St Edmundsbury and Ipswich
Diocesan Multi Academy Trust

Long Melford CE Primary School

Critical Incident Policy

Prepared By	*Amanda Woolmer - Headteacher*
Approved by the Committee/Governing body	*LGB – Long Melford CE Primary School*
Signature of Chair of Governors	
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CRITICAL INCIDENT POLICY

1. INTRODUCTION

A critical incident is one that triggers a real, perceived or possible threat to a member or members of the school community, school property or the school's reputation and credibility.

A critical incident is managed best when:
- Quick and efficient action ensures it does not escalate into a crisis
- The impact on the school community is kept to a minimum
- The dangers have been anticipated and action planned to manage it
- The Critical Incident Management Team is in control of the situation
- A complete emergency contact list is maintained and is readily available

Incidents may be personnel related (e.g. injury, illness, accident, either on school premises or on a school-arranged trip away from school premises), or premises related (e.g. material damage through fire, collapse, adverse weather, criminal or accidental damage). It is important to deal quickly and efficiently with the practicalities of an incident, and also to recognise the traumatic effect that it can have on the people involved, both children and adults.

Some incidents are completely avoidable if foresight has been exercised, potential risks identified and evaluated and preventative measures put in place.

This policy should be read in conjunction with the MAT Business Continuity Plan.

2. STAFF AWARENESS

Both teaching and non-teaching staff in school will be kept informed of arrangements for dealing with critical incidents, including who to contact in case of emergency. Managing critical incidents will be dealt with on a regular basis through staff meetings.

This policy provides details of the Critical Management Incident Team; on guidance on coping with a traumatic situation, in accordance with MAT guidelines. There is also a set of appendices containing forms, checklists and emergency telephone numbers.

The members of the Critical Management Incident Team (CIMT) are:

Headteacher – HT
Head of School - HoS
Chair of Governors – CG
School Office Administrator- SOA
Vice Chair of Governors - VCG
Governor responsible for Health and Safety – GHS

The CIMT are responsible for:

At the planning stage
Preparing a contingency plan
Updating existing policies
Arranging staff briefings and training
Preparing contact lists and making them readily available
Identifying individuals to perform specific tasks

At the incident stage
Communication and record keeping
Information and briefings
Liaison with helpers and visitors
Press and media liaison
Arranging support for individuals

3. COMMUNICATIONS

The school e-mail address is: office@longmelfordprimaryschool.co.uk

The Reception offices will be used as a communications centre.

The school Hall or Staffroom will, if necessary, be dedicated as a quiet space for parents (depending on the number of parents being supported).

4. RESPONSIBILITY FOR TASKS

In the event of a critical incident, the responsibility for specific tasks will be adopted as follows:

Obtaining factual information at the start of the crisis	HT/HoS, SOA
Contacting families	SOA
Briefing staff	HT
Informing pupils	HT, CG
Dealing with the media	HT, CG
Arranging support for pupils and staff involved	HT, CG

Trained Paediatric First Aiders are: Mrs Good, Mr Aitken, Mrs Mason, Mrs Dalziel, Mrs Aitken, Mrs Allen, Mrs Wilkinson
Trained First Aiders are: All other staff.

5. WHEN A CRISIS OCCURS – ACTIONS TO TAKE (See Appendix 3)

IMMEDIATE ACTION (Within hours)

- Obtain and collate accurate information about the incident, ensuring that record-keeping is on-going — HT/HoS/SOA
- Assess the severity of the incident and, if necessary, inform the MAT — HT
- Inform the Chair of Governors/Vice Chair — SOA
- Inform other members of the CIMT — SOA

6. DRAW UP AN INCIDENT ACTION PLAN

Start the Incident Log and record keeping procedures (see Appendix 4) stipulating:

- What action has been taken
- What has been said
- Details of people informed
- Details of people who have attended (e.g. helpers)

7. CONTACT

Contacts required:
- Families of children involved
- Arrange to inform other parents
- Inform teaching and support staff
- Inform pupils
- Contact appropriate support services (possibly delegate to MAT)
- Respond to/inform media
- Inform associated schools

SHORT TERM (Within hours or days)

Keep to normal routine as far as possible to ensure some security in the lives of the children, especially at a time of crisis.

Arrange a debriefing for staff and pupils involved in the incident to:
- Clarify what happened
- Allow for a sharing of reactions
- Reassure the participants that such reactions are not abnormal
- Mobilise resources

Develop a support plan for handling feelings and reactions of people. If necessary, call on professionals.

Release a more detailed press statement. The school will refer to and seek advice from the Diocesan Press Officer.

MEDIUM TERM (Within days or weeks)

- Continue to provide updates on facts
- Monitor the effects on pupils and adults and organise support for those needing it
- Prepare for involvement in funerals, memorial services, etc
- Prepare strategies for re-entry into school

LONGER TERM

Continue to be aware of people's state of mind. As things return to normal, it is important to continue to be aware of those who are vulnerable and be observant for continuing or emerging symptoms.

8. PREPARE FOR ANNIVERSARIES

Anniversaries are likely to be sensitive and difficult times. Marking an anniversary with something positive may be more helpful than allowing it to pass without drawing attention to it. The views of parents of any pupils who had been involved in the tragedy, or who had lost their lives, need to be taken into account.

Be aware of the effect of legal procedures.

Provide support for individuals as the facts progressively emerge and change.

Review procedures.

9. LOCAL AUTHORITY SERVICES

The range of services which can be called upon in an emergency are:

- Education Department services, including Educational Psychology, Transport, Advisory Support
- Public relations, particularly with regard to contact with the media
- Legal advice
- Architectural support in the event of a fire, explosion or serious building problem
- Health and Safety advice
- Insurance advice
-

County Emergency Plans Team in respect of a significant emergency. This team can be available for large-scale support from County Departments, the District and Borough Councils, Voluntary Agencies and a number of other specialist organisations, and is experienced in co-ordination with the emergency services.

The Police will be involved in certain incidents as part of their normal function. In such cases, the Police will normally contact the County Emergency Plans Officer.

MAT staff are likely to be called upon to respond to critical incidents and will have access to an extensive list of contact names and telephone numbers.

10. CO-ORDINATION BY MAT

Points of Contact

Co-ordination of MAT activities will be carried out by the MAT's senior staff. These staff will liaise closely with the MAT Director of Education or the Deputy Director of Education.

The MAT CEO / Director of Education should be the first point of contact in the MAT in the event of an emergency.

Diary and Record Keeping

The CIMT will ensure they are able to clear their own diaries as much as possible and focus on the developing emergency. They will ensure that records are kept of events that occur and actions that are taken.

Large Scale Incidents

For large scale incidents the County Emergency Plans Officer will have been notified. The Chief Executive will call together a Crisis Management Team to consider how to manage the MAT and Local Authority response to the incident and the assistance that MAT/LA departments can offer.

THE THREE PHASES OF EMERGENCY

- PHASE 1 – IMMEDIATE RESPONSE (within hours). Notification is first received and initial contact between the LA and school established. As much information as possible

about the incident is obtained from the source. An initial assessment is made of the gravity of the incident and what other agencies need to be involved.
- PHASE 2 – SHORT TERM RESPONSE (within hours or days). Involvement of other agencies. A team of personnel is established to deal with the situation at school.
- PHASE 3 – LONG TERM RESPONSE. Longer term actions about, for example, insurance, counselling and building needs will be taken.

IMMEDIATE RESPONSE

Information about an emergency will come either:
- From the school emergency contacts; OR
- From some other source such as the Emergency Plans Officer (particularly where the Police are involved) or the Press Office

Initial Action

a) INFORMATION RECEIVED FROM SCHOOL EMERGENCY CONTACT
- It will be the responsibility of the school to determine the gravity of the emergency and whether or not the MAT needs to be informed as a priority
- If considered serious enough, the school will contact the MAT CEO or other senior member of the MAT staff. Initial information about the incident will then be shared.

b) INFORMATION RECEIVED FROM OTHER SOURCES
- The appropriate the MAT will be contacted in the first instance. At this stage there may not be sufficient information actually to determine which school is involved, and further investigations may be required.
- The MAT will contact the school in order to establish initial information about the incident and to assess seriousness.

ESTABLISHING DETAILS

Once the school and the MAT are in contact it is important to establish as much of the detail as possible to determine what other advice and/or support will be necessary. Appendix 5 contains some typical questions, which the MAT could ask in order to make a full assessment of the situation.

ALLOCATION OF TASKS

The MAT will decide whether to allocate tasks to any other area-based staff. The MAT will inform the Director of Education, or the Deputy Director of Education, and also the Press Officer. Decisions will also need to be taken about whether to involve other local services at this stage. Communication with the school during this phase will be between the MAT and a single school-based person. This will help to maintain accuracy of information and interpretation of events and simplify decision-making. Early agreement on the means of communication is essential.

SHORT TERM RESPONSE

There are no time limits on the length of each phase. The main focus will quickly become the school itself as the full impact of the emergency becomes known. School staff, parents, relatives and pupils will all want to be kept up-to-date and the media will be on the scene very quickly. There may be other services at the school, such as police, ambulance and fire, if the incident is school-based. There will be significant pressure on the school as it responds to the demands of the situation and this will be at a time when the trauma felt by its community will be considerable.

AN INCIDENT TEAM

The MAT will discuss with the school whether its Critical Incident Management Team should be augmented. The MAT will be able to assist the school: by providing support in releasing information to the media, to parents and to others; by assisting with arrangements for early counseling within the school and for preparing the school for re-opening.

ALERTING THE COUNTY EMERGENCY PLANS OFFICER

If the emergency is sufficiently serious to warrant a wider response, the MAT Education Manager will need to give early consideration to alerting the County Emergency Plans Officer.

LONGER-TERM RESPONSE

The final phase of the emergency procedure will be to determine what longer-term work needs to be carried out. The issues that will need to be considered as a direct result of the emergency are likely to be:

- Arrangements for keeping parents and pupils informed.
- Counselling of pupils/school and staff/parents in the medium term. The MAT may be able to assist in the provision of counselling services.
- Insurance relating to individuals, buildings and claims generally.
- Legal matters, for example relating to personal loss, injury or claims by individuals.
- Health and Safety advice.
- Provision of temporary accommodation if necessary for immediate school needs and permanent accommodation in the longer term.
- Review of policy and practice in the light of further experience. Any written documents produced may require the approval of the MAT Legal Team.
- Memorials and Memorial Services.

11. INVOLVEMENT IN FUNERALS AND SPECIAL SERVICES

Attendance at funerals

There are many different religious and cultural views about the participation of young people in funeral rites. The school will want to respect these views and customs as well as the wishes of parents and the children themselves. The current consensus among mental health professionals is that most children (and adults) come to terms with their grief more quickly if they say farewell formally. Whenever possible, survivors should be encouraged and enabled to attend the funerals of those who died, and the parents of those who died should be encouraged to allow it.

Special assemblies and memorial services

In addition to funerals that families may choose to be private, schools may wish to mark the event with a special assembly or a memorial service. Discussions could be held with staff, governors, parents, pupils and the local community on what form this should take and who should be involved. Planning the ceremony often becomes an important therapeutic act in itself. For many who have been affected by a major incident, a memorial service acts as a way of acknowledging that it is now over. Even so, many staff and pupils may be upset during the service and this needs to be considered in planning, for example, where it is to be held and if access should be given to the media. Some schools have planted special gardens

in memory of pupils or staff members; others have installed seats in the playground in their memory or have commissioned sculptures or paintings.

Appendix 1

USEFUL CONTACTS

CONTACT	NAME	PHONE
Area Director (LA)	Sue Cook	01473 265354
Diocesan Adviser (MAT)	Daniel Jones	01473 298542
Members of CIMT		
Headteacher	Amanda Woolmer	School: 01284 830343 / 01787 379929 Out of hours: 07594280306
Head of School	Matt Vale-Smith	School: 01787 379929 Out of hours: 07745360316
Chair of Governors	Cheryl Morgan	via school
Vice-Chair of Governors	John Watts	via school
School Administrator	Nichola King Jess Brown Louise Gamble	01284 830343
Local Police	PCSO 3307 Grant Skeggs	01284 774340
Fire Service		999
Hospital	West Suffolk	01284 713000
Surgery	Long Melford	01787 378226
High School	Ormiston Sudbury Academy	01787 375131
	Stour Valley Community	01787 279342
Rector	Rev Matthew Lawson	01787 310845

List updated: May 2021

Appendix 2

AN ACTION CHECK LIST FOR SCHOOLS

IMMEDIATE (within hours)

· Obtain and collate accurate information about the incident	
. Inform the MAT	
· Retrieve the existing contingency plan	
· Call together the CIMT	
· Draw up an incident action plan	
· Establish a communications room and dedicated phone	
· Start the Incident Log and record keeping procedures	
· Contact the families of children involved	
· Arrange to inform other parents	
· Inform teaching and support staff	
· Inform pupils	
· Contact appropriate support services	
· Respond to / inform media	
. Inform Associated Schools	

SHORT TERM (within hours or days)

· Hold to normal routine if possible	
· Arrange a debriefing for staff and pupils involved in the incident	
· Develop a plan for handling feelings and reactions of people	
· Release a more detailed press statement (liaising with MAT)	

MEDIUM TERM (within days or weeks)

· Continue to provide updates on facts	

Appendix 3

INCIDENT LOG

DATE	TIME	EVENT	NOTES (e.g. cross ref. to other records)

TELEPHONE LOG

DATE	TIME	CALLER	BRIEF SUMMARY OF CALL

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)

Appendix 4

Handling the Media
Effective use of the media ensures:
public response to the incident is kept in proportion
the impact on the school is kept to a minimum
messages relating to the incident are accurately and quickly relayed, and understood
the school is perceived in a positive light - caring, concerned and in control

The audience includes:
internal: governors, staff, pupils, parents, victim/victim's family, accused/accused's family
external: the media, local residents, lobby groups, authorities

The internal audience will be reached by: briefings, phone calls, personal visits
The external audience will be reached by: press statements, press conferences, interviews

During the Crisis
Act decisively to move from knowledge of the incident to control of the information as quickly as possible
Inform the Critical Incident Team
Assemble all relevant facts (who, what, where, when, how, why)
Channel all information via the spokesman
Withhold sensitive information until next of kin have been informed
Identify the audience and define the message
Tell it accurately and fast - avoid a news vacuum, or people will invent their own
Provide regular updates, even if nothing new has happened
Prepare written statements to distribute after interviews
Establish a news monitoring system

Dealing with the Press
Never ignore a press call, you need to put your view
Don't start the interview until you feel ready
Find out what the reporter knows, what they want from you and their deadline. Get their details and phone them back at an agreed time
Gather the necessary information
DO NOT INCLUDE: information about an individual pupil without parental consent
DO NOT INCLUDE: information about an incident where there may be an internal or police inquiry
DO NOT speak off the record
DO NOT make off the cuff remarks
Prepare a statement
Imagine supplementary questions and plan your response
Keep calm and polite
If necessary stall the reporter with a comment such as: we are looking into the situation

The Statement: aim to show Care, Compassion, Control

Introduction: a statement of personal concern, honesty, commitment
Sorry, regret the incident, concern for all involved, highest standards expected etc

Facts: two or three key pieces of information
details known/not known, full/further investigation, appropriate action taken etc

Conclusion A summary including details of further updates

Appendix 5

RE-ENTRY FOLLOWING A CRISIS

Extract from "Should Crisis Call" - Stirling Council Education Services

When school attendance has been interrupted consideration of return to school should be part of the Crisis Management Contingency Plan.

Strategies for re-entry into school could include:

- liaison with other services and agencies where appropriate regarding re-entry: education officials; police; social work; health board; community services; voluntary agencies; press officer
- liaison with parents; governing body; parent/teacher association; letters to parents giving full information regarding re-entry
- the teacher visiting a student/s at home or in hospital
- maintaining contact between the home and the school and deciding who is the most appropriate person to do this
- checking whether any books or jotters were lost in the incident and making a decision about them
- checking what worries the students (siblings; injured) and the parents have about re-entry and making appropriate arrangements e.g. visit to the child's classroom; to the scene of the incident
- checking worries about examinations and making appropriate arrangements
- consideration of part time attendance
- adjustments to the curriculum
- adaptations to the building or availability of aids if the child is temporarily or seriously disabled
- check on worries about meeting other children and discussing reactions to questions and comments
- establishing a 'quiet place' in school where the student can go to 'get away from it all' if they become particularly upset
- establishing a parents' room where parents can have private support and basic needs such as refreshments
- ensuring that all staff who will come into contact with the students are aware of the expectations of the students, parents and other staff

Appendix 6

QUESTIONS FOR EDUCATION MANAGERS TO ASK

INCIDENTS IN SCHOOL

a) What is the nature of the incident?
b) Has the school been evacuated? If not should pupils leave the premises?
c) Is there information available about the pupils involved?
d) Are there staff with the pupils?
e) Have other Services (e.g. Police, Fire, Ambulance) been called?
f) Is transport required?
g) Do messages need to be sent to parents?
h) If police are involved what are the restrictions on the publication of information?
i) Has the Chair of Governors been informed?
j) Does the school need staff support urgently?
k) Does the building surveyor for the school need to be contacted about, for example:
   - The safety of the building structure;
   - The loss of mains services;
   - The security of the building.
l) Are the media involved? Does the Press Officer need to be informed?
m) Do other children (e.g. siblings at this, or another school; classmates etc.) need to be told?
n) Will arrangements have to be made to close the school or to change its normal pattern of operation?
o) How will you make contact, especially if phone lines are likely to be busy? Do you need to agree a schedule of actions or pre-arrange further contact times as well as the means of contact (e.g. a mobile phone, or ex-directory line or a telephone in adjacent accommodation)?

INCIDENTS OUT OF SCHOOL

A. What is the nature of the incident?
B. Can the school be identified?
C. Can the school be contacted?
D. Who is the appropriate contact in the school?

Particularly relevant if information is received from, for example, the media or the police, rather than the school.

E. How serious is the incident?
F. Are there lists available of pupils and staff?
G. Where has the incident taken place?
H. Are there any Services (e.g. Police, Fire) involved?
I. Do the Suffolk Police know about the incident? Can they help in obtaining information?
J. Can the school party be contacted?
K. Is further assistance needed at the scene of the incident to assist staff or because of injury (or possible injury) to staff?
L. Has the Headteacher/Chairman been informed?
M. Can the parents be contacted? Do messages need to be given to parents?
N. How will further contact be made with the school?
O. Are the media involved? Does the Press Officer need to be informed?
P. Do other children need to be told?

HARTEST CE PRIMARY SCHOOL CRITICAL INCIDENTS

SECTION 2 – OTHER CRISES

ASSAULT ON STAFF

Priority Contacts: Police 999 (or 112) Ambulance 999 (or 112)

Action:

1. Raise the alarm – either by: Fire bell
   Radio
   Use of school alarm system
   Verbally if necessary
2. Send for assistance – send child to say Emergency if appropriate
3. If teaching, send children quickly and quietly to another classroom or to a place of safety.
4. Try to isolate or calm offender, but do not tackle them physically
5. Reception to contact Police and or Ambulance as necessary.

INCIDENT INVOLVING CHILDREN OR STAFF DURING THE SCHOOL DAY

Action:

1. Headteacher to be informed immediately – teaching staff to remain with children.
2. Teacher may evacuate whole class area or isolate a section, e.g. corridor, toilet or immediate area of a broken window.
3. Headteacher to assess situation and respond accordingly which may be evacuation of the whole building, calling the police, other emergency services or organising emergency repairs. Staff at Hartest Pre School to be informed.

BEREAVEMENT (Pupil or Relatives)

Priority Contacts: Parents/Carers All Staff

Action:

1. Establish facts as action could vary dependant upon who has died.
   - (a) Parent/Relative
     - (i) Ensure the pupil is not left alone
     - (ii) Let them talk about their feelings
     - (iii) Make sure there is someone at home before arranging transport home. Ensure that someone accompanies them
     - (iv) Arrange for counselling if appropriate, with the parents' consent
   - (b) Friends
     - (i) Make sure the pupil is not left alone
     - (ii) Let them talk about their feelings
     - (iii) Arrange for counselling if appropriate, with the parents' consent
2. Provide a quiet room for distressed pupils, with adults available.
3. Talk to class or school
4. Maintain normality as far as possible

BEREAVEMENT (Member of Staff or Relative)

Priority Contacts: Next of kin, All other staff, MAT, Diocese

Action

1. Staff - Close Relative
   - (i) Ensure they are not left alone
   - (ii) If appropriate cover class or role
   - (ii) Let them talk about their feelings
   - (iii) Make sure there is someone at home before arranging for transport home. Ensure that someone accompanies them.
2. A current member of staff
   - (i) Inform all other staff
   - (ii) Inform parents of the children
   - (iii) Let the staff talk about their feelings
   - (iv) Close school for the day?
3. Talk to class or school
4. Allow the school to be a central meeting place
5. Maintain normality as far as possible

MISSING PUPIL

Priority Contacts: Police, Parents/Carers

Action

1. Inform head
2. Talk to friends and try to ascertain his/her intended movements
3. Check environmental area pond and road visible from school gates.
4. Make other children safe
5. Send someone with a mobile phone to child's home, to follow their normal route on foot.
6. Inform parent/carer
7. Assign a member of staff, with a mobile phone, to carry out further search of local area if necessary, reporting back on regular basis to school
8. If all else fails inform Police
9. If there is any possibility that the child could have gone with someone else, inform Police as a matter of priority.

TELEPHONED BOMB ALERT

Action:

1. Person receiving a bomb threat to follow these procedures.
   a) Record the exact words of the threat.
   b) Ask these questions:
      Where is the bomb now?
      When is it going to explode?
      What does it look like?
      What kind of bomb is it?
      What will cause it to explode?

Further questions may include: Did you place the bomb? Why? What is your name? What is your address/telephone number?

   c) Record the time the call was completed.
   d) Keep the telephone line open (even though the caller has disengaged).

e) Inform the Head.
f) Call police on 999 emergency number (use mobile if possible), giving all details. Log the time of the call.
g) On Police advice, the Headteacher may decide to evacuate the building.
h) Hartest Pre School staff to be made aware of situation.

2. Headteacher to assess need for evacuation – advice from Area Office and Police.
3. Headteacher to assess safety to return and to either organise return to building or evacuation to large building, e.g. Boxted and Hartest Institute.

POWER CUT

Priority Contacts:

Electricity Supply:	Phone Building repairs for contact 01473 264100
LA Building Repairs helpdesk	01473 264100

Action

1. Advise Office immediately, who will contact the supplier's emergency number
2. If long term, investigate alternative arrangements
3. During school hours the Head, in consultation with the MAT if appropriate, will decide whether normal schooling should continue in classrooms without power.