



Critical Incident Policy

2023- 2024

Rationale

Bramhope Primary school seeks to provide a safe and secure environment in which all children learn, develop and grow. Unfortunately, crises or tragedies can occur in any school and can result in significant distress for all individuals involved, as well as for the school as a whole. In writing this policy, we acknowledge that it is not always possible to plan ahead. Pupils and staff could be affected by any number of crises (critical incidents) that occur either in or out of our school such as:

- ♣ the death of a pupil or member of staff through natural causes, such as illness
- ♣ a traffic accident involving a pupil or staff member



- ♣ a deliberate act of violence, such as a knifing or the use of a firearm
- ♣ a school fire or flood
- ♣ allegations or actual incidents of abuse against staff by pupils
- ♣ an arson attack on the school
- ♣ deaths or injuries on school journeys, trips or residential trips
- ♣ tragedies involving children from our school at a public event such as a football match
- ♣ refugee children joining our school, uprooted from their countries and perhaps shocked by wars or atrocities
- ♣ abductions / disappearances
- ♣ incidents such as murder that attract the attention of national and international media over prolonged periods
- ♣ an act of terrorism
- ♣ a disaster in the community

Critical incident: Supporting Staff and pupils

The emotional effects of disasters on children are not always immediately obvious to parents/carers or school staff. We know that at times some children may find it difficult to confide their distress to adults as they know that it will upset them. For some, the distress can last for months, even years, and may additionally affect their academic attainment. Some children may not feel comfortable enough or be able to share their feelings and thoughts in public or with staff. Similarly, because many adults are not comfortable talking about death, bereavement and tragedy, they may unwittingly stop children talking about similar emotional experiences.

At Bramhope Primary School we take children's emotional needs seriously. All staff are committed to providing excellent pastoral care and ensuring children receive the help they require to explore such matters as death in an environment of trust, care and safety. We also have a Pastoral Leader (Mrs Judd) who provides additional support for children and their families and liaises with other agencies. Many staff have completed bereavement training. We recognise the impact such incidents can have on the well-being of staff and parents/carers and encourage all staff to seek counselling/supervision when required. We will do our utmost to support any recovery needed and to work with any agencies as necessary.



Critical incident: Preventative and precautionary measures

Whilst no amount of planning can prevent a crisis occurring, it is hoped that some serious incidents can be prevented by taking sensible precautionary measures.

At Bramhope Primary we expect that:

- ♣ Staff are aware that they should assess associated risks to children before carrying out a curriculum or extra-curricular activity
- ♣ Staff are aware that they are responsible for assessing risks to themselves before undertaking an activity
- ♣ Staff and pupils are familiar with the school's routines for **fire (continuous alarm)** and for the **evacuation** of the school building (as instructed by a member of staff)
- ♣ Staff and pupils are familiar with the routines and procedures for dealing with **invacuation (siren function on the Megaphone)** as detailed in this policy
- ♣ Staff and pupils are familiar with the school's security procedures that all visitors not wearing a visitors' lanyard and sticker should be questioned and escorted to the school reception
- ♣ Staff organising school trips and visits will conduct a pre-visit and complete an Evolve risk assessment to be electronically signed off by the Assistant Head (Vanessa Laws) and Headteacher in advance of the visit
- ♣ Staff will sign in and out of the premises in reception, using their electronic lanyard
- ♣ All staff are aware of pupils with complex medical needs or health problems
- ♣ The Head Teacher is aware of staff with medical needs or health problems
- ♣ Staff who regularly encounter children who have been violent or aggressive receive team teach training and record any incidents on a C50 form. This form will be given to a member of the admin team who will submit it to the Local Authority.

In the event of any critical incident, the priorities of those adults in charge of the school or trip will be to:

- ♣ Save life
- ♣ Minimise personal injury
- ♣ Safeguard the interests of all pupils and staff
- ♣ Minimise loss and to return to normal working as quickly as possible

A list of useful contacts is displayed in the school office to improve the effectiveness of communication during an emergency. All staff will follow any guidance given by the Local Authority as well as any advice given by the emergency services.



Critical incident involving a child

If a serious incident involving a child or children occurs, the staff member who reports the incident must obtain accurate information and relay this to the Head teacher, Deputy Head teacher or Assistant Head in her absence.

If it is confirmed that the school is facing a crisis, the Head Teacher will devise and communicate an action plan in response to the emergency. Initially, the Head Teacher will contact the parent/carer of the child as well as the chair of governors and the CEO. Staff and other parents will be informed as early as possible. **No member of staff or member of the governing body should talk to the media unless previously arranged.** Additionally, all parents/ carers and children will be asked not to talk to the media in the best interests of the children, staff and school as whole. It is expected that Pippa McPherson (Community Engagement and School Marketing) will deal with any request for television, radio or newspaper interviews. All enquiries will be directed to and through Pippa McPherson who will (if required) arrange to have a briefing session with the press. Pupils will be informed of what has happened in a factual but sensitive way in order to avoid any misunderstanding. It may be preferable to do this in classes so that children can ask any questions. **Facts only will be shared and staff will not share any personal comments or speculations.**

Critical incident involving the school building: evacuation

In the unlikely event that the school building is not safe to be used as a place of learning, pupils will evacuate to the playground (in case of fire), or another area as designated by the Head Teacher. Children will not return to the building until all health and safety regulations have been met. We will always put the safety of our pupils and staff first.

If necessary, Parents will be informed that the school has been closed and will be asked to collect their child from a designated point. **No member of staff or member of the governing body should talk to the media unless previously arranged.**

Critical incident involving the school building: invacuation

In the unlikely event that the school is under immediate serious threat by someone or something on the premises (for example a violent individual) **any member of staff** should inform the Head Teacher as quickly as possible that it is a **code 3**. The Head Teacher will respond to the emergency and may initiate a 'lockdown'. **A code 3 will be actioned by using the siren function on the megaphone three times in succession. Two megaphones will be left permanently in the headteacher's office for this purpose.** On hearing a code 3 warning, all staff will remain calm and await instruction. All staff and pupils should remain in their



teaching space and pupils who are in the toilet, or another part of school should return to their classroom. If there is no other instruction, adults should stay with the pupils should be reassured and asked to continue with whatever they were doing. **No staff or pupils should leave their teaching space until told to do so.**

Critical incident: Practising for evacuation and invacuation

To maintain an appropriate level of readiness for a critical event, the Head Teacher will familiarise the school community with this policy and children will practise an unannounced evacuation and a planned invacuation in the Autumn term. Staff will de-brief after each practice and the policy and procures may be changed accordingly.

In the Spring and Summer term, the Head Teacher will initiate an *unannounced* evacuation and an *unplanned* evacuation. Staff will de-brief after each practice and the policy and procures may be changed accordingly.