

St Mary Magdalen's Catholic Primary School



Critical Incident Policy

Governors' Committee Responsible:	Finance & Resources
Status:	Non-statutory
Review Cycle:	Every two years
Date Written/Last Review:	3 June 2020
Date of Next Review:	June 2022

MISSION STATEMENT

We are a Roman Catholic community, placing God at the centre of our lives. Christian values permeate every aspect of the school day. As a small friendly school, we aim to produce the warmth and intimacy of the family. We recognise each individual as special and loved by God, caring for one another and fostering love, trust and respect. When mistakes are made we recognise them as opportunities for learning and consequent reconciliation.

We aim to help all children fulfil their potential. We have high expectations of the children; we want them to do their best socially, personally, academically and spiritually.

We recognise each child's full entitlement to education. We value children's uniqueness and endeavour to nurture their potential. We strive to promote in them a sense of personal worth and self-confidence, as well as an awareness of their responsibilities to self and others.

Handling crises is a normal part of school life. Some incidents however are of a more critical and overwhelming character in which pupils, staff and parents/carers may experience acute or prolonged distress. We are aware that nationally schools have faced a wide range of crises including:

- fatal road traffic accidents;
- serious injuries or death of pupil/staff member/parent/carers;
- the consequence of terrorist or criminal activity;
- arson attacks;
- meningitis death.

The aim of this policy is to establish correct procedures to follow in the event of a critical incident at St. Mary Magdalen's Catholic Primary School and to lessen the effect of such a critical incident on the children, staff and parents/carers at our school. It is anticipated that by adopting the procedures outlined in this policy we will provide a more secure environment for everyone associated with the school. Our policy thus includes:

- our planned response to the effect of a critical incident;
- guidance and reference during such an event;
- a contact list of appropriate agencies and personnel.

WHAT IS A CRITICAL INCIDENT?

A critical incident is one which arises suddenly. Critical incidents may occur in school or out of school, but both types will have a major impact on staff and children.

Examples of in-school critical incidents:

- a serious accident to a child or adult;
- the death of a pupil or member of staff through natural causes, such as an illness;
- violence or assault within school;
- a school fire or explosion;
- dangerous substance leak/spill;
- destruction of part of the school building;
- abduction of a pupil/teacher;
- a pupil or pupils absconding;
- an illness such as meningitis within the school or the local community.
- response to COVID-19 or similar viral or bacterial epidemic or pandemic

Examples of out-of-school critical incidents:

- road, sea or air traffic accident involving pupils and staff;
- natural disaster in the community;
- a traffic accident involving a pupil or staff member;
- an accident to a pupil or staff member while out of school on a visit or swimming etc;
- death or injuries on a school journey;
- tragedies involving children from many schools, eg the Manchester Arena bombing, the Grenfell Tower fire, etc;
- civil disturbances and terrorism;
- dangerous substance leak/spill;
- fire;

- the experience of wars or atrocities by children joining our school, having been uprooted from their own countries.

PRACTICE WITHIN SCHOOL

School related critical incidents will be managed by:

- the school Critical Incident Management Team (CIMT);
- class teachers;
- specialist agencies;
- LA Emergency Planning Officer Team.

ROLE OF THE CIMT

This consists of the senior management team, school Administrative Officer, Premises Manager and Chair of Governors. This team ensures:

- that school and LA procedures are followed;
- lines of communication are kept open;
- that children and/or adults are supervised.

The overall coordination and management of the incident should be handled by the most senior staff member available.

ROLE OF THE CLASS TEACHER

We acknowledge that the Class Teacher has an important role to play in managing critical incidents and will be the best person to deal with the pupils in his/her class.

ROLE OF THE SPECIALIST AGENCIES

The main role of specialist agencies should be one of guidance, support and empowerment. Such agencies are also best placed to give aid to pupils who cannot be helped by the teachers within the school.

ROLE OF ALL SCHOOL STAFF

All staff should remember that good communication is key to the handling of such incidents. Staff should endeavour to act in a calm manner, within the given procedures, despite how shocking and disorientating an incident may be.

ROLE OF THE LA EMERGENCY RESPONSE TEAM

The role of this team is to provide 24-hour all year response to emergencies. This team will contact the school and issue instructions in the event of major local emergencies.

ROLE OF THE DIRECTOR OF EDUCATION

The Director of Education should:

- advise the Public Relations Unit so that appropriate assistance is made to the school;

- ensure that the appropriate officers, including Health & Safety, are advised of the crisis so that the best possible level of support can be made immediately available, as appropriate;
- ensure that those agencies or services that are skilled in offering counselling are alerted to the crisis so that support is available as soon as seen to be appropriate.

In determining the timing of the above response by the Local Authority, the Director of Education will be guided by the Headteacher, making certain that the support offered is timed to acknowledge the school's own response to the tragedy.

CRITICAL INCIDENT MANAGEMENT PLAN

Issues to be considered during an incident:

- the Headteacher or CIMT must be informed of any critical incident as soon as possible;
- as soon as an incident is confirmed, the management team will meet to decide strategies;
- the rest of the staff will be informed as soon as possible, preferably at a specially convened staff meeting;
- all staff should share the same information;
- pupils will be told information simply and sensitively, without fabrication, preferably in small group situations;
- the school will try, as far as possible, to keep to the normal routine.

ACTION PLAN

Differentiate between a major or minor incident. Major incidents require the following procedures:

- set up a communication network;
- inform immediately the Chair of Governors, Chief Education Officer, diocesan officers and any other appropriate officers;
- collect, record and convey as much accurate information as possible;
- identify at least two telephonists:
 - a) school main phone for incoming calls;
 - b) school mobile phone for outgoing information/staff use.
- reception area to be used for enquiries;
- use the up to date list of pupils' next of kin (record files) and contact parents/carers of affected children;
- record all actions;
- Headteacher to act as 'Press Officer';
- do not allow press/television on school premises;

ACTION PLAN TIMING

Obtain factual information at the start	Within hours
Senior staff meeting with support personnel	Within hours
Advise Director of Education and Diocesan Officer	Within hours
Contact families	Immediately
Call a staff meeting to give information	Same day if possible
Inform pupils in small groups	Same day if possible
Arrange a debriefing meeting for staff involved	Same day if possible

Arrange debriefing for pupil directly involved	Same day if possible
Identify high risk pupils and staff	Following day
Promote discussion in classes	Following days and weeks
Identify the need for group or individual treatment	Over days and weeks
Organise counselling	As required
Mark anniversary (sensitively)	Annually

EXAMPLES OF POSSIBLE CRITICAL INCIDENTS AND HOW TO RESPOND

Incident <i>(Examples – not an exhaustive list)</i>	Raising Alarm	Person Responsible	Action
Violence or assault within school	Panic alarm 999	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • first adult present 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • to ensure safety in the immediate area • emergency first aid • cooperate with Police
A school fire or explosion	Fire alarm 999	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • first person present at nearest call point • Administrative Officer 999 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • emergency evacuation procedures: to onsite assembly points: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> - KS1 back playground - KS2 front playground to off-site assembly point: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> - Christ's School Queens Road, Richmond Surrey TW10 6HW
Dangerous substance leak/spill (unsafe to remain on site)	Fire Alarm 999	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • first person present at nearest call point • Administrative Officer 999 • CIMT to contact Parish Priest, LA, governors & diocese • pupil and staff contact details needed: school held list: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> - Administrative Officer off-site list: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> - Parish Priest 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • emergency evacuation procedures to off-site assembly point: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> - Christ's School • contact parents/carers • supervise pupils until collected by parents/carers • ascertain when it is safe to return to school • inform parents/carers, staff, governors
A visitor having a heart attack	999 Call school-based first aider	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • first person present 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • emergency first aid response • ensure any children present are removed and reassured • contact next of kin if known

			<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • prepare for arrival of emergency services • counselling as necessary
Death or injury on a school journey	999	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • nearest adult • pupil and staff contact details needed – held by party leader • CIMT to contact parents/carers, etc 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • emergency first aid • accompanying adult/child to hospital (with emergency medical details) • contact next of kin • contact school, governors and LA <p>If necessary:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • contact all parents/carers • arrange to return party to school • contact media office • arrange counselling

The above examples illustrate different types of critical incidents requiring a range of action.

Following all critical incidents contact will be made with the relevant specialist agencies to provide members of the school community with appropriate support, counselling etc.

CONTACTS LIST: SUPPORT AGENCIES AND PERSONNEL

Emergency Services	Ambulance/Fire/Police	999
Parish Priest	Fr Adrian McKenna-Whyte	07966 460354/020 8876 1326 mortlake@rcaos.co.uk
LA Facilities Management	FM Helpdesk (24 hours)	020 8891 7007 fmhelpdesk@richmondandwandsworth.gov.uk
Governing Board (cascade)	Anna Brown, Chair of Governors	07950 021042/020 8878 3396 annabrown@hotmail.com
Education Commission	Dr Simon Hughes, Director of Education	01689 829331 educationdirector@rcaos.org.uk
LA H&S Officer	Lorna Mansell Head of Occupational Health, Safety & Wellbeing	020 8547 5187 lorna.mansell@kingston.gov.uk
School Nurse	Emily Kelly Richmond School Health Service, St Johns Health Centre, Oak Lane Health Centre, Twickenham TW1 3PA	020 8917 4220/07795 283727 emily.kelly3@nhs.net
Education Welfare Officer	Julie Miller	020 8891 7443/07920 362537 julie.miller@achievingforchildren.org.uk
Educational Psychologist	Zita Nagy	020 8487 5464 zita.nagy@achievingforchildren.org.uk
LA Single Point of Access (SPA)		020 8547 5008 (Mon-Thu 0800-1715, Fri 0800-1700) 020 8770 5000 (out of hours) spa@richmond.gov.uk
Ionising Radiation Emergencies	The Royal Marsden Hospital Stanger Science & Environment (leak spillage)	020 7352 8171 020 7902 6100
LA Press Office	Elinor Firth, Head of Communications	020 8487 5182/07877 148372 (out of hours) 020 8487 5159 elinor.firth@richmondandwandsworth.gov.uk
Richmond Park Academy	Nabila Jiwa, Headteacher	020 8876 8891 pa@richmondparkacademy.org

Please also refer to the following school policies:

- Data Protection Policy
- Health & Safety Policy
- Safeguarding and Child Protection Policy
- School Behaviour Policy
- Special Educational Needs & Disability Policy