

TWEEDMOUTH COMMUNITY  
MIDDLE SCHOOL



CRITICAL INCIDENT POLICY AND  
DISASTER RECOVERY PLAN

September 2015

**I. Policy for critical incident management and recovery**

**A critical incident is a crisis involving people or property, which could cause serious disruption to the running of the school or attract significant public and/or media attention to the school.**

Possible critical incidents are:

- Death or serious injury to a pupil or member of staff
- Violence or assault in school
- Extensive damage to school property, e. g. fire, flood, vandalism, etc.
- Contamination
- Health or welfare issues
- Hardware or software failure or hacking

Risk assessment has been completed and control measures put in place (see appendix 1).

The structured framework will be in place to enable a rapid response to possible incidents, ensuring the safety of all involved.

The procedures will be reviewed and updated on a yearly basis.

The school will always aim to minimise disruption and recover a full educational programme as soon as possible.

To ensure continuity of service, all data from the school's administration system must be backed up on a weekly basis and stored in a fire proof safe. Anyone wanting access to back up copies must get permission from the Headteacher.

Three named Incident Managers will be responsible for the recovery of all education and administration processes.

## **II. Alerts**

The first person to identify a danger or crisis must contact the Headteacher or his/her nominee immediately. The Headteacher or nominee should assess the situation taking into consideration the following:

- Are children and staff safe?
- Is evacuation required?
- What actions can be taken to ease the situation until the necessary help arrives?
- What emergency services have to be contacted? Ensure this has been done.
- If necessary call NCC Emergency Co-ordination Team and request immediate assistance.

In the event of evacuation, staff and children should go to the assembly point (playground by Caretaker's House – see appendix 2) via the nearest exit.

The office staff will collect the hard copy of the pupils' details in order to contact parents, only when the Headteacher has given instruction on details which can or cannot be disclosed.

### **III. Critical Incident Recovery Plan Procedures**

#### **A. Evacuation of the school buildings**

If necessary, fire drill procedures must be followed and everyone should line up on the playground (playground by the Caretaker's House). The Headteacher and Deputy Headteacher will bring mobile phones and contact appropriate emergency services, Children's Services Department and the Chair of Governors to agree the necessary action.

#### **B. All critical incidents**

There are three named Incident Managers:

- a) Headteacher,
- b) SMT member,
- c) Chair of Governors.

1. The Headteacher holds the authority to decide if a critical incident has occurred or is imminent. In such cases she/he will authorise appropriate measures, proportionate and effective to maximise the health, safety and welfare of the school population. Advice may be sought from emergency and government authorities as necessary in the circumstances. The Chair of Governors must be informed of the measures undertaken as soon as practicable.
2. In the event of a school closure, the Headteacher should arrange for this decision to be communicated by:
  - text message,
  - phone,
  - school website,
  - Northumberland County Council website,  Facebook,  Local radio.

To:

- Pupils,

- Parents/carers,
- Governors,
- Local authority (Duty Emergency Planning Officer, Children's Services,  
School Admissions, School Organisation Manager), □ Other users of the premises.

3. In the event that parents/ carers cannot be contacted, a nominated member of staff will act as 'in loco parentis' and care for children in an allocated base until parents arrival.
4. The school office will be used as the central liaison point for all incidents.
5. The three Incident Managers will have dedicated mobile phone numbers.
6. Incoming and outgoing calls will be monitored and separated.
7. If the major incident occurs, all staff must contact one of the Incident Managers, who in turn will contact Northumberland County Council for support on the following numbers:

Duty Emergency Planning Officer	via Fire Control 01670 534659/60/61
Office hours (Mon-Fri, 9am-5pm)	01670 624839
Out of hours	0845 600 6400

7. Callers to the above numbers must provide:
  - a) DfE school number,
  - b) The name and address of the school,
  - c) A contact phone number,
  - d) The nature of the incident,
  - e) If appropriate, confirmation that the emergency services have been informed.

Additionally, if announcing a school closure, the following details should be added:

- a) Radio Newcastle closure password,
  - b) Date of closure,
  - c) Reason for closure,
  - d) Your name and position at the school,
  - e) Website address (only required if there is more info on the school website).
8. Control points at or near the site will be established by the Incident managers to manage the crisis.
  9. Early meeting to be held by the Incident Managers to:
    - a) Provide an initial report,
    - b) Decide which part of the Recovery Plan to activate,
    - c) Contact LEA to receive support with media liaison, prepare a school statement (having first consulted with the Director of Education or the County Public Relations Officer).
  10. The appropriate insurance companies will be informed.
  11. The school will maintain a 'Log of events'.
  12. Staff involved in the Recovery Plan should have relief periods scheduled.

#### **IV. Recovery Plan**

The Headteacher will ensure that the school will make arrangements for:

- Communication with everyone who is involved, e. g. parents, staff, media, other agencies,
- Emergency accommodation if necessary,
- Additional teaching resources and staffing,
- Support from the Educational Psychologist, school counsellor, Social Services, LEA or emergency services (Police, Fire Service), as necessary.

#### **V. Recovery Team Members - Responsibilities and organisation**

Each of the Recovery Team members has set responsibilities. Their membership will be reviewed and updated on a yearly basis. The team consists of:

- Chair of Governors
- Headteacher
- SMT Member
- SBM
- Caretaker

### **Chair of Governors**

- Inform other Governors

### **The Head Teacher**

On behalf of the school, the Head Teacher or his/hers nominee will take charge of the incident.

- Contact families of pupils and staff involved in the incident
- Contact Chair of Governors
- Contact LEA
- Facilitate the LEA Press Officer or designate personnel to communicate with the media

### **The Senior Management Team**

The Team will assist the Headteacher in managing the incident and, if necessary, the teachers will be relieved from their normal duties.

- Inform members of staff
- Prepare and maintain the recovery plan
- Complete the information required for the Incident Report Form (appendix 3)
- Collate information for a log of events (appendix 4)
- Arrange standby provision for emotional support if necessary

### **School Business Manager**

- Bring school registers to the evacuation point
- If the school is not evacuated, man the office

- Provide Incident Managers with the dedicated phone numbers for incoming and outgoing calls

### **Caretaker**

- Bring all keys

### **The Local Authority**

Support can be requested from the Children's Services Department and/or Berwick Social Services. By informing the NCC Duty Emergency Planning Officer, the appropriate procedures will be activated.

If required the Director of Education/Senior Officer will:

- ❖ Make the decision whether assistance is required from appropriate people in the Education Directorate. If it does, an Incident Manager (Divisional Director or Education Officer) will be appointed and will decide when the Incident Management Team at NCC level should meet to take control of the emergency.

If necessary, the IMT will include:

- Director of Education or Divisional Director
- Principal Education Welfare Officer
- Principal Educational Psychologist
- Education Officers and the Public Relation Office
- Headteacher or her/his nominee
- Building Officer
- Emergency Planning Officer
- Health & Safety Officer
- ❖ Support the Recovery Management Team in school
- ❖ Help to organise a Rapid response Team
- ❖ Provide counselling services required
- ❖ With the help of the County Public Relations Officer, help with a media statement or organise a press briefing.

## **VI. ACTION: Key Tasks**

### **The Headteacher**

After calling out the emergency services and/ or Children's Services Department, the Headteacher will:

## **Immediately**

- Ensure that accurate information is provided for people/ services arriving at the scene
- Call the School Recovery Team for briefing and allocate responsibilities
- Provide extra support for the school office, ensure the phone line is solely available for outgoing calls
- Inform the Chair of Governors
- Liaise with emergency services

## **In the short term**

- Arrange with the support of the Children's Services Department to:
  - Inform parents
  - Deal with media □ Arrange briefings for:
    - Staff
    - Pupils (in small groups)
- In the most appropriate manner, follow normal routines in the school, but at the same time arrange with the Children's Services Department:
  - For children to be reunited with their families
  - As soon as appropriate, debrief for staff/ pupils
  - Plans to attend any funerals
- Should the school remain closed, children can access work and information at home via the School Website.

## **In the longer term**

- Provide alternative learning facility (a number of local venues have been identified as possible to use)
- Help pupils/ staff to come back to school
- Encourage discussion in classes

## **VII. Press and Media Liaison**

Immediately after an incident, information is most likely to be incomplete and inaccurate, so when enquiries arise follow these guidelines:

1. Establish the person you are talking to and their organisation, note down the answer, time and your response.
2. If possible, try to buy time, e. g. "the Head will call you back".

3. Know who is the person designated to talk to the press. Do not allow anyone to take that responsibility!
4. Do not talk to the press on your own; ensure you have a colleague with you to note what is said by the school.
5. Provide facts only – not the cause.
6. If necessary, identify a separate room for press.
7. Prepared and agreed statement should be given (not an interview). Refer to people first, property second.
8. In a later time and in agreement with The Headteacher, an interview can be given by arrangement.
9. Personal information (name, address) should not be given.
10. Do not blame or admit liability to anyone outside the Recovery Team Members.
11. Any misleading comments suggesting blame, liability, etc. should be corrected.
12. Prepare your responses to the worst possible questions.
13. Acknowledge and praise the actions of staff, pupils, emergency services, etc.
14. Show that the situation is under control.

#### **VIII. Communications**

1. Inform the parents of children involved and others whose children are upset by the incident. The Headteacher will contact the families quickly and with sensitivity. If they are unavailable, a message to call back on a given number should be left, including an assurance of appropriate action being taken.
2. Person appointed to answer incoming phone calls will have an agreed factual statement and reassurance about actions being undertaken as agreed with the Incidents Managers.
3. Setup a separate line dedicated for outgoing calls only.
4. If appropriate, invite families to an agreed venue, away from public and media, to receive further information.
5. An information letter containing necessary facts, sympathy/concern and a message of reassurance may be appropriate for some parents.
6. Families must be provided with the information on the help and support available to them.
7. Staff must be well informed and an update meeting must be arranged. All staff must be cautioned against talking to the media.

8. Pupils not involved directly, will be informed by the teacher in class or, if necessary, in an assembly.

## **IX. Post Crisis Support**

### **Post Traumatic Stress Disorder**

Children who have witnessed or experienced a traumatic event can develop Post traumatic Stress Disorder (PTSD). Children with PTSD try to avoid any situation or thoughts associated with the trauma. However, despite avoidance, they persistently re-experience the event and suffer 'survivors' guilt'.

### **Support Policy**

The school will make provision for emotional support when necessary by:

- Staff willing to offer support will be working with pupils, encouraging them to talk about their feelings and listen to their needs.
- Guidelines will be given to staff on how to support and talk to students.
- Further help and support will be provided for distressed pupils by the Educational Psychology Service, the Educational Welfare Service and other specialist agencies.

### **Monitoring Procedure**

- Parental permission must be obtained before any professional help is provided.
- Staff closely involved with the incident and pupils involved, should be offered professional support (e.g. counselling).
- Anniversaries should be planned for and sensitively handled.
- Pupils can be encouraged to send cards or letters.

### School Recovery Team Members

Name	Role	Contact number
Mrs A Bruce	<input type="checkbox"/> Inform all governors	07810055804

Mr B Hulbert	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>➤ Contact families of pupils and staff involved in the incident</li> <li>➤ Contact Chair of Governors and LEA</li> <li>➤ Facilitate the LEA Press Officer or designate personnel to communicate with the media</li> </ul>	07584293970
Mr S Middlemist	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>➤ Inform members of staff</li> <li>➤ Recovery plan supervision</li> <li>➤ Complete Incident Report Form</li> <li>➤ Arrange provision for emotional support if necessary</li> </ul>	07742313320
Mrs A Hogg	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>➤ Bring school registers to the evacuation point</li> <li>➤ If the school is not evacuated, man the office</li> <li><input type="checkbox"/> Provide Incident Managers with the dedicated phone numbers for incoming and outgoing calls</li> </ul>	07843090264
Mr D Smith	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li><input type="checkbox"/> Bring all keys</li> </ul>	07734350525

## **USEFUL CONTACT NUMBERS**

<b>Police, Fire, Ambulance</b>	<b>999</b>
<b>County Duty Emergency Planning Officer</b>	<b>01670 534659/60/61</b>
<b>Children's Services (NCC)</b>	<b>01670 624839</b>
<b>Social Services</b>	<b>01289 334000</b>
<b>Health Centre</b>	<b>01289 330333</b>
<b>School nurse</b>	<b>01289 356960</b>
<b>Berwick Infirmary</b>	<b>01289 356600</b>
<b>Alnwick General Hospital</b>	<b>08448 118111</b>
<b>Wansbeck General Hospital</b>	<b>08443 118111</b>
<b>Borders General Hospital</b>	<b>01896 826000</b>
<b>CORTECH Fire &amp; Security Systems</b>	<b>01670 522827</b>
<b>Northumbrian Water</b>	<b>0845 73375566</b>
<b>Gas Emergencies</b>	<b>0800 111 999</b>
<b>Electricity Emergencies</b>	<b>0800 668877</b>

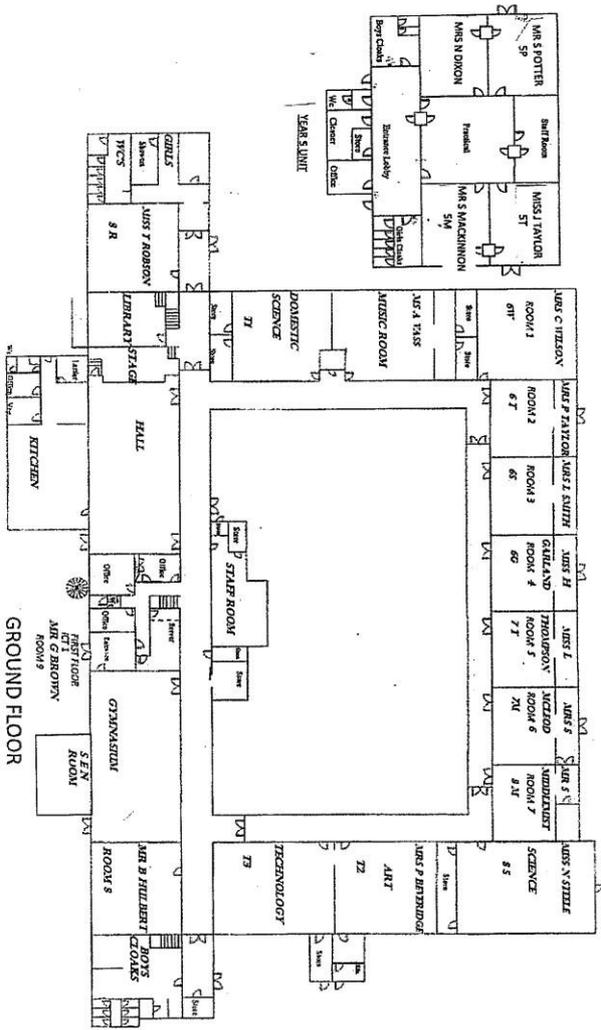
Appendix 1

Risk assessment

<b>Risks</b>	<b>Control measures</b>
<input type="checkbox"/> Death or serious injury to a pupil or member of staff	<ul style="list-style-type: none"><li>• Only trained people to carry risky operations, e.g. manual handling, ladder training, etc.</li><li>• Adopt the 'Critical Incident Policy and Disaster Recovery Plan' to prepare for serious incidents</li></ul>
<input type="checkbox"/> Violence or assault in school	<ul style="list-style-type: none"><li>• No access for unauthorised people</li><li>• Ensure there is a witness present when dealing with angry/aggressive parent/ carer or pupil</li><li><input type="checkbox"/> Contact Police if necessary</li></ul>
<input type="checkbox"/> Extensive damage to school property, e.g. fire, flood, vandalism, etc.	<ul style="list-style-type: none"><li>• Ensure fire safety procedures are followed and kept up to date, fire alarm and extinguishers tested and in date</li><li>• Locks and intruder alarm are in working order</li><li><input type="checkbox"/> Ensure all electrical tests are current and any faults repaired</li></ul>

	<input type="checkbox"/> Potential causes of flood to be repaired immediately
<input type="checkbox"/> Contamination	<input type="checkbox"/> Cleaning product stored in a locked cabinet and used by a trained member of staff <input type="checkbox"/> Paints in a small quantities stored in a cellar <input type="checkbox"/> Contactors to be informed of asbestos location
<input type="checkbox"/> Health or welfare issues	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Follow Health and Safety policy</li> <li>• Counselling services available if required</li> </ul>
<input type="checkbox"/> Hardware or software failure or hacking	<input type="checkbox"/> Passwords to be changed on a regular basis and not to be shared <input type="checkbox"/> Weekly back-ups carried out and stored in a fire proof safe <input type="checkbox"/> E-mails deleted when not required <input type="checkbox"/> Do not open any e-mails/ attachments from unknown source <input type="checkbox"/> Only authorised staff can access back-up copies, otherwise permission from the Headteacher must be obtained <input type="checkbox"/> Ensure virus protection is up to date

Appendix 2  
Assembly point



GROUND FLOOR

ASSEMBLY  
POINT

Appendix 3  
Incident report form

<u>Date of incident:</u>	<u>Time of incident:</u>
<u>Nature and location of incident:</u>	
<u>Contact person:</u>	
<u>Contact telephone:</u>	
<u>Names of injured pupils/ staff:</u>	
<u>Names of deceased pupils/ staff:</u>	
<u>Location of uninjured pupils/ staff:</u>	
<u>Action plan for uninjured pupils/ staff:</u>	
<u>Emergency Services involved:</u>	
<u>Name and phone number of hospital:</u>	
<u>Hospital contact name:</u>	

Completed by: ..... Date:  
.....

Appendix 4  
Log of events

<b>Date and time</b>	<b>Incident occurrence</b>	<b>Comments</b>	<b>Reported by:</b>

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