



Critical Incident Policy

Critical Incident Policy

Audience:	School and academy staff, particularly Headteachers and administrative staff Local Governance Committees
Reviewed: Approved: Effective From:	June 2026 14 July 2026 – Board 1 September 2026
Other related policies / procedures	Crofty Health & Safety Arrangements Policy
Owner	Penpol School
Policy / procedure model	Crofty policy: all Crofty schools use this policy Aligned: Policy to be adapted to school where indicated School policy: specific to needs of the school
Date of Next Review	June 2027
Version Number	2026-27 V1

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1. Introduction

- 1.1 The purpose of this document is to:
 - 1.1.1 Outline routines and procedures to reduce the danger inherent in certain situations.
 - 1.1.2 Assist staff in coping if and when tragic incidents occur.

2. Preventive and precautionary measures

- 2.1 Whilst no amount of planning can totally prevent accidents and problems occurring, it is hoped that some can be prevented and the effects on others minimised by taking sensible precautionary measures. It is expected that:
 - 2.1.1 All staff and pupils should be familiar with the school's routines for fire and the evacuation of the school building on hearing the fire alarm.
 - 2.1.2 All staff should be familiar with the routines and procedures for dealing with incidents on or off site (Procedures for off-site incidents - Appendix 2).
 - 2.1.3 All staff and pupils should be familiar with the school's security procedures, that all visitors not wearing a visitor's badge should be questioned and escorted to reception.
 - 2.1.4 All staff organising school trips and visits follow the guidelines and checklist.
 - 2.1.5 All staff should sign in and out of the premises.
 - 2.1.6 All staff are aware of pupils with health problems.

3. A critical incident may be defined as:

- 3.1 An accident leading to a fatality.
- 3.2 Severe injury or severe stress.
- 3.3 Circumstances in which a person or persons might be at serious risk of illness.
- 3.4 Circumstances in which any part, or whole of the school is unable to function as normal due to external influences
- 3.5 Any situation in which the national press or media might be involved.

4. Examples of critical incidents include:

- 4.1 Death of a pupil or member of staff.
- 4.2 Death or serious injury on a school trip.
- 4.3 Epidemic in school or community.
- 4.4 Violent incident in school.
- 4.5 A pupil missing from school or home.
- 4.6 Destruction or major vandalism in school.
- 4.7 A hostage taking.
- 4.8 A transport accident involving school members.
- 4.9 A disaster in the community.
- 4.10 A civil disturbance or terrorism.
- 4.11 In the event of such an incident the priorities of those adults in charge of the school or trip at the time must be to:
 - 4.11.1 Save life.
 - 4.11.2 Minimise personal injury.
 - 4.11.3 Safeguard the interests of pupils and staff.
 - 4.11.4 Minimise loss and to return to normal working quickly.

5. Critical Incident Management Team (CIMT)

- 5.1 A Critical Incident Management Team (CIMT) will comprise of the following:

- 5.1.1 Headteacher – would normally take the lead role although may be appropriate for someone else to take this role.
- 5.1.2 CEO.
- 5.1.3 Director of Education.
- 5.1.4 Estates Manager.
- 5.1.5 Chair of Trustees.
- 5.1.6 Chair of Governors or Vice-Chair of Governors in Chair's absence or in a matter relating to the Chair's own children.

5.2 It is recommended that the CIMT organise staff appropriately to 'shield' the CIMT from being bombarded.

5.3 The CIMT need to remain calm to ensure that the situation is managed as well as possible.

5.4 The school's reaction to a critical incident can be divided into the following categories:

- 5.4.1 Immediate action.
- 5.4.2 Short term action.
- 5.4.3 Next few days and beyond.

6. Critical Incident Contingency Plan

Immediate Action i.e. within hours of incident	Who?
Assess continuing risk and ensure the safety of children and staff	Head
Inform Headteacher of the nature of the incident	All staff
Identify children and adults who may have specific needs	Head/Admin
Contact appropriate Emergency and Support Agencies	Head/Admin
Ensure that emergency services are able to access the situation quickly, without obstruction. Ensure that relevant building & gate keys are available	Head/Admin
Consider school evacuation/school closure	Head
Ensure that school registers/staff & visitor signing in sheets are available	Admin
Collect and record information about the incident	Head
Gather and brief the CIMT, allocate roles and responsibilities	Head
Trigger support from the LA / MAT and other contacts on the emergency list, be clear who will contact whom	Head
Contact families affected, must be done quickly and sensitively. Consistency of information is vital. Possibly invite parents to school for immediate emotional support	Head/Admin
Arrange to reunite children with their parents as soon as possible and practical	Head/Admin
Set up incident management room with dedicated phone line	Head/Admin
Agree a factual statement for all staff but particularly those answering calls	Head
Agree a response for offers of help to the school for those answering calls (Thank them, take details of offer, say we may take them up, we will get back if needed)	Head/Admin
Arrange to inform other parents, may need advice from LA / Solicitors especially if there is the possibility of legal liability. Model letters in 'Remember me' appendices	Head
Inform school staff, caution them about media. Give them a consistent brief (maybe a script) to allow them to handle questions from children and parents	Head
Inform pupils, consider appropriate setting, consistency of information vital allowing for differences in their ability to understand. Exercise care to protect children and adults closely involved	Head/Class Teachers

Deal with the media, very important to seek advice from LA / Trust SLT / NAHT before agreeing to speak or be interviewed. If not possible, then an agreed statement from the CIMT should be read by an agreed spokesperson	Head
Devise a plan to support affected people, most common reactions are denial, distress, guilt, anger, helplessness. CIMT should consider outside professionals to support staff and pupils affected by the incident. Those providing support also need support	Head

Short Term Action (First 24 hours)	Who?
Managing staff, follow up on support for all staff. Staff monitoring should be a priority, particularly members of the CIMT. If a crisis persists over many hours staff become tired and this may affect their decision making abilities	Head
Encourage pupils to talk, either staff members or professional support. Staff will need briefing in appropriate responses. Consider training e.g in bereavement counselling, provide resources for class discussions	Head/Class Teachers

The Next Few Days and Beyond	Who?
Provide further information to parents	Head
Make arrangements for attendance at funerals if appropriate	Head
Keep in touch with the families who have been affected	Head
Discuss how to mark the event in school/setting, e.g. special assembly, memorial (in consultation with the family)	Head
Staff, ongoing monitoring, and support including CIMT, recognising the effects of working at heightened emotional levels, trying to maintain normality	Head
Monitor the vulnerable; the effects can reverberate for years. Brief new members of staff and pupils as to the school's history	Head
Marking anniversaries, events need to be appropriate and sensitively thought through	Head
Legal proceedings may prolong the recovery process for anyone involved in them	All
Evaluate and review school/setting response to incident	Head

School site

School Address	Penpol School
Telephone number	01736 753472
Headteacher & emergency contact details	Chris Chislett Out of School emergency contact -WILLSECURE- 0800 6122140 or 07518610652
Utility supplies locations	Electricity cupboard and heating pump at the front of school. Boiler room at the rear of the school. Water mains at front gate
Internal Hazards	Kitchen
School Key Holders	Chris Chislett Nigel Smith

	Tiffany Pope Nic Stanlake Rebecca Best Paul Hudson
Pre identified place of safety/rest centre (In the event that the school building has been evacuated and pupils and staff are unable to return).	Ellis Park/Hayle Academy/Hayle Tennis Club- based upon dynamic risk assessment of nature of the incident

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Appendix 1

Emergency contacts (checked April 26)

CONTACT	NAME	TELEPHONE
Director of Children, Schools, and Families	Ben Davies	01872 322403 or 0300 1234 100
Emergency Planning Unit		01872 323752 emergencymanagement@cornwall.gov.uk
Chair of Governing Body		
Headteacher	Chris Chislett	
CEO of the CET	Cathryn Andrews	
Director of Education	Tamsin Lamb	
Estates Manager	Steve Eva	07932 248904
Police		999 Camborne Police 101
Fire Brigade		999 Tolvaddon Fire station 08003581999
Ambulance		999
Treliske Hospital		01872 250000
Barncoose Hospital - Minor injuries		01209 318010
Emergency Department at Treliske Hospital		01872 253111/253113
School Nurse Team		01872 324261
Education Psychology Service Central Office		educationalpsychology@cornwall.gov.uk 01579 341132
Education Welfare Service		01872324298 educationwelfare@cornwall.gov.uk
Health and Social Care		0300 1234 131 or 03001231116 01208251300 (weekend and evenings)
Penhaligon's Friends		01209 215889
The Samaritans		08457 909090 or 116123 (Free) 03332020800
Cornwall LA Press Officer		01872 323682
Press and Media contacts	BBC Radio Cornwall	08081001039
	Pirate FM	01209 314400
	Cornish Guardian	01872 271451
	BBC Spotlight	01752 229201
Legal advice	James Twine at Wolferstans	01752 292351
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Appendix 2

Procedures for off-site incidents

Critical Incidents

When faced with a critical incident it is vital for those adults in charge to

KEEP CALM

The adult in charge of the group should

- Save life.
- Minimise personal injury.
- Safeguard the interests of pupils and staff in the group.
- Inform emergency services.
- Inform the Headteacher or their representative.

Injuries or illness

SERIOUS INJURY OR ILLNESS: REQUIRING AN AMBULANCE

Eg: loss of consciousness, fitting, suspected broken bones, any other injury requiring urgent medical attention.

In serious situations the member of staff leading the group should:

- **PHONE 999** and request an ambulance.
- **PHONE SCHOOL** and speak to Head, Deputy, or a senior member of staff to inform of situation.
- Senior member of staff to phone parents/legal guardians

SIGNIFICANT INJURY OR ILLNESS: NOT REQUIRING AN AMBULANCE

Eg: deep cuts, significant bump to head, sprains, stomach upsets

Member of staff leading group should:

- **PHONE SCHOOL** and speak to Head, Deputy, or a senior member of staff to discuss course of action.
- Senior member of staff to phone parents/legal guardians

Member of staff leading group to phone parents only if Head, Deputy, or a senior member of staff cannot be contacted.

MINOR INJURY: TREATMENT BY STAFF

Eg: grazes, small cuts, minor bump to head

- **GROUP LEADERS TO TREAT MINOR INJURIES WHEN APPROPRIATE** using school First aid kit.

Lost Child Procedure

Group leader will:

Ensure staff keep calm and try to prevent the children becoming anxious or worried

- Take an immediate roll call of all children.
- Establish who saw the child last and where and **write this information down**.
- As quickly as practical, conduct a search of the immediate surroundings, but not beyond that.
- Phone 999 and inform the emergency services.
- In an indoor venue alert the security staff.
- Phone school and speak to the Head, Deputy, or a senior member of staff.

Next steps:

- The senior member of staff will inform the parents who make their way to the school. This is advised as the best place, as by the time the parent arrives, the child may have returned to the school.
- Staff will take the remaining children back to school.
- The group leader may be advised by the emergency services to stay at the venue until they arrive.
- Staff must not discuss any incident with the media and will refer all enquiries to the school.

Managing People in Critical Incidents

Critical incidents can be very worrying for all concerned.

Part of managing the incident is to **try to keep everyone as calm as possible**.

Children will be sensitive to what is going on around them. They too may be worried.

Staff caring for the children should...

- **Be focussed on the children's needs.**
 - **NOT discuss the incident in front of them.**
 - **Be honest with the children but also reassure them.**
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- **Parents** will feel angry and fraught. They may want to blame staff and may single out one staff member over others; they may direct their anger at the Headteacher. When dealing with a distraught and angry parent, there should always be two members of staff. One should be the Headteacher and the other should be a senior member of staff.
 - **Staff** will feel worried about the child, especially the responsible teacher or the adult assigned to supervise the child. They may blame themselves and their feelings of anxiety will rise as the length of time the child is missing increases. Staff may be the understandable target of parental anger. The Headteacher needs to ensure that the staff under investigation are not only treated fairly but receive support while feeling vulnerable.