



WILLASTON PRIMARY ACADEMY

CRITICAL INCIDENT POLICY

Person responsible for the Policy:	<i>Miss Joanna Wright</i>
Date Approved:	<i>*Dec 2023</i>
Approved by:	<i>Mr Aaron Perrin/Governing Body</i>
Date for Review:	<i>Dec 2024</i>

1. Introduction

A Critical Incident may be defined as a single incident or sequence of incidents which:

- are sudden and unexpected
- contain real or imagined threats to a person(s)
- overwhelm usual coping mechanisms
- cause severe disruption
- are traumatic to anyone

The trauma caused by critical incidents challenges individuals mentally, physically, emotionally and spiritually.

2. Critical Incidents affecting Willaston Primary Academy may include:

- The death of a student(s) or member(s) of staff through sudden accident, murder, terminal illness or suicide.
- Serious injury to a pupil or member of staff.
- A serious accident involving students and school personnel on or off school premises.
- Criminal activity such as a violent attack or violent intrusion onto school premises, e.g. involving an armed intruder or a bomb threat.
- Significant damage to school property - fire, flood, building collapse or major vandalism in the school.
- A hostage situation.
- A disaster in the community, e.g. transport accident, terrorism.
- Severe weather (e.g. flooding)
- Public health incidents

3. Developing a Critical Incident Contingency Plan

Although it is not possible to predict when and where a disaster will strike, there is much that staff at Willaston can do to be prepared should the worst happen. This policy is to enable the Senior Leadership Team/Governing Body to put in place the following contingencies within the policy so that in the event of a disaster, on whatever scale, staff can act quickly to cope with the distress and confusion and begin to regain a sense of control.

The experience of schools which have been involved in a critical incident shows that those which have made some preliminary plans are able to act promptly and cope most effectively with the traumatic consequences of a critical incident. These plans would include suggested actions, roles and responsibilities which can be initiated promptly in the event of a critical incident.

Foremost in this planning is the creation of a Critical Incident Leadership Team, based on the Senior Leadership Team and Governing Body, but also including staff who are most suited in terms of their personal and practical skills and their availability and reliability. This team should aim to meet **annually** to review and update the Critical Incident Contingency Plan. The Team will have at least one member whose role it is to co-ordinate and liaise with the media – this is the **Chair of Governors – Mrs Toni Brookshaw**. This needs to be someone other than the Headteacher as they may well be deployed elsewhere.

Willaston's Critical Incident Plan will have prepared procedures and responses that can be put into action in the immediate aftermath of a critical incident. It will need to be flexible enough to cope with a wide range of possible incidents which may occur either on or off site.

Cheshire East provide services in relation to a Critical Incident and should be contacted as soon as possible at:

E-mail: sciesteameast@cheshireeast.gov.uk

Telephone: 01606 275039

The Critical Incident Response Team (CIRT) was established in 1995 in Cheshire to ensure that schools received a co-ordinated response from the local authority when dealing with a critical incident. CIRT has received national recognition for its work, one of its strengths being the multi-agency make up of the team with members from the Educational Psychology Service, Education Welfare Officers, the Youth Service etc. The guidance draws on the experience in Cheshire and other LA's over the past 15 years. It uses the experience of schools which have been through a critical incident.

(See Appendix below – Managing the response to Critical Incidents in Schools, Settings and Services)

4. Critical Incident Leadership Team members

In the event of a Critical Incident, Willaston's Critical Incident Leadership Team will convene. The team consists of:

Headteacher – Mr Aaron Perrin

Deputy Headteacher & Designated Safeguard Lead– Miss Joanna Wright

Chair of Governors – Mrs Toni Brookshaw

Site Manager – Mr Richard Bond

Business Manager Manager – Mrs Debbie Frost

Admin – Mrs Hayley Bottomley & Miss Cheryl Pickston

CEO – Mrs Louise Gohr

4.1. This team will be responsible for:

- Ensuring that parents are kept informed about the situation.
 - Deciding when and how to re-open the school.
 - Organising and providing support for staff, pupils and others who have been directly affected.
 - Providing support for the families of those hurt or bereaved.
 - Ensuring the school effectively cooperates and liaises with the relevant bodies during investigations into critical incidents.
 - Dealing with continued interest from the media.
 - Ensuring the appropriate attendance of school members at funerals.
 - Organising memorial services, including the sending of flowers.
- 4.2. In the event of a critical incident, the critical incident management team will work alongside the headteacher in order to effectively fulfil their role, as outlined above.
- 4.3. Where possible, School office will be allocated to the critical incident management team and any necessary equipment and information will be stored here.
- 4.4. With prior agreement, the local church hall will be used as a reserve off-site location for the critical incident management team when the on-site location is not usable.
- 4.5. The team will collate and retain any records regarding the planning of, and response to, critical incidents, including written records
- 4.6. The team will ensure that each member of staff involved in dealing with a critical incident has recorded all decisions that were made, any communication that was received and all tasks that were carried out.

5. Roles and Responsibilities

5.1. The headteacher is responsible for:

- Ensuring all members of staff are aware of their responsibilities.
- Appointing designated staff members to the critical incident management team.
- Working alongside the critical incident management team to ensure that critical incidents are managed effectively.
- Ensuring that an appropriate ratio of first aiders to pupils is sustained at all times.
- Ensuring that a simple and straightforward, but effective, critical incident management plan is in place.
- Ensuring that all staff members are aware of the school's critical incident management plan and the associated procedures.
- Reviewing the critical incident plan at regular intervals, ensuring that it is kept up-to-date with developments at the school, such as changes to evacuation procedures.
- Keeping a duplicate copy of the critical incident management plan off the school premises in case of a fire, flood or explosion.

- Ensuring that vital information is not lost in the event of a fire, flood or explosion, by keeping a copy of up-to-date pupil and personnel records off the school premises.
- Liaising with the press, or appointing a designated member of staff to do so.
- Reviewing allocations of responsibilities in light of staff absence.
- Compiling an emergency contact list and ensuring that all members of staff hold a copy of this.
- Informing parents and the school community about the critical incident.
- Maintaining the welfare of all staff, pupils and visitors.

5.2. All staff members are responsible for:

- Acting in accordance with this policy at all times.
- Effectively implementing the critical incident management plan, when necessary.
- Maintaining up-to-date records of critical incidents at the school.
- Maintaining their own records of events, as well as keeping copies of notes made by other colleagues.
- Ensuring that they effectively understand the school's critical incident management plan.
- Understanding how to effectively carry out the school's emergency evacuation procedures.
- Understanding their role in the execution of the school's emergency plans, including evacuation procedures and the critical incident management plan.
- Ensuring that pupils are aware of the school's emergency evacuation procedures.
- Ensuring that their own contact details are kept up-to-date on school records.

6. Initial Action

- 6.1. All staff members and pupils are aware of the school's emergency procedures, including those outlined in the school's Evacuation/ Lockdown procedure.
- 6.2. The school's designated emergency assembly points are clearly indicated and known by all staff members and pupils.
- 6.3. The school will carry out a practice drill of the school's evacuation procedure at least once a term, to ensure that pupils and staff members fully understand what is involved in the procedure, and that it is implemented effectively.
- 6.4. In the event of an evacuation, staff members and pupils will be alerted by the alarm
- 6.5. In the event of an external hazard, staff members will be signalled using the lockdown procedure
- 6.6. In the event of an intruder, staff members will be signalled to commence the lockdown procedure by internal phone system or by a designated messenger/ bell ringer.
- 6.7. In the event of severe weather, the procedures outlined in the school's Adverse Weather Policy will be followed.

- 6.8. All staff members are aware of the school's designated first aiders and the locations of first aid boxes within the school.
- 6.9. In the event that first aid or medical treatment is necessary, the procedures outlined in the school's First Aid Policy will be followed.
- 6.10. Staff members are aware of any Personal Emergency Evacuation Plans in place.
- 6.11. All staff members will receive training regarding the school's emergency evacuation procedures, and will be aware of:
 - The appropriate route to take.
 - What assembly point to use in the event of different scenarios.
 - Security arrangements that are in place, such as the locking of the school gates.
 - Access arrangements for the emergency services.

7. Emergencies during education visits

- 7.1. Critical incidents that occur on school trips will be managed in the same way as those that occur on the school premises.
- 7.2. The trip leader is responsible for maintaining written records of any critical incidents that occur whilst on a trip, as well as the action which was taken and by whom.
- 7.3. The trip leader is responsible for reporting the critical incident to the headteacher immediately.
- 7.4. Any critical incident that occurs on a school trip will be communicated to all staff members, ensuring that they are aware of any pupils who may suffer from shock.

8. After a Critical Incident

- 8.1. Following the occurrence of a critical incident, the school's short terms aims include the following:
 - Contacting those directly involved
 - Inform the governing board and the LA
 - Appropriately debriefing the school community
 - Attempting to maintain normal school routines
 - Making appropriate plans for attendance at funerals and memorials
 - Monitoring the wellbeing of staff and pupils, particularly those directly involved in the incident
 - Expressing sympathy to the families of those involved
 - Identifying vulnerable staff and pupils, ensuring they are aware of the support available to them
- 8.2. In the medium term, the school's aims include the following:
 - Making arrangements for pupils involved to return to school

- Arranging alternative teaching, where necessary
 - Providing support to staff members and pupils affected
 - Arranging consultations with educational psychologists, where necessary
 - Clarifying support arrangements and referring pupils for individual help, if appropriate
 - Keeping parents updated and informed
- 8.3. In the longer term, the school's aims include the following:
- Introducing support systems to continuously monitor vulnerable pupils and staff members
 - Discussing how to mark anniversaries
 - Ensuring all staff members, including new staff, are aware of pupils affected by the incident
 - Acting sensitively to pupils' needs
 - Ensuring pupils and staff members know how to obtain further help, including via external support services

9. Post Incident Support

- 9.1. Staff members will strive to create a welcoming atmosphere in which pupils can openly discuss life events, including when critical incidents occur.
- 9.2. Following a critical incident, staff members will consult with the parents of pupils involved regarding how best to support the pupil, ensuring that their needs are taken into account.
- 9.3. Topics including bereavement, stress and safety will be covered as part of the curriculum.
- 9.4. Pupils and staff will be provided with safe areas where they can take a timeout if necessary.
- 9.5. Absences must be authorised for pupils attending events following the incident, including funerals and counselling sessions.
- 9.6. Strategies will be implemented for managing any distress that could be caused by ongoing police enquiries, legal proceedings or media attention.
- 9.7. The critical incident management team will lead debriefing meetings for staff members, pupils and parents, as well as for the wider community where appropriate.
- 9.8. The need for individual or group support will be assessed by **class teachers** in the period following a critical incident.
- 9.9. The school will ensure the demands on pupils and staff additional duties, are appropriate or deferred/cancelled if necessary.
- 9.10. Arrangements will be made for a member of staff to visit those affected, whether at home or at hospital – consent will be sought from parents before visits take place.
- 9.11. Where necessary, the school will liaise with parents regarding a phased return to school for pupils involved in a critical incident.

- 9.12. Information regarding the support being accessed by staff members and pupils will be treated as personal data and processed in line with the school's GDPR Policy, transferring information to external agencies where necessary.

10. Media relations

- 10.1. Where possible, press interest will be managed by the LA's press office.
- 10.2. All information given to the media is done so through a single reliable source.
- 10.3. All statements will be agreed by the **headteacher** and **critical incident management team** before going to the press.
- 10.4. Pupils will not be named during communication with the press unless parental consent has been sought.
- 10.5. Personal information regarding staff members, pupils and visitors will be kept confidential and treated in accordance with the school's Data Protection Policy.
- 10.6. Details of the critical incident which may be harmful to investigations into the incident or which reveal personal information will be treated as confidential.
- 10.7. Staff members will not talk off the record to the media and will refer all enquiries to the headteacher, or Chair of Governors.
- 10.8. The school will strive to liaise and co-operate with the media by answering any queries, as appropriate.
- 10.9. All statements given to the press will be factual.
- 10.10. The school will aim to reassure the public and demonstrate control of the situation, as well as counter any dangerous rumours or gossip.
- 10.11. Child protection and safeguarding measures will be taken when reporting about pupils.
- 10.12. Parental permission will be sought prior to any press interviews with pupils.
- 10.13. Times of press releases will be pre-agreed in order to avoid continuous pressure.
- 10.14. Where appropriate, a pre-prepared statement containing basic information about the school and the school's procedures will be used.
- 10.15. The critical incident management team will ensure that any media access to the site, staff and pupils is controlled.

11. Handling complaints

- 11.1. Willaston Primary Academy recognises that the occurrence of a critical incident is a sensitive subject.
- 11.2. Complaints or concerns regarding the school's critical incident arrangements should be made in accordance with the school's Complaints Policy.
- 11.3. The school will continuously work to address and resolve concerns, ensuring that critical incidents are dealt with in a sensitive and supportive manner



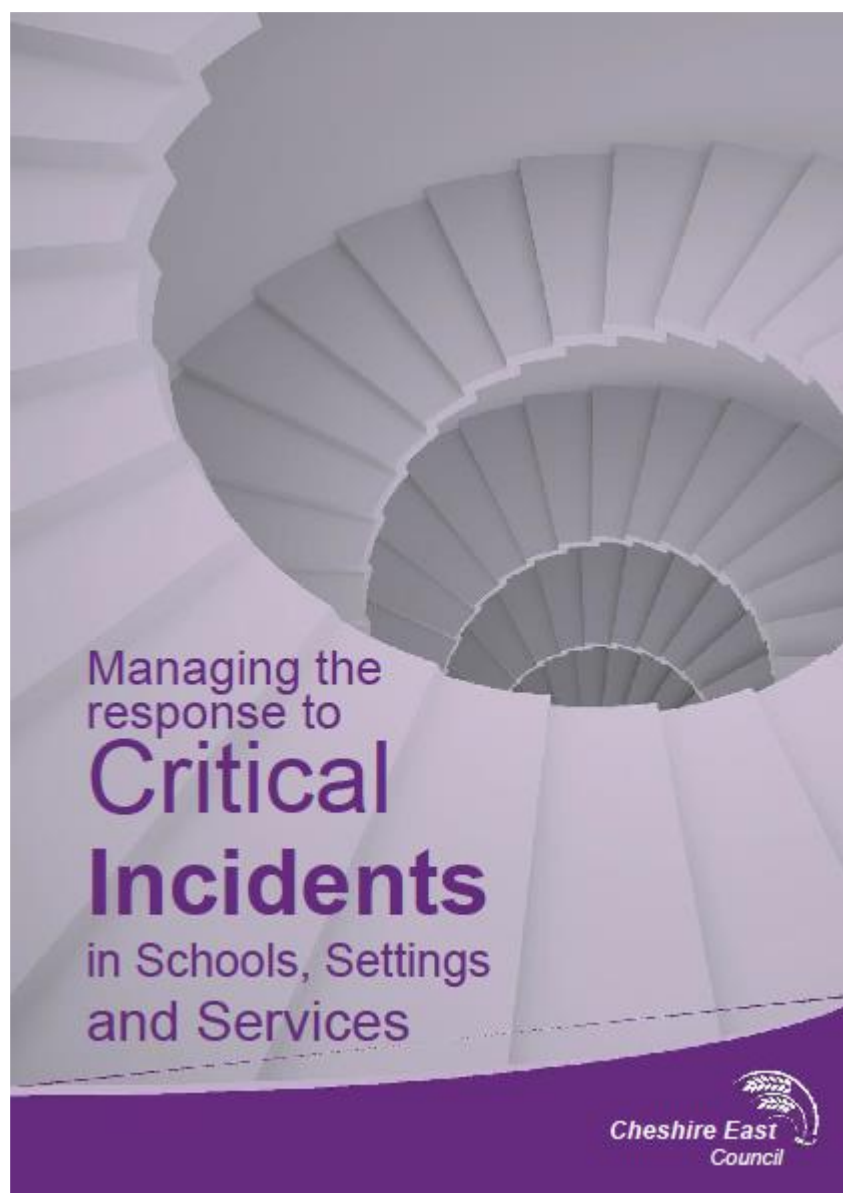
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Initial Action Form

In the event of a critical incident, this form should be completed by whoever received the alert in order to gather as much information as possible.

Name of the person informing about the incident:	
Emergency procedure carried out:	
Alert raised by:	
Details of the incident:	
Number of people involved:	
Details of staff members at the scene:	
People who have been informed:	
Exact location of the incident:	
Number of casualties and injuries:	

Details of any casualties and injuries:	
Action taken so far:	
Assistance needed:	
Form completed by:	
Job role:	



Business Continuity Planning / Emergency Contacts via Local Authority

The following points of contact are provided for Cheshire East schools for urgent/ emergency contacts. Where necessary, liaison will take place with our media/communications leads following discussion with the school around the incident and if necessary, liaison with elected members if felt necessary.

SCiES / Critical Incident:

Personnel

Any staffing/pupil/family critical incident. Contact:

SCiES team: 01606 275039

SCiESteam@cheshireeast.gov.uk

Ofsted /School Improvement

Support for ALL schools relating to Ofsted Inspections. Contact:

Mike Harris: 07909 535529

Fiona Burke Jackson: 07711 231351

Mark Bayley: 07770 322965

HR / Staffing Issues

Level of support will depend on CHES buyback.

Contact:

Katie Dean: 07786 686716

Nuala Hadden: 07885 189279

Potential School Closure:

Public Health/COVID

Ongoing COVID support or health outbreaks health/ concerns

Contact:

Nicola Axford: 07798 925902

or

COVID19@cheshireeast.gov.uk

Potential School Closure:

Buildings: Heating/leaks etc

Levels of support will be determined by school status.

Contact: Facilities Management

Helpdesk: 01270 686888

24Hr/365 via EQUANs

property@cheshireeast.gov.uk

Potential School Closure:

Bad Weather

Potential /actual closure due to bad weather.

Contact:

Schoolgovernance@cheshireast.gov.uk

Potential School Closure: Site intrusion / Terrorist threat

Potential threats will follow Police Advice. Contact Police direct and local authority via:

Contact:

Mark Bayley: 07770 322965

Mike Harris: 07909 535529

Critical Systems: GDPR

Schools should liaise through their DPO but general advice available via ChESS buy-back

Contact:

ChessDPandFOIsupport@cheshireast.gov.uk

Critical Systems: IT

Potential system breach/failure.

Level of support will depend on ChESS buyback.

Schools are advised to contact their Internet Service Provider (ISP) in the first instance.

Schools ICT Helpdesk on:

Media / Communications Support/advice.

This will be determined by level of buyback via CHES. Education point of contact: media@cheshireeast.gov.uk

Senior Staff absence:

There are times when school leaders are absent from school and interim arrangements need to be put in place. In such situations, it is important that the local authority is aware of any changes so that they have up to date points of contact.

Any interim changes of 2 weeks or more, please contact schoolgovernance@cheshireeast.gov.uk in the first instance.

These points of contact will be reviewed and updated on a termly basis

VERSION 1 – Autumn Term: November 2022.