

ST PAUL'S C of E (VA) PRIMARY
SCHOOL

St Paul's C of E Primary School

Life in all its fullness

Critical Incident policy

Created: January 2019

Reviewed: March 2026

'Life in all its fullness' John 10:10

- *We nurture a passion for wisdom so everyone can realise their full potential*
 - *We respect and love everyone as individuals*
 - *We celebrate and serve our diverse community*

The three core Christian values of wisdom, love and welcoming community, form the basis of work in our school community

Critical Incident Policy

Handling crises and dealing with incidents is part of school life. However, on occasion, schools will experience incidents which by their nature and scale could be referred to as 'critical incidents'.

What do we mean by a critical incident?

"A critical incident may be defined as any sudden and unexpected incident or sequence of events which causes trauma within a school community and which overwhelms the normal coping capacity of that school".

Such incidents will usually require the assistance of the emergency services and /or Cambridgeshire County Council and others.

The incident or event may be unanticipated, imminent or in progress. It may occur on school property, in the local community or out of school.

Examples include:

- Arson/fire or laboratory or gas explosion
- Public health threats such as Pandemic Influenza
- Pupil sudden death or suicide
- Sudden death of a staff member
- Abduction/disappearance
- Floods
- An external security risk or incident requiring the lockdown of the school premises
- An incident which affects access to the school
- An incident off site whilst members of the school community are on a school visit
- A major incident on the school site
- An environmental incident, for example, the release of hazardous substances or severe weather
- Bomb threat or explosion
- A deliberate act of violence, such as the use of a knife or firearm on site
- Civil disturbances and terrorism
- An incident involving an intruder, believed to be armed, on school premises
- Road traffic accidents, involving fatalities within a school community

Good Preventative Practice

Curriculum

At St Paul's we may have to tackle sensitive issues such as death, bereavement and serious injury and should not have to address these issues for the first time following an incident of this nature. The appearance of these issues in the curriculum will mean that pupils will have had some familiarity with them, even if only in the classroom. If young people have had experience of dealing with such subjects, they will not become shrouded in mystery and taboo. As with other sensitive issues it is often helpful if parents and governors can be involved in the planning.

Areas to consider include life, death, bereavement and rites of passage within a multi-cultural and multi-faith framework using well-chosen literature in RE, drama, history, humanities and PSHE and citizenship. When focusing on these issues at St Paul's, we are sensitive to:

- helping teachers deal with these issues and take into account their personal experiences; the pupils' backgrounds, having an informed understanding of the different cultural and religious attitudes to disability, disasters, death, bereavement, mourning and funerals;
- how different religions and cultures interpret the causes of disaster and explain the events;
 - the atmosphere of support and trust amongst our children and the extent to which they would be able to talk and share their feelings.

Pastoral Support

We actively foster strong links between children and class teachers underpinned by a clear school ethos of care, trust and support with strong links with parents / carers thus ensuring management of crises is more effective. As a church school there is an added layer of support as offered by the Diocese.

Behaviour Policy

At St Paul's we have an agreed set of expectations for behaviour, to which children and adults are committed, encompassing all areas of the school and all activities. This is particularly important where activities themselves are potentially dangerous (e.g. sport) or are taking place in areas of the school which might pose a hazard.

During out of school activities codes of behaviour are outlined to parents and participants and a risk assessment is carried out to reduce the potential for serious incidents.

Training

Whole staff training on the prevention, management and response to incidents will raise their awareness and understanding of these issues and what to do. Regular reminders and updates serve to keep the issues live and enhance the sensitivity of staff to preventative measures.

Training in how to deal with aggression, the school's security procedures, health and safety, risk assessment and how to cultivate a sense of self-awareness are offered as required.

School Security

It is always better to prevent incidents occurring. Our school security systems offer effective protection and enable ease of access to the school for children, staff, governors, parents and visitors. To facilitate this, we have:

- entry security to prevent unwelcome visitors entering the school,
- out of hours' security systems to reduce the potential for damage and vandalism,
- 24-hour fire alarm system.

Administrative Practice

In the event of a disaster good administrative and back-up systems assist effective management and ensure a fast response. Practical measures include: -

- a list of all pupils and staff, with next of kin contact details held centrally on Bromcom
- registers are completed promptly at the beginning of each morning and afternoon session. Names of pupils who are late or leave school early are recorded;
- an inventory of equipment is held on site and a second copy retained by the headteacher. The inventory is regularly updated;
- an effective signing in and out procedure for all visitors and volunteers in school;

Planning for Trips and Visits

- Prior to embarking on a school visit we follow the DfE and LA guidance.
- Additional insurance is obtained where required.
- Risk assessments are carried out prior to all trips and visits outside the school grounds.

Health and Safety

All relevant school policies include reference to health and safety procedures and how these relate to the teaching and organisation of the subject.

At St Paul's we follow LA and Diocesan guidelines and advice on the testing and maintenance of equipment, fixtures and fittings. All electrical, PE and firefighting equipment is inspected and tested annually.

Regulations are published for the storage and security of potentially hazardous substances and chemicals.

Regular health and safety checks on buildings and site are conducted by a Health & Safety Committee made up of a governor and two members of the school staff. Potential dangers are reported to the Head.

At least one member of staff is qualified as a first aider.

These guidelines are intended to assist us, as a school, to respond to a critical incident.

Schools will need to consider their response to a situation

- Immediately

- In the medium term
- In the long term as the situation returns to normal

Non Critical Incidents

Some incidents might be non-critical and examples include:

- Death of a person associated with the school
- Lower scale health issues
- External incident requiring enhanced awareness
- Short term loss of staff or infrastructure
- Expected death of a pupil or member of staff

Please note that in the event of being notified of an unexpected death you must notify your Education Adviser as soon as possible as they will initiate the 'Child Death Protocol' to alert relevant colleagues.

Although not critical, schools may still wish to contact their Education Adviser to discuss intended responses. If in doubt it is better to consult with your Education Adviser.

Critical Incident Management Team (CIMT)

This is the group that will lead, in the event of a critical incident. In most schools the CIMT is the

Senior Leadership Team with appropriate co-opted members. This reduces confusion as to who is in charge during an emergency.

The CIMT must include non-teaching staff. Governors may be included if it is felt appropriate and they can contribute in the early stages. Teams should also be aware of substitution arrangements and what to do out of hours or during the school holidays.

Schools must ensure that all staff are aware of the CIMT and its members' roles.

The CIMT members should have clearly identified and agreed roles and responsibilities

These should include:

- Manager to lead on site
- Point of contact for the emergency services, the Local Authority, media, insurance, Chair of Governors and other appropriate outside agencies
- Responsibility for obtaining and collating key information and contacting parents and carers of those involved
- Liaison with staff, pupils and parents
- Managing telephone contacts and individuals coming into the school
- Co-ordinating a record of contacts and logging significant actions

- Maintaining the normal running of the school, if appropriate

People named in the plan with specific responsibilities including the CIMT should provide a 24-hour contact telephone number and arrangements should be made for business continuity during school holidays when named individuals may be away.

Design a plan to meet the needs of your school and its site users and establish a systematic mechanism to implement your plans and advise all parties. In producing a plan, you should identify the range of crises or incidents that could affect your school.

If your school is near to an industrial site, for example, this may include the need to evacuate or contain students and staff at short notice.

- It should be simple and straightforward to operate
- All staff must be familiar with it
- It should list staff mobile telephone numbers and the plan should include cascade arrangements to contact every member of staff.
- It must include contact details for all outside agencies, including out of hours' numbers where appropriate.
- Arrangements should be in place for an independent outgoing phone line.
- It should be appropriately practised and regularly reviewed under a range of on-site and off-site scenarios.
- Information should be updated systematically and communicated to staff.
- A copy must be taken on all school visits along with specific and associated documentation.
- All CIMT are responsible for safely keeping a duplicate copy off-site in the event of a fire/flood.
- The plan should identify alternative facilities should the school become untenable for whatever reason. This facility may be a school, a County Council or community building in the vicinity of the school.
- This facility should, at the very least, provide an administration base as a bare minimum for business continuity. Facilities for teaching may not be available and assistance would be available from the Local Authority.
- Staff with up to date first aid qualifications should be identified.
- Do remember that some incidents may require a lockdown of the school, so you must ensure that the plan does not just focus on evacuation.
- Identify contact/rendezvous points and emergency assembly areas.
- Outline and practise lockdown arrangements/invacuation/return to base.

Outline and practise evacuation arrangements

- The plan should take into account that some incidents may run for days so plan for standby and roster arrangements. Ensure that planning includes a consideration of the medium and long term actions required after the immediate conclusion of an incident.

A resource kit should be prepared in advance and maintained in a “grab pack” for immediate use, such as site plans, contact lists (staff, governors, pupils and external contacts including your education adviser), include key holders (internal and external), emergency contacts, incident recording sheets, stationery. All CIMT hold the mobile phone numbers of those in the team.

Ensure all communication systems and procedures are in place, known to staff and kept up to date.

Critical Incident Management Team

The team will take the lead in an emergency. The structure of the team is as follows:

Headteacher	Helen Darrell
Deputy Headteacher	Natasha Thake, Keri Lennon – Interim Deputy Headteacher
Leadership Team Members	Sarah Day
Chair of Governors	Alex Smith and El DeVaux

Procedures to manage the incident

Appendix 1 – Procedures for responding to a critical incident (including time plan)

Appendix 2 – Phone tree, cascade list

Appendix 3 – Logging of events sheet

Appendix 4 – Evacuation procedures + Blank PEEP

Appendix 5 – Lockdown procedures

Appendix 6 – Drill letter to parents

Appendix 7a – Procedure for handling a bomb threat

Appendix 7b – Bomb threat checklist

Appendix 8 – Hoax threat letter to parents

Appendix 9 – Closing at short notice

Appendix 10 – Closure prior to start of school day + advance letter to parents

Appendix 11 – Emergency procedures for off site visits

Appendix 12 – List of emergency contact numbers