

# **Fowey Primary School**

## **Critical Incident Policy**

### **Introduction**

The purpose of this document is to:

- outline routines and procedures to reduce the danger inherent in certain situations
- assist staff in coping with disasters if and when tragic incidents occur

### **Preventative and precautionary measures**

Whilst no amount of planning can totally prevent accidents and problems occurring, it is hoped that some can be prevented and the effects of others minimised by taking sensible precautionary measures. It is expected that:

- all staff and pupils should be familiar with the school's routines for fire and the evacuation of the school building on hearing the fire alarm
- all staff should be familiar with the routines and procedures for dealing with emergencies (as detailed in this Policy)
- all staff and pupils should be familiar with the school's security procedures, in particular that all visitors not wearing a visitor's badge should be questioned and escorted to reception
- all staff organising school trips and visits follow the guidelines and checklist
- all staff should sign in and out of the premises
- all staff are aware of pupils with health problems
- all staff are aware of school policy in dealing with violence at work

### **A major incident may be defined as:**

- An accident leading to a fatality;
- Severe injury or severe stress;
- Circumstances in which a person or persons might be at serious risk of illness;
- Circumstances in which any part, or whole of the school is unable to function as normal due to external influences and
- Any situation in which the national press or media might be involved.

### **As such, major incidents include:**

- Death of a pupil or member of staff;
- Death or serious injury on a school trip;
- Epidemic in school or community;
- Violent incident in school;
- A pupil missing from home;
- Destruction or major vandalism in school;
- A hostage taking;
- A transport accident involving school members;
- A disaster in the community;
- A civil disturbance or terrorism.

In the event of such an incident the priorities of those adults in charge of the school or trip at the time must be able to:

- Save life
- Minimise personal injury
- Safeguard the interests of pupils and staff
- Minimise loss and to return to normal working quickly

A **Critical Incident Management Team (CIMT)** will comprise the following:

- Kate Sicolo, Headteacher
- Maria Barnes, Deputy Headteacher
- Paul Trudgeon, SLT
- Chris Williams, Chair of Governors
- Jacqui Kay, Office Manager
- *Jaine Colville, Vice-Chair of Governors in Rachel Arthur's absence or in a matter relating to the Chair's own children*

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

- a) Immediate action
- b) Short term action
- c) Medium term action
- d) Longer term action

### **IMMEDIATE ACTION – i.e. within hours of the incident occurring**

1. Obtain and collate information relating to the incident – uncertainty breeds rumour and accurate information is essential;
2. Gather and brief the CIMT – brief the team, allocate roles and responsibilities and check in regularly;
3. Trigger support from the LA and other contacts on emergency list – establish clearly who is going to contact whom;
4. Set up an incident management room and dedicated phone line – to deal with calls from anxious parents, etc. CIMT should agree a factual statement and avoid speculation;
5. Contact families affected – 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;

6. Make arrangements to inform other parents – may need to take advice from LA, especially if there is the possibility of legal liability. CIMT may wish to send a letter to parents, or prepare a leaflet.
7. Inform teaching and other school 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.
8. Inform pupils – can be done in small or large groups depending on which is most appropriate. Care needs to be exercised to protect both children or 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.
9. Encourage people involved to talk – the incident may need to be discussed before children go home for the day, for both pupils and adults.
10. Deal with the media – most important to seek advice from 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 school's behalf.
11. 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 – the next stage**

1. Reunion of children with their families – especially where the incident occurs outside the school. Mostly children will need to be brought home, but sometimes parents and families need to visit the scene of the incident to understand how they deal with repercussions in terms of children's fears etc.
2. Managing staff – support needs organising for all staff, preferably from within the school, but using outside agencies if appropriate. Staff monitoring should be a priority, even members of the CIMT. If a crisis persists over many hours staff become tired, weary and upset and this affects their powers to make sensible decisions.

3. 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...
4. 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 school 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. Pupils may wish to send cards and letters. The school 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.

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**

1. Return to school for staff or pupils after long absence – 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 process etc.
2. Consulting professionals – consideration should be given to consulting the Educational Psychology Service for support and guidance, especially to help those showing unusual or prolonged reaction to the incident.
3. Keeping parents informed – it may be appropriate to produce a leaflet for parents giving guidance on the possible delayed reactions of pupils to an incident and making suggestions to help them deal with these.

4. Support for staff – ongoing monitoring and support for staff is a major consideration. CIMT especially will not be immune to reaction from their ordeal.

## **LONG TERM ACTION**

Monitoring the vulnerable – the effects of a crisis can reverberate for years, and it is especially important that new staff and pupils are briefed in the school's history to help them understand and deal with potential repercussions especially at anniversary times.

Marking anniversaries – these difficult times need to be treated with sensitivity. Some suggestions for schools to mark anniversaries are by annual concerts, memorial services, memorial prize giving ceremonies, memorial gardens etc ...

Legal processes – 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 – it may be appropriate to schedule INSET training for staff in loss counselling, bereavement etc.

## **Action Cards**

The Action Cards give responsibilities for specified staff in the event of a critical incident

(a) away from the school

(b) in the school environment

These should be used in the event of a major incident and be carried by staff on school visits.

Due to the nature of school life, which includes the absence of staff on courses, at meetings etc. the following staff order should be followed.

## **ACTION CARDS 1 - GUIDANCE FOR SCHOOL STAFF IN EVENT OF A MAJOR INCIDENT IN SCHOOL ENVIRONMENT**

### **INSTRUCT ALL COLLEAGUES TO RECORD THEIR ACTIONS AS SOON AS POSSIBLE**

<p><b>INFORM</b>  OBTAIN FACTS AND INFORMATION  CALL THE EMERGENCY SERVICES USING 999  RETAIN ANY RELEVANT EQUIPMENT  INFORM REST OF SCHOOL STAFF AND CHILDREN AS APPROPRIATE  CONTACT DIRECTOR OF EDUCATION AND PRESS OFFICER SERVICES (or his/her representative)  CONTACT CHAIR OF GOVERNORS  CONTACT HEALTH AND SAFETY REPS  PREPARE TO DEAL WITH THE MEDIA (ON GUIDANCE FROM CORNWALL LA PRESS OFFICER)</p>	<p><b>ADULT 1 - INFORMS</b></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• <b>Kate Sicolo, Headteacher</b></li> <li>• <b>Office Manager</b></li> </ul>
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<p><b>SAVE</b>  ADMINISTER FIRST AID WHERE POSSIBLE  ESTABLISH A CONTACT POINT WITH THE EMERGENCY SERVICES  TRAVEL WITH CASUALTIES TO HOSPITAL  COMPLETE ACCIDENT FORMS</p>	<p><b>ADULT 2 - SAVES</b></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• <b>First Aiders in school at time – list in staff room and around school</b></li> </ul>
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<p><b>CARE</b>  KEEP A RECORD OF WITNESSES  KEEP OTHERS INFORMED OF SITUATION  ARRANGE FOR NON-CASUALTIES TO EVACUATE SCHOOL  CARE FOR RELATIVES ARRIVING AT SCHOOL  CONSIDER RELOCATION TO OTHER PREMISES  REMAIN AVAILABLE TO EMERGENCY</p>	<p><b>ADULT 3 - CARES</b></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• <b>Maria Barnes, Deputy Headteacher</b></li> </ul>
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<p><b>ASSIST</b>  KEEP OTHERS INFORMED OF SITUATION  ENSURE ALTERNATIVE ACCOMODATION IS AVAILABLE IF NEEDED  KEEP SWITCHBOARD STAFF AWARE OF KNOWN FACTS  HELP TO ESTABLISH INCIDENT ROOM</p>	<p><b>ADULT 4 - ASSISTS</b></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• <b>Paul Trudgeon, SMT</b></li> <li>• <b>Chris Williams, Chair of Governors</b></li> </ul>
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**MAINTAIN VITAL COMMUNICATIONS WITH COLLEAGUES AT ALL TIMES. DO NOT ALLOW PUPILS TO TALK TO THE MEDIA UNLESS STAFF OR PARENTS HAVE GIVEN PERMISSION**

## **ACTION CARDS 2**

### **GUIDANCE FOR GROUP LEADERS ON OUT-OF-SCHOOL ACTIVITIES**

#### **THERE HAS BEEN A MAJOR INCIDENT**

**INSTRUCT ALL COLLEAGUES TO RECORD THEIR ACTIONS AS SOON AS POSSIBLE  
ALLOCATE KEY RESPONSIBILITIES – as outlined by the emergency action cards**

<b>INFORM</b> OBTAIN FACTS AND INFORMATION CALL THE EMERGENCY SERVICES USING 999 RETAIN ANY RELEVANT EQUIPMENT INFORM HEADTEACHER/SENIOR SCHOOL STAFF CONTACT HEALTH AND SAFETY REPRESENTATIVES REQUEST ASSISTANCE ON SITE AS NECESSARY PREPARE TO DEAL WITH THE MEDIA (ON GUIDANCE FROM HEADTEACHER/CORNWALL LA PRESS OFFICER)	<b>ADULT 1 - INFORMS</b> <ul style="list-style-type: none"><li>• <b>Group Leader</b></li></ul>
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<b>SAVE</b> ADMINISTER FIRST AID WHERE POSSIBLE ESTABLISH A CONTACT POINT WITH THE EMERGENCY SERVICES TRAVEL WITH CASUALTIES TO HOSPITAL COMPLETE ACCIDENT FORMS	<b>ADULT 2 - SAVES</b> <ul style="list-style-type: none"><li>• <b>Nominated adult(s) (First Aiders) shown on risk assessment</b></li></ul>
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<b>CARE</b> CALL OTHER ASSISTANCE AS NECESSARY KEEP A RECORD OF WITNESSES KEEP OTHERS INFORMED OF SITUATION CONSIDER ABANDONMENT OF ACTIVITY ARRANGE FOR NON CASUALTIES TO RETURN TO SCHOOL REMAIN AVAILABLE TO EMERGENCY SERVICES AND SUPERVISING COLLEAGUES	<b>ADULT 3 - CARES</b> <ul style="list-style-type: none"><li>• <b>Nominated adult shown on risk assessment</b></li></ul>
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**MAINTAIN VITAL COMMUNICATIONS WITH COLLEAGUES AT ALL TIMES**

### **ACTION CARDS 3**

## **GUIDANCE FOR SENIOR STAFF ON HEARING OF A MAJOR INCIDENT AFFECTING AN OUT-OF-SCHOOL ACTIVITY**

### **THERE HAS BEEN A MAJOR INCIDENT**

**INSTRUCT ALL COLLEAGUES TO RECORD THEIR ACTIONS AS SOON AS POSSIBLE**

**ALLOCATE KEY RESPONSIBILITIES – as outlined by the emergency action cards**

<p><b>INFORM</b> OBTAIN FACTS AND INFORMATION ENSURE EMERGENCY ASSISTANCE HAS BEEN CALLED CONFIRM WHO IS IN CHARGE CONTACT HEADTEACHER/SENIOR STAFF CONTACT EMERGENCY PLANNING OFFICER CONTACT CHAIR OF GOVERNORS CONTACT LA REPRESENTATIVES CONTACT OTHER STAFF PREPARE TO DEAL WITH THE MEDIA (ON GUIDANCE FROM CORNWALL LA PRESS OFFICER)</p>	<p><b>ADULT 1 - INFORMS</b></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"><li>• <b>Kate Sicolo, Headteacher</b></li><li>• <b>Office Manager</b></li></ul>
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<p><b>CARE</b> DECIDE WHO AND HOW TO TELL PARENT OF CHILDREN ON THE VISIT ESTABLISH INCIDENT ROOM ESTABLISH ROOM FOR RELATIVES REMAIN AVAILABLE TO SUPERVISING COLLEAGUES</p>	<p><b>ADULT 2 - CARES</b></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"><li>• <b>Maria Barnes, Deputy Headteacher</b></li><li>• <b>Paul Trudgeon, SLT in her absence</b></li></ul>
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**MAINTAIN VITAL COMMUNICATIONS WITH COLEAGUES AT ALL TIMES**

## **CONCLUSION**

The prime objective, shared between the school and LA, is to serve the best interests of pupils and staff in coping with an incident, collectively and individually. School's who 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 school response to such an incident will provide focus for those with whom the responsibility will rest.

As a matter of urgency there will be a need for emergency telephone lines. Contact the Emergency Planning Unit for Cornwall who is able to make these arrangements with British Telecom.

<b>CONTACT</b>	<b>NAME</b>	<b>TELEPHONE</b>
Director of Children, Schools and Families	Jane Black	(01872) 322403 or 0300 1234 100
Emergency Planning Unit		(01872) 323752 <a href="mailto:emergencyplanning@cornwall.gov.uk">emergencyplanning@cornwall.gov.uk</a>
Chair of Governing Body	Chris Williams	
Vice-Chair of Governing Body	Jaine Colville	
Police		999 PCSO Lloyd Paynter St Blazey Station (01726) 812262
Fire Brigade		999
Ambulance		999
Fowey Hospital		(01726) 832241
School Nurse		(01726) 291221
Education Psychology Service Central Office	Cath Harvey	(01872) 323038
Behaviour Support	Tim Davis	(01209) 881828 or (01872) 322479
Emergency Department at Treliske Hospital		(01872) 253111/253113
Education Welfare Officer	Linda Dale	(01872) 323014
Health and Social Care		0300 1234 131
Penhaligon's Friends		(01209) 210624
Local Religious Groups	Philip de Grey- Warter	(01726) 833535
The Samaritans		08457 909090
Cornwall LA Press Officer	Mark Nicholson	(01872) 322186
Press and Media contacts	BBC Radio Cornwall	(01872) 222222
	Pirate FM	(01209) 314314
	Cornish Guardian	(01872) 247457

Policy reviewed on:

Signature of Headteacher:.....

Signature of Chair of Governors:.....

Review date: January 2019