



Wakefield Grammar School Foundation

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VALIDITY – Policies should be accessed via the Foundation intranet to ensure the current version is used.

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1. Purpose of the Critical Incident Policy

Wakefield Grammar School Foundation is committed to ensuring that, in the event of a major emergency or incident, the School(s) will provide an effective emergency response to minimise the impact of the incident and ensure the wellbeing and safety of all children and adults in the School's care.

This plan will be supported by existing Emergency response arrangements with the Emergency Services and the Local Authority Emergency Planning Team, as necessary.

2. 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(s) operating under normal conditions, and requiring the assistance of the Emergency Services and others.

Where there has been a death or serious injury arising through interpersonal violence, this will constitute a Critical Incident, regardless of the perceived capacity of the School(s) to cope.

The incident or event may be unanticipated, imminent or in progress. It may occur on the School property, in the local community or outside School (e.g. educational visit).

Non-Critical Incidents

Non-critical incidents may be disruptive to routine without involving risk to the wellbeing of individuals.

Examples of non-critical incidents /events:

- Death of a person associated with the School.
- Expected death of a pupil or member of staff.
- Lower scale health issue, including a notifiable infectious outbreak.
- Issue outside of School or in the local community, including industrial action.
- Short term loss of a number of staff.
- Short term loss of infrastructure systems, such as telephone services, email system, Internet connectivity, website, servers.
- Severe weather problems, including fallen trees, flooding or other weather damage.
- Minor disruption to utility services, such as loss of heating, power, gas or water in some School buildings.
- Flight restrictions / travel disruptions preventing normal return of School group.

Emergency / Critical Incidents

Critical Incidents may include any unexpected event which is likely to significantly disrupt the normal functioning of the School(s). These are more likely to involve a real threat of, or actual injury or death, where urgent and significant agency support is needed.

Examples include:

- A deliberate act of violence, such as the use of a knife or firearm on either a member of staff or a pupil.
- A School fire or laboratory explosion.
- The destruction or serious vandalism of part of the School.
- Public health threats (e.g. Pandemic Influenza).
- The large-scale loss of water or heating.
- Gas leak.
- The unexpected death of a pupil or member of staff.
- A serious allegation made about a current or former member of staff.
- A transport related accident involving pupils and/or members of staff.
- A major emergency in the community, for example, the release of hazardous substances, severe weather, etc.* ➡ Death or injuries on educational visits.
- Civil disturbances and terrorism.

Not all these incidents will require a full scale response. However, plans must not overlook the long-term effects and wider consequence management issues that can arise during or following on from an incident.

*A serious incident in the local community, which could have a significant impact on the School(s), would typically involve the Local Authority's Emergency Planning Department.

3. Objectives of the Critical Incident Plan

1. To establish an effective framework of emergency response where roles and responsibilities are clear.
2. To ensure that the critical incident is communicated quickly and clearly to supporting agencies and partners, with accurate information provided, enabling support arrangements to be rapidly activated.
3. To maintain high standards of welfare and duty of care arrangements for pupils, staff and carers.
4. To ensure that actions and decision making during the critical incident are properly recorded.

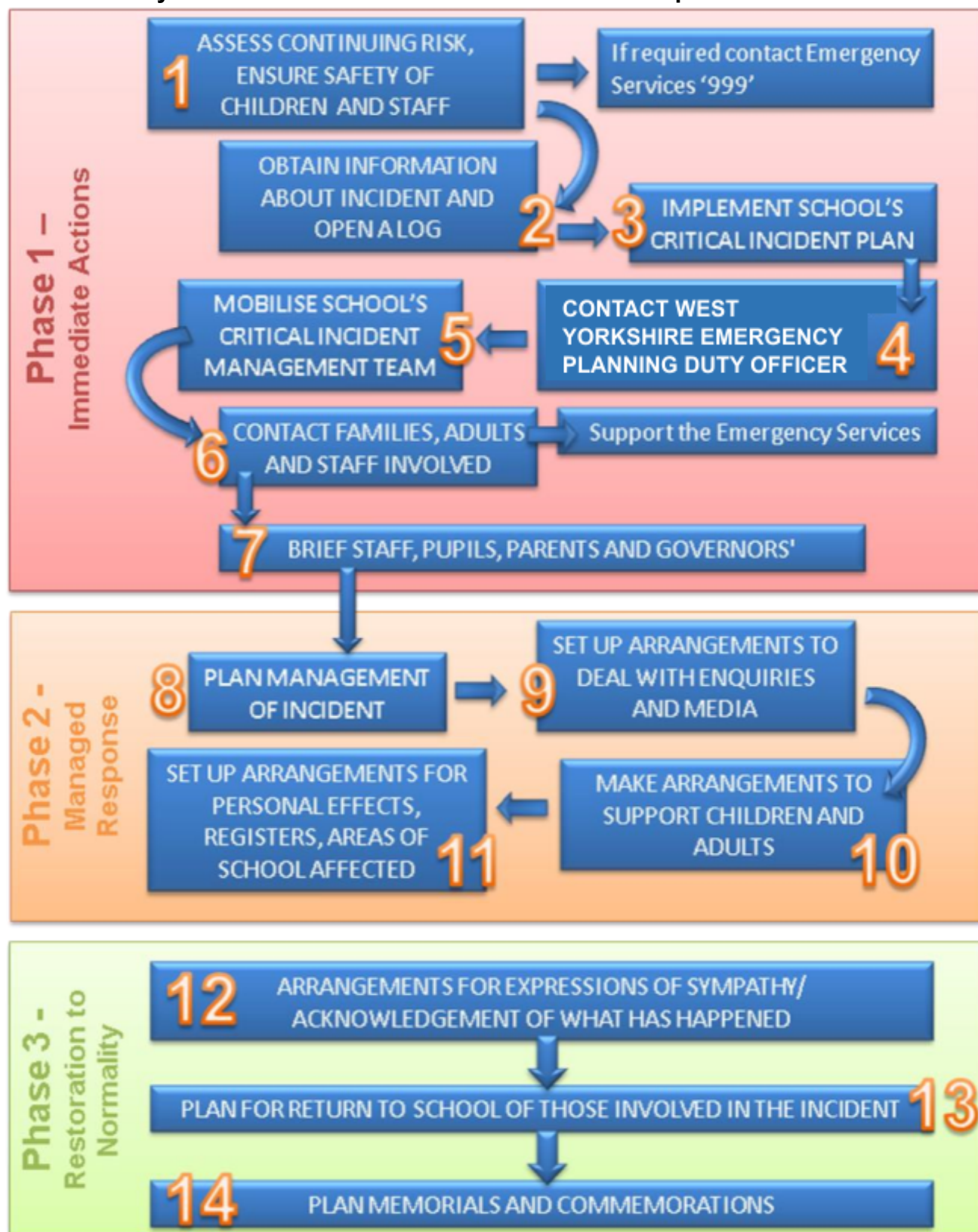
5. To minimise educational and administrative disruption within the school(s).
6. To ensure communication with parents, pupils and staff is handled in a managed and appropriate manner.

4. Implementation and Review of the Critical Incident Plan

- The Heads and the Governing Body of Wakefield Grammar School Foundation are responsible for annually reviewing the Plan and updating as required.
- The School's Critical Incident Plan and all School contact information should be accessible for Heads, on and off the school site in electronic and hard copies.
- All School staff should be aware of the Critical Incident Plan and how it is initiated.
- The School's Critical Incident Plan is included in the induction process for new staff.
- The Plan is regularly practised under different scenarios, e.g. during / after School hours, on / off site.
- Each School's Critical Incident Management Team is clearly identified with agreed roles and responsibilities. See *Appendix 1: Critical Incident Management Team Roles*.

Where these individuals, for whatever reason, are not available, those who will act in their place are also identified and aware of this.

5. Key Tasks and Actions in a Critical Incident Response



Phase 1: Immediate Actions

1 - 7 should be undertaken straight away. The order in which these actions should be undertaken will be determined by the needs of the situation.

Action 1

ASSESS CONTINUING RISK, ENSURE SAFETY OF ALL CHILDREN & ADULTS IF REQUIRED CONTACT EMERGENCY SERVICES 'DIAL 999'

- Implement emergency response plan for pupils, if necessary – fire evacuation or lockdown.
- Deploy first aiders, if necessary.
- Account for all pupils and staff.
- Report anyone missing to the Police or other emergency services.

Action 2

OBTAIN INFORMATION ABOUT INCIDENT AND OPEN A LOG

- Collate as much information as possible about the incident (see *Resource Sheet 1: School Incident Form & Incident Log*). Information should include the following:
 - Overview of incident/description.
 - When and where incident occurred.
 - Names of children and adults involved in the incident including those who witnessed it.
 - If the incident is a crime scene consider preserving the scene and identify witnesses and/or potential offenders.
 - Nature of any injuries / fatalities.
 - Hospitals where injured have been taken.
 - Names of adults with injured children / adults.
 - Actions undertaken by emergency services, including arrangements for caring for children/adults who do not require hospital treatment.
 - Locations of the uninjured.
 - Remaining hazards at the scene.

Not all of this information may be available, however, this should not cause a delay in moving to the next action.

- Collect relevant pupil / staff lists and contact numbers as appropriate.
- Control the escape of inappropriate / inaccurate information via mobile / public phones from within the group.
- Start a log of events with times and details of actions and decisions taken.

This could be important for any subsequent inquiry which could range from an internal school/local authority inquiry to a formal inquiry with legal implications such as a Coroner's inquiry or an insurance claim. Those involved may be required to give a statement to Police and/or attend court as a witness. A record of events and actions is crucial in these circumstances.

Action 3

IMPLEMENT THE SCHOOL'S CRITICAL INCIDENT PLAN

- Person(s) with lead responsibility to be released from all duties.
- Collect School Emergency Pack, containing a copy of the Critical Incident Plan (see *page 13*).
- Set up an operations room for the co-ordination of the incident. 📞 Establish an independent telephone line.

Action 4

CONTACT AND CONSULT

- Contact Chair of Governors
- Contact Local Authority's Emergency Planning Department Duty Officer

Action 5

MOBILISE THE SCHOOL CRITICAL INCIDENT MANAGEMENT TEAM

- Brief the team.
- Clarify tasks, make plans and assign roles (*see Appendix 1: Critical Incident Management Team Roles*)
- Set up timetable of meetings to review management of incident.
- Contact Police and the critical incident response team coordinator to be part of the management team.
- Set out first meeting (*see Resource Sheet 2: Critical Incident Management Team Agenda*).
- Identify how senior staff, including the Head, will be supported.

Action 6

CONTACT FAMILIES OF PUPILS, ADULTS AND STAFF INVOLVED IN INCIDENT

- Designate key member(s) of staff to make contact with and liaise with the Police.
- Ensure that persons making contacts are fully briefed with written guidance on the situation.
- If this is a Police led incident then contact with families should be agreed by both parties.
- Maintain a record of contacts to avoid confusion and distress through duplication of contacts and to ensure that nobody is missed out.
- Establish and offer useful telephone numbers, either for support or for more information.
- Check that families / parents are not left alone in distress, suggest that they make contact with other relatives / neighbours.
- Where appropriate, give advice to parents and families on responding to contacts from the media.
- Where appropriate, give information about arrangements for uniting or putting in contact children, adults and staff with their parents / families.
- Where a parent or family cannot be contacted, consider asking the Police to visit the home.

Action 7

BRIEF STAFF, GOVERNORS, PUPILS, PARENTS / CARERS AND OTHER MEMBERS OF THE SCHOOL COMMUNITY

- Update Chair of Governors, request that he inform all other governors.

- Hold briefing meetings for all teaching and non-teaching staff, set up a schedule to keep staff informed and updated (see *Resource Sheet 3: Sample Staff Meeting Agenda*).
- Issue a prepared statement for all parents – use School website, letter or email, whichever seems most appropriate to the situation (see *Resource Sheet 4: Sample Letter - Informing Parents*).
- Inform all pupils in the most appropriate way - Ensure that staff tasked with telling children are able to undertake this task. Make special arrangements to protect and support staff, adults and children who were close in any way to those affected (see *Resource Sheet 5: Pupil Meetings – Informing Pupils*).
- Identify pupils, adults and staff who are absent. Make appropriate arrangements for them to be briefed.

Phase 2: Immediate Managed Response

Action 8

PLAN MANAGEMENT OF INCIDENT

- The school's Critical Incident Management Team should liaise with the Emergency Planning Duty Officer, Critical Incident Response Team, the Police and other agencies as appropriate (see *Resource Sheet 2: Critical Incident Management Team Agenda*).
- Review actions so far, clarify tasks, assign roles and make further actions accordingly.
- Ensure that School and other agencies' actions are properly coordinated.
- Establish timetable of meetings to review the management of the incident.
- Clarify criteria for withdrawal of outside agencies at appropriate stage.
- Access further advice from the emergency services if required.

Action 9

SET UP ARRANGEMENTS TO DEAL WITH ENQUIRIES AND MEDIA

- Caution all constituencies about talking to the media in any format.
- All media contacts should be directed to or dealt with by a designated individual – press statement to be drafted in consultation with Governors and taking legal advice if appropriate (see *Resource Sheet 6: Guidance for handling external telephone calls and the media*).
- Names of those involved in the incident should not be released or confirmed to the media or other callers until the statutory authorities (e.g. Police) have confirmed the identity and the parents and families have been informed and have given permission.
- Consider providing those answering the phone with a written statement as to what it is appropriate for them to say (see *notes in Action 6*).
- Caution staff about talking to the media.

- Organise additional staff to deal with phone enquiries and people coming to the School as necessary.
- Designate areas for parents, media, others. This could be off site depending on the nature of the emergency – in some cases, a 'Friends and Family Reception Centre' may be established by the Police.
- Ensure that the incident log includes a record of all telephone calls made and received and any actions taken.

Action 10

MAKE ARRANGEMENTS TO SUPPORT CHILDREN AND ADULTS

- Identify those children, adults and staff who are most likely to be in need of support.*
- Arrange for school staff/support agencies to provide support (*see Resource Sheet 7: Emotional Distress – Supporting Individual Pupils*).
- Ensure that pupils, adults, staff and parent / carers are aware of the support arrangements the school is making and how these are accessed.
- Consider setting aside and staffing an appropriate area for children who are becoming too distressed to continue with their lessons.
- Consider setting aside and staffing a further area for people coming into school who are distressed.
- Try to maintain normal School routines wherever possible.
- Consider holding a staff briefing with support agencies to discuss appropriate management strategies for distressed children.
- Plan how to manage distress that may be caused by ongoing Police / legal proceedings and media attention.
- Give children permission individually and collectively to discuss what has happened and their reactions.
- Consider putting on a special class session to give pupils information about the grieving process and to enable them to talk through their experiences.
- Plan appropriate support for staff to enable them to cope with children's questions and discussion.
- Ensure that all staff including those coordinating the School's response do not neglect their own need for support.
- Schedule staff coordinating the School's response to be 'off duty'.
- Ensure staff are alert to physical and / or emotional change or any other signals of distress among staff as well as children (*see Resource Sheet 9: Emotional Distress – Signs and Symptoms*).
- Refer staff, adults and, with parental consent, children to outside agencies for support.
- If the school has to close, ensure all staff and parents are briefed on the arrangements for the collection of children. Supervise children being collected and make arrangements for those who are not able to be collected. Ensure that staff and parents are clear as to the arrangements for re-opening the school.

* In addition to the individuals directly affected, children and adults who are most likely to suffer distress as a consequence of an incident are those who:

- are uninjured, but were at greatest risk
- directly witnessed death/injury/violence as part of the incident
- are siblings
- have any possible perceived culpability for what has happened, however, indirect or incorrect
- are experiencing instability at home
- have learning difficulties
- have pre-existing emotional and behavioural / mental health difficulties ▪ are vulnerable due to cultural and/or language difficulties ▪ have previously suffered bereavement or loss.

Action 11

MAKE ARRANGEMENTS FOR PERSONAL EFFECTS, REGISTERS AND AREA OF SCHOOL AFFECTED

- In discussion with parents / families, and, if necessary the Police, decide what to do with the personal effects of the individuals who have been affected.
- Consider discussing with relevant class members what would be appropriate for work (including work as part of any displays), desks, books, lockers, etc. belonging to individuals who have been affected.
- Make arrangements to adjust class registers, rotas, any other pupil listings accordingly.
- Make appropriate arrangements for the part of School where the incident occurred.

Phase 3: Restoration to Normality

Action 12

MAKE ARRANGEMENTS FOR EXPRESSIONS OF SYMPATHY AND / OR ACKNOWLEDGEMENT OF WHAT HAS HAPPENED

- Make arrangements to express support / sympathy to families, children and adults who have been affected.
- Make arrangements to support the plans that the family may have for a memorial.
- Make plans for attendance at funerals. Find out if School representatives are welcome. Ensure that School representatives feel able to cope with these tasks.
- Make arrangements for someone from School to visit those who have been affected.
- Consider sending cards and messages from children and staff to children, adults and staff affected.
- Consider organising a special assembly / service to collectively acknowledge what has happened and how the School is coming to terms with this. Consider involving local religious leaders. Consult with families of individual affected.
- Consider setting up an area in the School where writing, artwork or other mementos can be dedicated to individuals affected.

Action 13

PLAN FOR RETURN TO SCHOOL OF THOSE INVOLVED IN THE INCIDENT

- Home visit by member of staff to discuss arrangements for return, e.g. visits, parttime attendance, etc.
- Planned support for emotional needs, e.g. how to cope with the comments and questions of other pupils, permission to remove themselves from lessons to go to an agreed place if they are becoming distressed, etc.
- Support for possible physical needs, e.g. mobility difficulties, disfigurements, etc.
- Rota of home visits from school friends.
- Where appropriate, organise work to be sent home prior to return.
- Brief staff and children on how best to support individuals returning to School.
- Arrangements to differentiate work, manage missed coursework, special arrangements for exams.
- Adjust working arrangements for staff returning to School.

Action 14

PLAN MEMORIALS AND COMMEMORATIONS

- Consider an appropriate memorial, taking into account the wishes of those who were involved or bereaved e.g. special garden, tree, furniture, painting, sculpture, photograph, memorial prize.
- Appeals and donations are a complex area and advice should be sought from the British Red Cross (via the Emergency Planning Team).
- Discuss how to mark anniversaries.
- Brief staff who subsequently join the School about the incident, also about the long term emotional needs of children and staff affected by it.

6. Monitoring Incidents and Evaluating the Response

After managing a critical incident it is good practice to review the procedures and amend the plan in the light of experience and lessons learned.

An evaluation form is included (*see Resource Sheet 10: Internal School Incident Evaluation Form*) for internal School use.

In debriefing, participants are guided to assess the effectiveness of their own performance and that of the team, provide constructive feedback and correct any unsafe practises.

Benefits

1. Opportunity for constructive feedback
2. Identify areas that went well and areas for development
3. Gives an opportunity of understanding to participants why strategies / policies and / or decisions were made
4. Improving teamwork
5. Identifying issues connected to communication
6. Identify training needs or confirm skills

7. Engaging participants in reflective critiquing and discussion
8. Identifying new methods of delivery
9. Sharing of information with interested parties for shared organisation learning, joint training and planning.

The timing of a debrief is important to allow individuals to rationalise what occurred and identify the strengths and areas for development within the whole picture after the event. However, it is important not to leave it too long so that the meaning and outcomes become distorted, and the appropriate time for change is also lost. Ideally the time scale should be between 3 days and 1 month. Legal implications may affect the timing. Whilst the confidentiality of a debrief may be useful in order to fully understand the issues, information given during it may be disclosable in a public enquiry.

A Multi-Agency Debrief can be requested by anyone involved. The debrief is similar to evaluation and provides opportunity to reflect on the incident and review procedures (it is not the same as critical incident stress debriefing). All agencies who were involved in the incident should be invited to participate. The Local Resilience Forum (LRF) can provide trained facilitators and a report of the debrief. Contact the Emergency Planning Duty Officer to make a request.

7. School Emergency Pack

Each School should have an Emergency Pack, located in the School Office, which contains essential information and equipment that may be required during an emergency.

Suggested contents:

- Copy of School Critical Incident Plan
- Log book
- Contact telephone list - Governors, bus companies, etc.
- List of all pupils (names, address, medical details, emergency contacts)
- Staff list (names, addresses, medical details, emergency contacts)
- Plans of the School
- Mobile phone and charger
- Torch
- First Aid Kit
- Pens and paper
- Air-horn
- Hi Vis vests
- Wind-up radio

8. Useful Phone Numbers and Websites

Wakefield Council Emergency Planning Team	0345 8506506
Police (non-emergency)	101
Mid Yorkshire Hospitals NHS Trust	01924 541000
Environment Agency (Floodline)	0345 9881188
Yorkshire Water	0345 1242424
Gas Emergency	0800 111999
Electricity Emergency	0800 404090
Telephone supplier (ETS Communications Ltd.)	01924 237000
Wakefield Social Care Direct	0345 8503503

West Yorkshire Resilience Forum

Website: www.westyorksprepared.gov.uk

Advice on how to make your own emergency and business continuity plans

Environment Agency

Website: www.environment-agency.gov.uk

Flood warnings

Meteorological Office

Website: www.metoffice.gov.uk

Weather advice

Foreign Office

Website: www.gov.uk/foreign-travel-advice

Travel advice by country

CRUSE – Bereavement Care

Phone: 0870 167 1677 / 0844 477 9400

Website: www.crusebereavementcare.org.uk

Telephone counselling service for those who are bereaved and those who care for bereaved people. Can offer referrals to local Cruse branches and other bereavement and counselling services throughout the UK.

The Compassionate Friends

Phone: 0117 953 9639 / 0845 123 2304

Support for bereaved parents who have lost a child of any age from any circumstances.

Winston's Wish Family Line

Phone: 0845 2030 405

Website: www.winstonwish.org.uk

Information and guidance for families of bereaved children. Can provide contact details for local groups which support bereaved children.

Child Bereavement Trust

Phone: 0845 3571000 / 01494 568 900

Information line for parents who have been bereaved.

The Samaritans

Phone: 0845 790 9090

Website: www.samaritans.org

Produce comprehensive guidance packs for dealing with issues such as suicide.

Survivors of Bereavement by Suicide

Phone: 01482 610728 / 0115 944 1117

Can provide details of local self-help groups for those bereaved by suicide.

Childline

Phone: 0800 1111

National help line for children

British Red Cross

Website:

<http://www.redcross.org.uk/What-we-do/Preparing-for-disasters/How-to-prepare-for-emergencies/Emergencies-in-schools>

Appendix 1 Critical Incidents Management Team Roles

To be completed by each School to identify roles and responsibilities for the School's Incident Response Team. The name in bold is the person who would resume this role, if available, although alternative candidates are also in place for each role.

Role	Responsibility	Possible Candidates	Name
INCIDENT MANAGER	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Acts as or appoints School's single point of contact, acting as liaison between Schools 🏫 Consider the need to alert other colleagues and external agencies. Establish a Critical Incident Management Team. Collate all relevant information relating to the emergency. Co-ordinate the emergency response strategy for the school, liaising with relevant services and Governors, as appropriate. Monitor the emergency response. Provide regular staff / team briefings. Authorise any additional expenditure. 	Head Teacher; Deputy Head (non-Pastoral); Bursar	Heidi-Jayne Boyes; Jude Tingle or David Eggleston; Laurence Perry
DEPUTY INCIDENT MANAGER	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Assists Incident Manager. Co-ordinates and manages staff in the Critical Incident Management Team. Monitors staff welfare and organises staff roster. Co-ordinates evacuation, if necessary. Liaises with the Emergency Services and other organisations as necessary. 	Deputy Head Teacher; Director of Sixth Form; Member of Foundation Senior Management Team	Jude Tingle and / or David Eggleston; Joanna Rhodes; e.g. Annette Casey, Kent Oliver, Cath Worsley

Role	Responsibility	Possible Candidates	Name
PARENT LIAISON OFFICER	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Advises parents and provides information. • Provides point of contact. • Arranges on-site co-ordination of visiting parents. • Maintains regular contact with parents where appropriate. 	Director of Sixth Form; Senior Staff Member	Joanna Rhodes; e.g. a Head of Year
ADMINISTRATORS	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Operate telephone lines. • Help collate information. • Relay incoming and outgoing messages. • Provide admin support to the Incident Manager and Deputy. • Maintain a master log of key events and decisions. 	Head's PA; Office Manager; etc.	Sam Mead; Georgina Jackson; Celeste Fisher; & others
COMMUNICATIONS OFFICER / MEDIA SPOKESPERSON	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Acts as point of contact for media enquiries. • Works with Bursar and Governors to prepare media statements. • Assist with internal communications. <p>NB consult GSA for advice if appropriate.</p>	Head of Marketing at WGHS; Senior Staff Member; School Governor	Joanne Dell; e.g. a Head of Department
PUPIL WELFARE	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Maintain supervision. • Ensure the safety and security of pupils. • Co-ordinate the roll call / register. • Provide information and offer reassurance. • Monitor pupils' physical and emotional welfare. 	Deputy Head Pastoral to coordinate supported by: Matron; Pastoral Support Assistant; Teaching Staff	Louise Ladds to coordinate supported by: Sally Christie; Abi Lovell; All available teaching staff, in addition to library

Role	Responsibility	Possible Candidates	Name
			staff, data & exams staff, etc.

Appendix 2 Resource Sheets

Resource Sheet 1	School Incident Form & Incident Log
Resource Sheet 2	Critical Incident Management Team Agenda
Resource Sheet 3	Sample Staff Meeting Agenda
Resource Sheet 4	Sample Letter - Informing Parents
Resource Sheet 5	Pupil Meetings - Informing Pupils
Resource Sheet 6	Guidance for handling external telephone calls and the media
Resource Sheet 7	Emotional Distress - Supporting Individual Pupils
Resource Sheet 8	Emotional Distress - Class Management
Resource Sheet 9	Emotional Distress - Signs and Symptoms
Resource Sheet 10	Internal School Incident Evaluation Form

Resource Sheet 1 School Incident Form & Incident Log

Use this form to record initial information on the incident and to log situation updates. This form should be started as soon as possible and all boxes completed.

Date:	Time:	Your Name:
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Name of School(s):

INCIDENT DETAILS

Description: *WGSF Schools; if individuals affected are adults, note the detail nature of incident; names of any pupil(s) involved, including age; names of siblings attending or having just left time they have been at the school, links to any other schools, etc.*

How were you made aware of the incident?
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IS IT A CRITICAL INCIDENT?

Is it an incident requiring immediate action or is there significant disruption to day-to-day operation of the School?

No	Yes	Date and Time declared critical:
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Are there any casualties or fatalities?

Have the emergency services been called?

Is the incident currently affecting School activities? If so, which areas?

What is the estimated duration of the incident?

What is the actual or threatened loss of staff/pupils?

1 – 20% ☐ 20 – 50% ☐ Over 50% ☐

Has access to the whole School site been denied? If so, for how long? (provide estimate if not known) Which work areas have been destroyed, damaged or made unusable?

Is there evidence of structural damage?

Which work areas are inaccessible but intact?

Are systems and other resources unavailable? (include computer systems, telecomms, other assets)

If so, which staff are affected by the ICT disruption and how?

Have any utilities (gas, electricity or water) been affected?

Is there media interest in the incident? (likely or actual)

Does the incident have the potential to damage the School's reputation?

Other relevant information:

Enter any further information on the incident as it occurs on the log on the following pages.

INCIDENT LOG

Date	Time	Situation update

Resource Sheet 2 Critical Incident Management Team Agenda

1. Share information with the team regarding the facts of the critical incident.
No information should be shared with anyone else until a decision is made about what information is to be shared and the process for notifying staff and students.
2. Determine the impact of this particular incident on individual members of the School in order to ensure that all members can function objectively. Assess the likely impact of the critical incident on classes and individuals. Consider the impact for anyone in the school community who may have recently experienced a significant death or loss. Are there staff members who may require assistance in leading the classroom discussion?

3. Determine whether there are the cultural or religious implications surrounding the incident. How should they be addressed?
4. Identify school resources. Are there other staff members who might be helpful additions to the team in this situation?
5. Update from other agencies and partners – confirm co-ordination issues.
6. Determine whether additional counsellors are required to provide support to the team and work with students. Assess the extent of the need for additional resources.
7. Confirm the overall strategy and the specific roles of the Critical Incident Management Team members for this particular crisis.
8. Develop an agenda for the general staff meeting and prepare a written statement for the meeting about the critical incident. *See Resource Sheet 3.*
9. Decide whether it would be appropriate to send home a brief announcement about the critical incident. *See Resource Sheet 4.*

Resource Sheet 3 Sample Staff Meeting Agenda

The following sample staff meeting agenda can be adapted by the Critical Incident Management Team to fit the particular needs of the incident.

1. Attendance – anyone who is not present should be informed of the critical incident as soon as possible following the meeting.
2. Provide as much accurate information as possible, including:
 - names of the students or staff members directly involved,
 - time and place of the event,
 - any additional information surrounding the event
 - names of any siblings of those directly affected who are also in the school.
3. Introduce the Critical Incident Management Team, and any additional support staff or community resource people who are present, and explain their roles.
4. Briefly review the School Critical Incident Plan. Provide extra copies.
5. Prepare teachers to deal effectively with informing their students of the critical incident.
 - Give out a script and model how students should be told.
 - Encourage teachers to allow time for classroom discussion.
 - Provide all staff with a copy of the protocol for class discussion (*see Resource Sheet 8 for guidelines on leading a classroom discussion*).
 - Clarify procedures for handling students who want to leave the classroom.
 - Students who are highly emotional should be accompanied to a designated area.
 - Students who wish to leave the school should only be released to a parent or approved adult.
6. Inform teachers of support plans.
 - Identify staff who will run the support and the appropriate procedure for sending students for support.

- Advise staff to be aware of their feelings and support each other.
 - Clarify the way to get counselling assistance for staff members.
 - Inform staff of any outside agencies involved in student or staff support.
 - Ask for staff help to identify students who may be at risk or need extra support.
 - Make counselling plans for all students who are potentially at risk for suicide or other serious emotional responses to the critical incident.
 - Direct staff to refer students who appear to be emotionally unstable to the counsellors.
7. Review media policy.
 8. Inform all staff of any changes to the regular school schedule or cancellation of normal school events.
 9. Set the date and time of a follow-up meeting.
 - Assure staff that they will be kept informed of any relevant information in this update meeting.
 - Follow up meeting will provide an opportunity for staff members to discuss classroom experiences and report information back to the group.

Resource Sheet 4 Sample Letter - Informing Parents

Dear Parents,

You may have heard..... / It is with sadness and regret that I have to inform you.....

(known facts of the incident)

As a School community, we are all deeply affected by this tragedy /

I am sure that you will wish to join me and my staff in offering our condolences and sympathy to those affected / to

(refer to individuals/families affected only where it is appropriate to release this information)

I have now spoken to all pupils and staff in school about what has happened and you will need to be aware of the following arrangements that we have now made:

(Details about:

- *school closure,*
- *changes to timings of school day*
- *transport*
- *lunch time arrangements*
- *changes to staffing*
- *arrangements for specific classes / year groups*
- *counselling support*
- *provision of further information as relevant)*

(If appropriate, advice about media contacts)

I think it is very important that we all take the time to talk with and reassure children about what has happened. This is likely to be a very difficult time for us as a School community and we will all need to support each other.

We appreciate the expressions of concern we have received, however, it would be helpful if parents did not telephone the School during this time so we can keep phones and staff free to manage the situation.

Yours sincerely,

Resource Sheet 5 Pupil Meetings – Informing Pupils

- Pupils should be told simply and truthfully what has happened, in small groups if possible, e.g. class, form, year, etc. In some circumstances, it may be appropriate to bring pupils together as a whole school. Where this is the arrangement, ensure that pupils have an opportunity to ask questions and talk through what they have heard with form / class teachers in smaller groupings afterwards.
- Begin by preparing the pupils for some very difficult / sad news.
- Taking account of children's needs and backgrounds, give simple, factual information using language and concepts appropriate to the age of the children.
- Avoid using euphemisms, use words like 'dead' and 'died', etc.
- Pass on facts only; do not speculate on causes or consequences.
- If questions cannot be answered this should be acknowledged.
- Address and deal with rumours.
- Try to give expression to the emotions that individuals may be experiencing (e.g. shock / disbelief, etc.) and explain that strong and difficult feelings are a normal part of the process of coming to terms with this sort of experience.
- Do not refrain from referring to the deceased by name, perhaps highlighting some positive aspect(s) of their lives.
- Finally, explain what arrangements the school has in hand for coming to terms with what has happened.

"I've got some very sad news to tell you today that might upset you. There is a serious illness called meningitis. Sometimes people with meningitis get better but sometimes people die from it. Some of you will have known that Jane Smith in year 4 was suddenly taken ill last week. I have to tell you that Jane died in hospital yesterday.

Like me, many of you will find it hard to believe that this has happened. It is obviously a very big shock for us all. Jane was such a happy girl who got on well with everybody. We will all miss her.

It is important for you to know that strong and perhaps difficult feelings are part of the normal process of coping with this sort of situation. It will help to talk about what has happened and about your thoughts and feelings. Please do take the opportunity to talk to your family, friends, teachers and adults in school. This is likely to be a difficult time for us as a school community and we should all try to support each other. Please come and talk with me if you have any questions or if you just want to talk."

Resource Sheet 6 Guidance for handling external telephone calls and the media

When a disaster occurs, one of the most critical factors in making a successful recovery may be the way that public relations are handled. This is even more vital when the crisis takes the form of an accident or a scandal relating to staff or pupils, when the press can be expected to be highly intrusive. Saying the wrong thing can have significant repercussions.

Guidance for staff handling telephone

calls 📞 Give your name if it is requested.

- Keep calm and listen carefully to the caller.
- Show that you understand their concerns and want to help them.
- Reassure the caller that the situation is under control.
- Do not in any circumstances admit liability or fault.
- Never criticise the school, any of its staff, or the way the crisis is being handled. 📞 Do not give out personal details relating to individuals.
- Never say anything 'off the record' or 'in confidence'. 📞 Do not be impatient or lose your temper.
- Only promise to call back if you are certain that you can do so.
- If a journalist or reporter calls, refer them to the Bursar / Head.
- Be aware the journalists can masquerade as parents, old girls / boys or Governors. Check the number they give or ask for other details (e.g. address) before providing information.
- Make a brief note of each call, logging the time, who called and what information was given.

Guidance for dealing with the media

- **Staff should be told not to talk to the press themselves but refer the query to the Bursar or Head.**
- Any required press statement should be agreed with the Governors.
- The press statement be reviewed daily and revised as necessary.
- Press should not be allowed on the premises except by invitation.
- Information given to the press should tally with the information given to parents and pupils.
- The Head and Bursar should have an agreed line for the press and should not deviate from that line. This should take account of the following:
 - Questions about normal policy should be anticipated
 - Do not get drawn into answering hypothetical questions
 - Do not admit liability
 - Do not attribute blame
 - Do not identify individuals involved until their next of kin have been informed

- Do not attribute views to other individuals or organisations
- Only use facts that are certain and avoid detail
- Never comment 'off the record'

Resource Sheet 7 Emotional Distress – Supporting Individual Pupils

- Be accepting and allow the pupil to express their emotions. Ask open-ended questions (e.g. "How are you today?") or just sit with them if this is what you feel is appropriate. Avoid touching or hugging but try to be as natural and unembarrassed as possible. Have some tissues to hand. It might be appropriate to use reflective listening (i.e. repeating back to the child what they have said) or summarise what they have said. This gives an opportunity for the child to elaborate and / or modify what they have said as well as an opportunity to hear a perspective on their own experiences. Sometimes it is helpful to give a name to the emotion that you are hearing being expressed (e.g. "That sounds very sad", "Did you feel angry then?" etc.).
- You might have to explain your limits of confidentiality.
- Don't forget that knowing what to say is far less important than being able to listen in a sympathetic and supportive manner. If it seems appropriate to offer advice, then strategies for the pupil that you might want to suggest could include:
 - Talking to their family and friends.
 - Crying and expressing their emotions in a suitable safe context.
 - Maintaining normal routines.
 - Eating normally.
 - Taking physical exercise.
 - Maintaining normal sleep patterns.
 - Carrying on seeing and being with friends.
 - Listening to and playing music.
 - Maintaining interests and pastimes.
- As part of such sensitive support, it will be important to ensure that the pupil can continue to seek support from you but without them becoming dependent. If appropriate, agree to a set number of sessions at a set time and place where you can be confident of not being disturbed (in terms of your own safety and accountability ensure that parents and relevant staff are aware of any such arrangements).
- Using a visual aid such as an outline of a hand, ask the pupil to identify 5 individuals (e.g. staff, peers, family, other adults) who they feel they could approach as part of their support network to help them feel safe. Ask them to test it out. If all else fails, what else could they always have 'up their sleeve' (e.g. Childline, etc.)? 📞 Liaise with parents as appropriate.
- Consider liaising with colleagues to differentiate work outcomes / homework, etc. or arrangements for managing the pupil's emotional distress in class.
- Be aware that holidays, Christmas, birthdays and the anniversary of the event that has caused distressed can mark points of particular emotional vulnerability.
- Taking into account other agencies or professionals who may be involved, consider providing pupil with information about youth counselling and information services / other community support as appropriate.

Finally, do not underestimate the emotional demands of this sort of work or the confusion that might arise from any of your own unresolved issues. Ensure that you

have the opportunity to talk through any form of support that you provide for an individual pupil with a trusted colleague.

Resource Sheet 8 Emotional Distress – Class Management

- Maintain normal routines and care.
- Be prepared to be more tolerant and accepting of children who might be more restless, distractible, irritable, emotionally volatile and or difficult to engage than would usually be the case.
- Where possible, and where this is something that the pupils clearly need, be prepared to deviate from your lesson plan to allow them to talk and ask questions.
- When in discussion with children, do not be afraid of referring to deceased person(s) by name.
- Be honest when answering questions. Do not be afraid of saying that you do not know the answer or that the question is one that is too difficult for you to answer. Taking account of children's needs and backgrounds, give simple, factual information using language and concepts appropriate to the age of the children (avoid using euphemisms).
- Consider setting up a 'questions post box'. Consider how best to follow up questions raised. 📧 Allow children to talk about their feelings including difficult, confusing and complex feelings. Give them the message that it is OK to talk and that their feelings are a normal experience given the situation.
- In the same way, allow younger children to express themselves through their play. They are likely to feel the need to 'work out' difficult and confusing experiences and play gives them the opportunities to act out some of the issues. Adults may feel uncomfortable witnessing children's excitable 'playing out' of what has happened and may feel the need to intervene. Try to be accepting and permissive except where this is clearly unhelpful and / or distressing for other children.
- Allow children to support each other.
- Manage discussion in a calm and reassuring manner. Allow the expression of feeling but try to manage the emotional temperature. Try to help the children to achieve a sense of perspective. Reassure children about anxieties that they may be experiencing.
- Consider setting up a display area for artwork, writing, mementos that the children may wish to contribute.
- Calmly and, where possible, discreetly intervene if it is the case that individual pupils are clearly too distressed to remain in class. Ask if they want to remain in class but in an area away from the main body of children. Make sure that they are supported by a friend. If appropriate, send them with a friend to the School Office / Head of Year / Matron, as appropriate. Inform parents.
- Be aware of other children in your classes who may not be so visible but who nevertheless may be struggling to cope. Make times and opportunities for them to talk. If you continue to have concerns, refer them through the School's pastoral system. Inform parents.

Finally, ensure that you are caring for yourselves.

Resource Sheet 9 Emotional Distress - Signs and Symptoms

A crisis may cause different reactions in different children in different ways. Also, be alert to delayed reactions which may occur some time after the actual incident. Some of the more common reactions include:

Physical:

- Wetting / soiling 'accidents'
- Disturbed sleep, bad dreams, fatigue
- Lack of energy, listlessness
- Headaches, tummy aches, muscle aches
- Change in appetite / weight
- Lowered resistance to illness
- Alcohol / drug abuse

Cognitive:

- Difficulties in concentrating, forgetfulness, increased distractibility
- Loss of previously acquired skills
- Deterioration in standards of work
- Being more accident prone
- Reduced interest in usual activities and interests
- Appearing preoccupied

Emotional / Behavioural:

- Numbness
- Feeling of irritability, anger, aggressive behaviour
- Nervousness, jumpiness, panic feelings
- Raised levels of anxiety, fear of dark / confined spaces
- Feeling overwhelmed or confused
- Feeling insecure / clinging behaviour
- Regression to behaviour of a younger child 📺 Repetitive 'acting out' through play / drawing, etc.
- Crying spells
- Mood swings
- Apathy, hopelessness, depression
- Guilt
- Withdrawal from relationships
- Suicidal thoughts

Where an individual is experiencing:

- persistent and intrusive thoughts, dreams or flashbacks to do with the distressing event;
- avoidance of features associated with the distressing event; and / or
- physical, cognitive, emotional/behavioural symptoms as noted above, for at least 1 month then serious consideration should be given to accessing specialist child mental health services. You will obviously want to discuss this with the family and a referral can be made to CAMHS by the family via their GP, or indeed by the School.

Resource Sheet 10 Internal School Incident Evaluation Form

School Name:	Date of Incident:
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Brief description of Incident	
Incident deemed critical: Yes / No	Police involved: Yes / No
Key actions taken by school:	
Description of any external support accessed:	
What worked well:	
What worked less well:	
How could things have been done better:	
Comment on the School's Critical Incident Plan:	
What actions will you take now:	

Person completing form:

Date: