to kitchen and turn off lights.

9. If practicable staff should notify the front reception by walkie talkie and/or email via the class computer that they have entered lock down and identify those children not accounted for and of any extra children who are now in lockdown in their room with them.

NO ONE SHOULD MOVE ABOUT THE SCHOOL

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1. Staff to support children in keeping calm and quiet.
2. Staff to remain in lock down positions until informed by key staff e.g. Headteacher or School Admin in person that there is an all clear.
3. As soon as possible after the lock down teachers not with their class return to their classrooms and conduct a register and notify the reception immediately of any pupils not accounted for.

Staff Roles

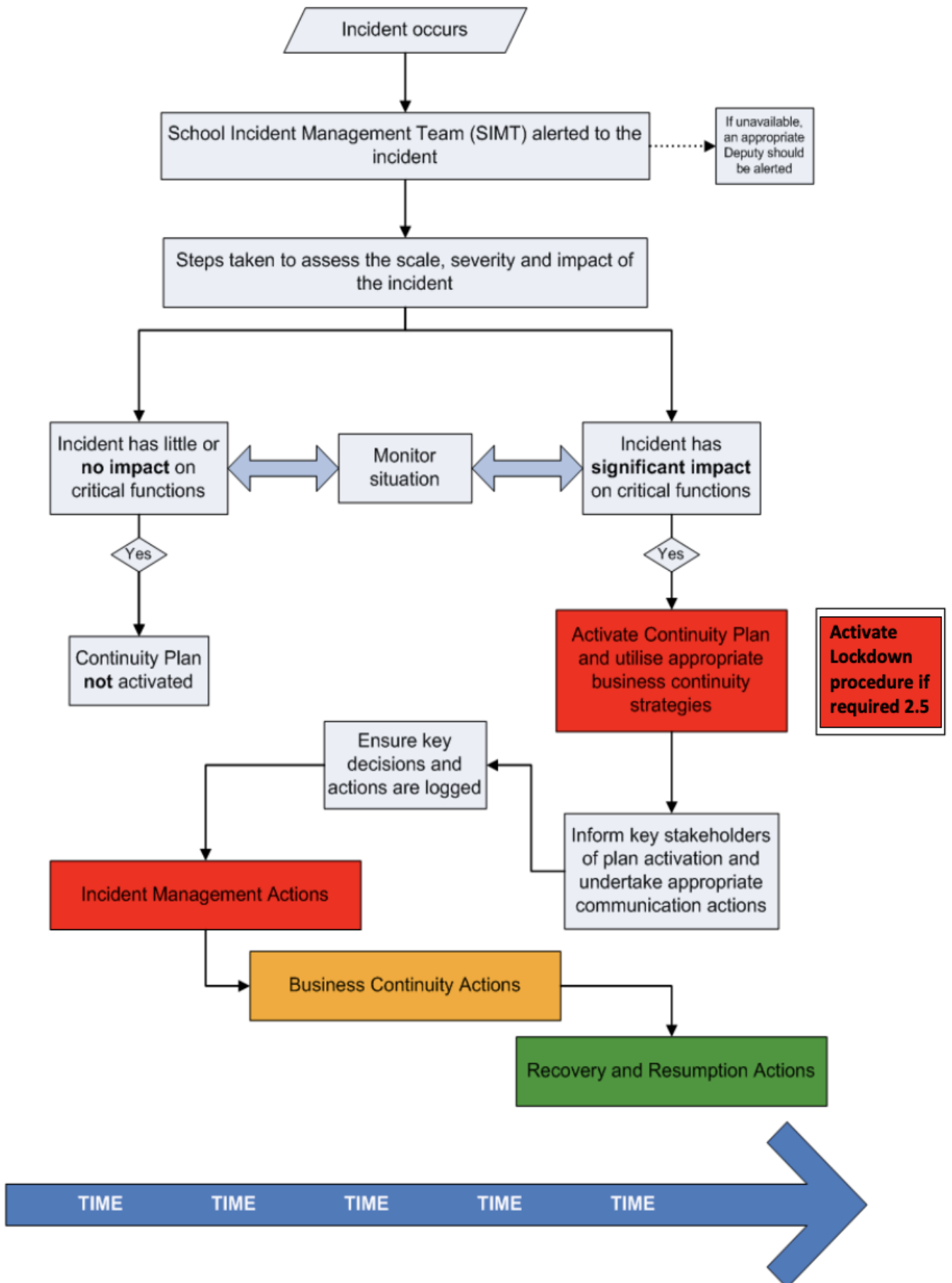
1. Headteacher (or Deputy Head, in her absence) will be nominated as the lockdown manager to initiate, manage and conclude the lockdown.
2. Head or Office staff to call police. 999
3. If a class is out of school e.g. on a school trip, office staff will call the class teacher and warn them that school is in lock down. Advice will be given as to when it is safe to return to school.
4. Individual teachers/TAs - lock/close classroom door(s) and windows.
5. Teachers will (as best they can) keep a calm atmosphere in the classroom, the children engaged in a silent activity or read a story and keep alert to the emotional needs of the pupils.
6. Do not allow anyone out of the classroom during a lockdown under any circumstances.

Communication with Parents

If necessary, parents will be notified as soon as it is practical to do so via email or text. Parents will be told: '...the school is in a full lockdown situation. During this period the phones must not be used and entrances will be un-manned, external doors locked and nobody allowed in or out...' Depending on the type and severity of the incident, parents may be asked NOT to collect their children from school as it may put them and their child at risk. Pupils will not be released to parents during a lock down. Parents will be asked not to call school as this may tie up emergency lines. If the end of the day is extended due to the lock down, parents will be notified and will receive information about the time and place pupils can be picked up from the office staff or the emergency services. A letter to parents will be sent home on the nearest possible day following any serious incident to inform parents of the context of the lockdown and to encourage parents to reinforce with their children the importance of following procedures in these very rare circumstances.

Lock down (Stay Safe) drills will take place at least once a year to ensure everyone knows exactly what to do in such a situation. Monitoring of practices will take place and staff debriefed for positive reinforcement or to identify required improvements.

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St George's Emergency Closure Procedure

In the event of weather conditions making travel difficult and potentially hazardous to you, we will follow these procedures:

- 1. At 6.45am the HT will telephone the Admin officer to get a view on weather conditions in the village.**
- 2. The HT will decide on whether the school needs to be closed for the day for Health and Safety reasons.**
- 3. The decision will be based on weather conditions locally and further across the county and road information.**
- 4. We are aware that very few members of the teaching staff live within walking distance of the school.**
- 5. The HT will telephone teachers to inform them of the decision to open or close. Admin will alert parents via an email and a message will be posted on the school website.**
- 6. The DHT will inform the Teaching Assistants if the school is closed.**
- 7. The situation will be reviewed every morning if necessary, depending on overnight snowfall and up to date road conditions.**