



Critical Incident Policy
Cockfield CEVC Primary School

WHAT IS A CRITICAL INCIDENT?

Disasters can strike suddenly and without warning. Schools can experience fires, fatal accidents, murder, and suicide, violence by a disturbed person or even terrorist action. Sometimes a crisis grows quickly from what was at first a manageable event, such as an occurrence of COVID or meningitis, into a panic headline situation. This policy sets out guidelines for dealing with such situations at Cockfield School.

Post-Traumatic Stress Disorder is defined by the world Health Organisation and the American Psychiatric Association as a reaction that may follow an event that is outside the range of usual human experience and would be very distressing to almost anyone.

COCKFIELD SCHOOL

CRITICAL INCIDENT MANAGEMENT TEAM

The Cockfield School Critical Incident Management Team (CIMT) is made up of the following personnel:

Headteacher	Trudie Harkin
School Secretary	Denise Webster
Chair of Governors	Dr Norman Kelly
Governor	James Scott

To be amended as necessary.

All members of the CIMT hold a copy of this policy at their home address. A telephone tree system is in place to contact staff. Parents would be informed through the school office, by radio/press, or the school website. If the class/school is on a trip at the time of an incident a contact list for each pupil is held by the class teacher.

CONTINGENCY PLAN

1. Identify the 'critical incident' which may be:
 - a) Serious damage to the school buildings e.g. a fire.
 - b) Serious accidents in school
 - c) Accidents during school trips/visits.
 - d) Traffic accidents involving home to school transport.
 - e) Death of a pupil.
 - f) Infectious illness e.g. meningitis outbreak
 - g) Widespread emergency affecting the area e.g. severe weather
 - h) Catastrophic loss of IT

2. Contact the LEA

3. Dedicated 'phone lines:

For sending out messages School 01284 828287

Person responsible –School Admin Team

For telephoning into school for information

CATEY 01284 827274

This telephone line will be manned during an emergency by a member of staff. In case of school closure the severe weather network will be implemented.

ACTION LIST – WHEN A CRISIS STRIKES

1. **IMMEDIATE ACTION** (within hours)
 - a) **Obtain and collate accurate information about the incident.** It is important that accurate information is passed on when alerting people to an incident. Setting people on a course of action which later turns out to be wrong can be positively harmful. The process of gathering information will be on-going throughout the incident and keeping a record of this will be important (see below).

- b) Inform the LEA** if appropriate and decide which, if any, of the LEA services that can be called upon should be involved. The Chair of Governors will be alerted to the situation as soon as possible.
- c) Retrieve the existing contingency plan** and use as a first point of reference.
- d) Call together the CIMT.** The membership of this team will be altered according to circumstances.
- e) Draw up an incident action plan** based on the contingency plan.
- f) Establish a communications room and dedicated 'phone line** as identified in the contingency plan.
- g) Start the Incident Log and record keeping procedures.** This is important in the management of an evolving incident and vital in any subsequent review of how the incident was handled. Later enquiries or court cases can depend on the accurate recording and availability of information. It is essential to have an up to date record of:
- what action has been taken
 - what has been said
 - the people who have been informed
 - which people have attended (as visitors, helpers etc.)
- h) Contact the families of children involved.** It is important to keep a log of which families have been contacted and by whom so that no family is omitted or contacted twice by different persons. If necessary seek advice about how to do this as sensitively as possible from professional sources.
- i) Arrange to inform other parents** who although not directly involved may be concerned. A brief pre-prepared note may be useful. More detailed information can be provided at a later date if appropriate.
- j) Inform teaching and support staff** who, because of their close contact with pupils, will need to be given full and accurate information. They will need to be briefed about what can be appropriately discussed with pupils. Staff should be advised that enquiries from the media must be directed to the headteacher.

- k) **Inform pupils** including those not directly involved. There may be a need to give up –dated information as a situation develops.
- l) **Contact appropriate support services.** The Area Education Manager will be able to advise about whether other support services should be involved. He may be able to undertake this on behalf of the CIMT.
- m) **Respond to / inform media.** The press and other media can have a considerable impact on an incident. A good working relationship with the media can be very helpful in providing accurate information to the public.
- n) **Inform associated schools** which could be directly affected by the incident, not least because they may have on their roll siblings of pupils involved.
- o) **In the case of COVID refer to the latest Suffolk County Council Referral Poster detailing action needed. See appendix.**

2. **SHORT TERM** (within hours or days)

Hold to normal routine if possible in order to minimise the anxiety in the lives of children, in particular, and ensure some security.

Arrange a de-briefing for staff and pupils involved in the incident.

This will a. clarify what has happened

- b. allow for a sharing of reactions
- c. reassure the participants that such reactions are normal
- d. mobilise resources.

Develop a support plan for handling the feelings and reactions of people. The advice and assistance of specialist staff will be sought where appropriate.

Release a more detailed press statement. Where relevant more detailed and up to date information will be issued to the media bodies that were contacted in the first instance. The County Press Office will be consulted if necessary.

In the case of COVID, the Head teacher will follow the latest Government guidelines regarding isolation and testing.

3. **MEDIUM TERM** (within days or weeks)

Continue to provide updates on facts for staff, parents and the media for as long as necessary.

Monitor the effects on pupils and adults and organise support for those needing it. Put the support plan into action and if other agencies have taken on the task ensure that it is happening.

Prepare for involvement in funerals, memorial services etc.

There are many different religious and cultural views about the participation of young people in funeral rites. Cockfield School wishes to respect the views and customs as well as the wishes of the children and parents. It is widely acknowledged that most children come to terms with their grief more quickly if they say farewell formally. Therefore, survivors will be encouraged and enabled to attend the funerals and/or memorial services of those who died and the parents of those who died will be encouraged to allow it.

4. **LONGER TERM**

Continue to be aware of people's state of mind as things return to normal and be aware of those who are vulnerable and watch out for continuing or emerging symptoms. New staff and staff unfamiliar to vulnerable pupils will need briefing about the situation.

Prepare for anniversaries

As anniversaries are likely to be sensitive and difficult times the occasion may be marked with something positive. The views of parents of any pupils involved in any tragedy will need to be taken into account.

Be aware of the effects of legal procedures

As enquiries, court cases etc. can be rather protracted affairs the headteacher will need to be aware of these proceedings and the possible effects on those involved.

Provide support as the facts progressively emerge and change

The understanding of an event can change as information emerges. Strong feelings of guilt may develop and support may be needed for these people.

Review procedures in the light of experience.

USEFUL CONTACTS

CONTACT	NAME	PHONE
Emergency Officer	Ben Copeman	07540 672832
Severe Weather	Jan Scott	07920 466310
Chair of Governors	Norman Kelly	01284 828904
Vice Chair of Governors	Rev Sharon Potter	01284 828599
Educational Psychologist	Mrs N Micklejohn	01284 352165
Local Police (Sudbury)	PCSO J Barrett	01284 774340
Fire Service Enquiries		01473 588888
West Suffolk Hospital	(Accident and Emergency)	01284 713333
S C C Transport Department	Mr Trevor Whiting	01473-584637 (0800 – 1700 hrs) Mob:07841939704
Churchwardens of Cockfield Church	Dave Smith Norman Kelly	01284 828239 01284 828904
Bury Free Press		01284 757845
East Anglian Daily Times	News Desk	01473 324732
Radio Suffolk		01473 340707
SGR / Heart		01603 630621
School Nurse		01284 775077
Thurston Upper School		01359 230885

RECORD OF INFORMATION GIVEN OUT

DATE	PERSON or ORGANISATION TO WHOM GIVEN	BRIEF SUMMARY OF INFORMATION (More detail can be placed on the Incident File)

Signed _____ Headteacher

Signed _____ Chair of Governors

Signed _____ Chair of Committee

Date _____

School Closure Plan

At all times, the policy is to attempt to keep the school open. However, consideration regarding staff journeys to school, the safety of the site and pupil supervision will need to take place.

A decision about school closure would take place as early as possible in order that communication systems be triggered effectively and efficiently.

6am – **TH** to speak with **SC** regarding conditions of the school site and a decision made based upon this.

TH will then phone **AP; DW, and County** – Ben Copeman – **07920 466310**

TH to update website & call Chair of Gov’s **NK JF, SC, CL.**

AP will phone **TA’s KI AK KF LDC JH, DG**

DW will phone; **Lynn. LC** will phone **her staff**

DW will phone; **Catey, MDSAs & other members of staff**

Please ensure that you **ALL** have the relevant contact details that would be necessary in these circumstances. If you change contact details - esp. mobiles - please ensure that you inform the relevant people.