

St. Theresa's
Catholic Primary School



ST. THERESA'S CATHOLIC PRIMARY SCHOOL

Critical Incidents Policy

"We learn together, we play together, we pray together, we grow together in the love of God"



Validation grid

Title	Critical Incidents Policy
Author	Barbara Costa
Associate Author	
Target Audience	All staff community
Stake holders consulted	Staff and governors
Curriculum / non curricular	Non curricular
Associated Policies / Documents	Educational Visits Policy, Health and Safety, Adverse Weather, Complaints, Supporting Children with Medical Conditions and First Aid, Child Protection and Safeguarding, Invacuation
New Policy or Review of existing policy.	Review
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Headteacher Barbara Costa Barbara Costa

Chair of Governors Fiona Kerin Fiona Kerin

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Statement of Intent

St. Theresa's Catholic School recognises that whilst the safety of pupils, staff members and visitors on the school premises is paramount, it is not always under our control.

In an emergency, staff members will endeavour to take all reasonable actions in order to ensure the safety of all those on site.

The procedures in this policy aim to minimise disruption to the learning environment whilst ensuring the safety of all pupils, staff members and visitors, by responding to critical incidents as quickly and efficiently as possible.

1. Legal Framework

This policy has due regard to all relevant legislation and statutory guidance including, but not limited to, the following:

- Workplace (Health, Safety and Welfare) Regulations 1992
- The Management of Health and Safety at Work Regulations 1999
- Health and Safety at Work etc. Act 1974
- The Regulatory Reform (Fire Safety) Order 2005
- DfE 'Emergency planning and response for education, childcare and children's social care settings'
- DfE 'School and college security'

2. Definitions

For the purpose of this policy, a “**critical incident**” is an emergency which affects pupils, staff, visitors or property and requires immediate responsive action which is beyond that reasonably expected from the school’s own management team.

The risks for a school are to:

- the pupils, staff, parents, governors and visitors
- the buildings, premises and grounds
- the systems and services without which the school cannot function effectively

Critical incidents include, but are not limited to, the following:

- The death of a pupil, staff member or governor
- A serious incident involving a pupil or staff member on, or off, the school premises
- An incident of serious violent crime
- A violent intrusion onto the premises, e.g. a bomb alert
- Extensive damage to school property
- A fire, flood or explosion
- The effects of disasters in the wider community
- A serious safeguarding incident which may attract media and public interest
- Incidents whilst on educational visits
- Epidemics
- Exposure to hazardous substances near, or on, the school premises

3. Roles and Responsibilities

The **Headteacher** is responsible for:

- Being the Incident Manager
- The overall implementation of this policy and ensuring all members of staff are aware of their responsibilities.
- Appointing designated staff members to the critical incident management team.
- The incident management team at St. Theresa’s is: The Executive Headteacher (Barbara Costa), The Head of School (James Troy), the Site Manager (Martin Kryst), the Chair of Governors (Fiona Kerin).

Other members of staff may be involved as appropriate (e.g. Inclusion Leader: Barbara Folan). The Headteacher will be the initial or main point of contact.

- 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.
- Reviewing the critical incident policy 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 policy 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.

The **LA** is responsible for:

- Giving immediate support, guidance and advice to the Incident Manager
- Supplying relevant technical expertise and advice
- Managing the press and the media
- Providing information
- Subsequently supporting the school to recover after the incident

The **Diocese of Westminster** may also offer this or similar support and must be informed of any incident.

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.
- Reporting and recording minor and critical incidents in line with the school's accident reporting procedures.

4. Major elements in drawing up the policy for dealing with critical incidents

It is impossible to predict the exact form or effect of an emergency.

4.1 Checklists of information for responding to a crisis

See Appendix 1 and Appendix 2.

These are also kept off site at the homes of –

Barbara Costa (Headteacher)

Fiona Kerin (Chair of Governors)

- Admin data is backed up weekly to the main server automatically.
- All staff laptops are backed up weekly to the main server automatically.
- Parent/child/staff/finance details and school assessment data is all stored on web based systems.

4.2 Procedures for responding to Critical Incidents

The Incident Manager will take the following actions:

- Call the emergency services and / or other agencies as appropriate and the following information will be given:
 - Exact location of incident
 - Number of casualties
 - Number of injuries
 - Location and phone number of where call is being made
- Where possible, the school will remain open and normal routine will be maintained, or evacuate the premises immediately, if necessary
- First aid will be administered where necessary by the first trained first aider at the scene of the incident
- Receive report of incident and decide this is a critical incident
- Inform the Head of School Improvement (HOSI). The HOSI will contact all services required immediately after receiving notification to ensure support is arranged. A lead Officer will be appointed and the school informed.

HOSI: 02083597725/07961 081977

Business Support and Communications Team: 0208 359 7288

Out of hours: 0208 359 2000

- Contact parents of affected pupils
- Contact Diocese of Westminster Education Service (0207 798 9005)
- Inform the Chair of Governors

- Identify, if necessary, a central liaison point. Whenever possible this should be the school / centre office. Ideally the liaison point should have telephone and wifi/email facilities
- If the incident is off site, the group leader will:
 - Take a copy of the procedures and emergency numbers with them on any off site activity in accordance with the school Educational Visits Policy
 - Account for all party members
 - Call the school

As soon as possible

- Inform pupils and staff
- Prepare letter for parents
- Prepare press statement with guidance and support from LA and Diocese

Longer term

- Arrange meeting of governing body, LA officers and Diocesan officer to discuss the way back to normality.
- Consider plans for counselling support

4.3 Death of pupil or member of staff

- In addition to the above, make safe (if possible) the hazard so others are not harmed or in danger
- Preserve any evidence of the cause of the incident
- Contact parents / carers / next of kin
- Arrange counselling
- Inform the Barnet Health and Safety Manager (see Appendix I)
- Later, inform the Health and Safety Executive (HSE) (by phone) and complete and return RIDDOR form to the Health and Safety Executive within 10 days.

4.4 Serious accidents or illness

- Contact emergency services if necessary
- Contact parent/s
- Contact parish priest
- If a parent is unavailable to meet the pupil at hospital, the accompanying member of staff should act 'in loco parentis', including giving permission for treatment – subject of course to any known parental wishes e.g. Jehovah's Witnesses

- Notify HSE if incident is reportable

4.5 Assaults on staff by parents or members of the public

- Member of staff to contact the police
- Try to identify the assailant but do not detain by force
- Collect and retain names of any witnesses and prepare witness statements
- Notify HSE if incident is reportable
- For further information on how the school would deal with a dangerous person/animal on site, please see the school's Invacuation Policy

4.6 Bomb threats

- Sound alarm
- Call emergency services
- Evacuate building to offsite emergency point – Pure Gym car park
- Confirm with staff and the police that the building is empty
- Contact parents
- Do not re-enter the building without clearance from the emergency services

4.7 Fire Alarm

- Sound alarm
- Call emergency services
- Evacuate building to offsite emergency point – Pure Gym car park
- Confirm with staff and the police that the building is empty
- Contact parents
- Do not re-enter the building without clearance from the emergency services

All staff members will receive training regarding the school's emergency evacuation procedure and will be aware of:

- The appropriate route to take
- What assembly point to use

The school will carry out a practice drill of the school's evacuation (in response to a Fire Alarm procedure) at least once a term.

Staff members will be aware of any Personal Emergency Evacuation Plans (PEEPs) in place.

4.8 Gas Leak

- If a gas leak is suspected, and if it is safe to do so, turn off the supply where? immediately
- Call the National Gas Emergency service 0800 111 999

- If necessary evacuate building to offsite emergency point – Pure Gym car park and contact police
- Confirm with staff and the police that the building is empty
- Contact parents
- Do not re-enter the building without clearance from the emergency services

4.8 Emergency school closure

- The decision to close the school will be made in exceptional circumstances by the Headteacher and the Chair of Governors
- A mobile phone can be used for emergency use away from the building
- Ensure adults are available at home or they can collect the child. If not then the child should remain at school or in a supervised safe place
- Communicate reasons to parents for closure as soon as possible using the school Teachers 2 Parents texting service
- Plan for reopening school and communicating with parents / carers
- In case of radiation fallout keep children inside school until safe to release them

4.9 Managing information

- In the immediate aftermath of an incident or crisis it is possible that the school / centre will be inundated with incoming calls from anxious parents and others – including the media. The Incident Manager should prepare for the eventuality. Staff dealing with these calls should liaise with the Barnet Communications Officer (see 5.2 below) and provide an agreed, factual statement along with a reassurance that appropriate actions are being undertaken. Staff should keep a note of all conversations. A separate dedicated line(s) may be needed for outgoing calls – mobile phones are clearly very suitable.
- The school's texting service (Teachers 2 Parents) will also be used to give information to parents and staff as appropriate.

5. Working with the media

5.1 In the case of a major incident the media will become involved very quickly.

In many situations where the emergency services are involved the police will take the lead on dealing with the media. Reporters may press the school for information, views and comments. Staff and governors are NOT to speak to the media until a statement has been agreed by the Incident Manager.

The media will not go away if you totally ignore them. They will be a bigger problem as they will seek out information themselves, distract staff and disrupt the work of the school. All enquiries should be referred to the Press Office Team.

Contact telephone numbers – Press Office team 020 8359 7299

The Press Office team will allocate a named and dedicated press officer to the school who, amongst other things, will:

- Advise the Incident Manager on news and information management
- Field and respond to media enquiries
- Draft press statements and releases
- Supervise and manage journalists on site where the situation arises

5.2 If the media ‘doorstep’ staff and / or parents the Press Office team should be contacted at the earliest opportunity for advice and support and the journalist should be politely and firmly referred to the Press Office team.

6 Recovery planning

Once an immediate crisis has been addressed, the school (Headteacher and Leadership Team) will set up a recovery team, where this is appropriate, which will be assisted by the LA and the Diocese. Depending on the nature of the incident, the LA or the Diocese may take the lead role.

The range of issues that may need to be addressed in a recovery programme is varied but may include:

- ways of communicating to staff, parents and children
- formal and informal recognition and rituals
- support for staff and pupils, which may include therapeutic help
- support for the Incident Manager and the recovery team
- the curriculum implications – timetabling, staffing etc.
- buildings issues (perhaps in the case of a major fire)
- policies and procedures implications

The LA recommends that an impact assessment is carried out, with the support of council officers, and that a recovery programme is then drawn up.

The strains of leading a school / centre through a critical incident can be very disturbing but may not be apparent until after the crisis has subsided. The support of family, colleagues, governors and LA staff may need to be engaged.

7. Post Incident Support

Staff members will strive to create a welcoming atmosphere in which pupils can openly discuss life events, including when critical incidents occur.

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.

Counselling will be offered to pupils and staff who were involved in, or witnessed, a critical incident.

Topics including bereavement, stress and safety will be covered as part of the curriculum.

Pupils and staff will be provided with safe areas where they can take a timeout if necessary.

Absences will be authorised by the class teacher for pupils attending events following the incident, including funerals and counselling sessions.

Strategies will be implemented for managing any distress that could be caused by ongoing police enquiries, legal proceedings or media attention.

The critical incident management team will lead debriefing meetings for staff members, pupils and parents, as well as for the wider community where appropriate.

The need for individual or group support will be assessed by class teachers in the period following a critical incident.

The school will ensure the demands on pupils and staff, e.g. deadlines for coursework or additional duties, are appropriate or deferred/cancelled if necessary.

The school will consider alternative arrangements in line with the relevant guidance from the awarding bodies, STA or DfE should a pupil miss a statutory examination or assessment.

Where necessary, the school will liaise with parents regarding a phased return to school for pupils involved in a critical incident.

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 Data Protection Policy, transferring information to external agencies where necessary.

Following an emergency situation, the school will work collaboratively with pupils, staff and parents who are anxious to reassure them and to respond to concerns.

The school will provide remote education to enable pupils to keep pace with their education when in-person attendance in school is not possible due to a critical incident or emergency.

8. Handling Complaints

St. Theresa's Catholic School recognises that the occurrence of a critical incident is a sensitive subject.

Complaints or concerns regarding the school's critical incident arrangements should be made in accordance with the school's Complaints Policy.

The school will continuously work to address and resolve concerns, ensuring that critical incidents are dealt with in line with the law, as well as in a sensitive and supportive manner.

Key Contacts

Incident Managers	Names and contact details
LA out of hours emergency service	0208 359 2000
Press Office 9am – 5pm	020 8359 7299
Chair of Governing Body	Fiona Kerin
The Site Manager	Martin Kryst Mobile no: XXXXXX
Key holders and emergency key holder	Barbara Costa (Executive Headteacher) James Troy (Head of School) Martin Kryst (Site Manager)
Executive Headteacher	Barbara Costa Office number: 020 8346 8826 Mobile: XXXXXXXX
Head of School	James Troy Office number: 020 8346 8826 Mobile: XXXXX
Head of School Improvement	020 8359 7725 07961 081977
Diocese of Westminster Education Service	020 7798 9005
Emergency Services Police, Fire and Ambulance	999 and ask for the particular service(s)
L.B. Barnet Health and Safety Manager	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Barnet Health and Safety Officer • 020 8359 7955
Health and Safety Executive	www.hse.gov.uk

Essential Information

	<u>Notes</u>
<p>An up to date list of emergency contacts for all children and staff</p>	<p>To be immediately available for the Incident Manager.</p> <p>This can be accessed remotely via Teachers 2 Parents and Arbor websites.</p>
<p>School visit and journey lists</p>	<p>1 copy for trip leader</p> <p>1 copy retained at school or held by senior staff responsible for the trip (evening or overnight).</p> <p>Details of names, addresses, location and contact details for all pupils and staff on school visits and journeys.</p> <p>Significant medical information relating to the above.</p>
<p>Premises site plans including hazardous substance storage locations, gas, electric and water control positions</p>	<p>Barbara Costa</p> <p>Martin Kryst</p>
<p>Copy of school asbestos survey</p>	<p>Kept in school office</p>
<p>School bank details, account number and sort code.</p>	<p>Finance Department, LB Barnet</p> <p>020 8359 4673</p>

Appendix 3

- Barnet “Guidance for Off-Site Visits and Related Activities with EVOLVE”

<https://www.barnet.gov.uk/educational-and-recreational-visits>

- L.B. Barnet, “Fire precautions” LCOP 3

<https://www.barnet.gov.uk/sites/default/files/assets/workingwithchildren/Informationforschools/Localcodesofpractice/Autumn2017Updates/LCoP03FirePrecautionsSept2017V2.01.pdf>

‘Health and Safety: responsibilities and duties for schools’ updated April 2022

<https://www.gov.uk/government/publications/health-and-safety-advice-for-schools/responsibilities-and-duties-for-schools>

Emergency planning and Response, DfE

<https://www.gov.uk/government/publications/health-and-safety-advice-for-schools/responsibilities-and-duties-for-schools>

Useful websites include:

- <https://oeapng.info/>
- <http://www.hse.gov.uk/services/education/faqs.htm>
- https://www.gov.uk/government/uploads/system/uploads/attachment_data/file/61089/expecting-the-unexpected.pdf

‘Expecting the unexpected. Business continuity in an uncertain world’. This guide for contingency planning for business gives a very clear and concise overview of how the private sector is recommended to approach this issue.

www.thebci.org

The Emergency Planning College (EPC) delivers Cabinet Office-approved emergency planning and crisis management training.