



HYLAND HOUSE SCHOOL

CRITICAL INCIDENT POLICY

Ratified by governors Sep 2023

Review date: Sep 2024

RATIONALE

A critical incident can be defined as a sudden, unexpected and tragic event or sequence of events which causes trauma and confusion within a school community and which overwhelms its normal coping mechanism.

It may affect pupils, staff, parents and governors, may relate directly to the safety of the school community or may involve an incident beyond the school premises.

As a critical incident is likely to have a severe impact upon the school, both in the short and long term, our aim is to ensure that school strategies and procedures are in place to protect the physical and emotional wellbeing of every member of the school community.

EXAMPLES OF CRITICAL INCIDENTS

A critical incident is likely to involve death or serious injury to one or more members of the school community and, or, their families either at school, journeying to or from school, participating in a school related activity, at home or in some other context.

In School:

- The death of a student or member of staff through natural causes
- An accident involving a student or member of staff
- A deliberate act of violence such as knifing or the use of a firearm
- A school fire or an explosion in a laboratory

Out of School:

- Deaths or injuries through accidents
- Suicide
- Civil disturbances

PURPOSE

- ❖ To ensure that swift and appropriate action is taken in the case of the school being made aware that a critical incident has occurred
- ❖ To ensure that the welfare of pupils and staff is paramount
- ❖ To ensure that the school responds in a sensitive, consistent and effective manner which reduces confusion, panic and extreme emotion
- ❖ To have in place a Critical Incident Management Team, the membership of which is known to all relevant parties (see Appendix 1)
- ❖ To have in place a Critical Incident Management Plan, the details of which are familiar to all relevant parties (see Appendix 2)
- ❖ To maintain normality, as far as possible, in parts of the school which are not affected and to restore normality as soon as possible to the parts which are affected
- ❖ To have immediate access to all relevant contact details (including outside agencies)
- ❖ To offer sensitive, non-intrusive support in the short and medium term to all those affected directly or indirectly by the incident

GUIDELINES FOR MANAGING A CRITICAL INCIDENT

- The Headteacher will take charge of the school's response. In the case of the Headteacher being unavailable, the members of the Critical Incident Management Team (CIMT) will take charge. The Headteacher's office will be the central liaison point.
- The CIMT will assess immediate practical needs.

- The CIMT will contact next of kin of those directly involved if required.
- A short simple statement of facts will be prepared by the Headteacher or a member of the Senior Leadership Team.
- All contacts from the media will be dealt with by the Chair of Governors, SEC Media or Headteacher.
- Secretarial staff taking incoming calls will use a statement agreed by the CIMT.
- When necessary, all members of staff will be informed and will be guided in relation to informing pupils.
- The CIMT will determine the involvement of parents if appropriate.
- Short and long term support will be offered to those affected.
- There will be an evaluation of the way in which the incident was dealt with.

APPENDIX 1

MEMBERS OF THE CRITICAL INCIDENT MANAGEMENT TEAM

- Headteacher
- Senior Leadership Team
- School Chaplain
- Chair of Board of Governors or other member in his/her absence
- BUC Education Director

(Other members of staff may be additional members of the CIMT as and when required. One/two members of staff may be asked to take responsibility for the normal running of the school whilst the CIMT is engaged in dealing with the incident.)

APPENDIX 2

CRITICAL INCIDENT MANAGEMENT PLAN

Preventative Strategies

- ✓ Regular review of relevant policies e.g. Health and Safety
- ✓ First Aid training
- ✓ Fire Drills
- ✓ PSHE Programme

Preparation for the Eventuality of a Critical Incident

- ✓ A Critical Incident Report Booklet will be drafted
- ✓ Members of the CIMT will have ready access to pupil, staff and governor contact details
- ✓ Members of the CIMT will have a register of emergency services and relevant outside agencies
- ✓ Relevant members of the secretarial staff will have a register of emergency services and relevant outside agencies
- ✓ In the case of the site having to be evacuated, venues to which pupils will be taken will be identified
- ✓ Opportunities to explore sensitive issues such as tragedy and death will be built into pastoral programmes

In the Event of a Critical Incident:

Initial Response

- The Headteacher should be contacted first (if not available then a member of the Senior Leadership Team)
- The Headteacher (Senior Leadership Team member) should seek to clarify from relevant sources the nature and circumstances of the incident
- The CIMT will meet at the earliest opportunity and agree on procedures for managing the critical incident
- If the incident is on site, health and safety measures will be put in place and the emergency services contacted

Longer Term Issues

- School structures and routines will be re-established
- Supportive strategies for pupils and staff will be implemented
- There will be ongoing contact with parents
- Actions taken will be reviewed and policies amended if appropriate
- The PSHE and pastoral programmes will be reviewed
- Staff will be mindful of anniversaries and other special dates

The use of appropriate outside agencies is crucial to providing long term support as is the use of appropriately trained members of staff who are known to those in need of help.