

# Hartford Junior School



## Critical Incidents Policy

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Revision and edition Log

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**Important Note – At each review for this policy, Hartford Infant School should be consulted.**



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### **1. INTRODUCTION**

This policy has been written in conjunction with Hartford Infant School, on the assumption that a critical incident at either school would affect both schools equally as they share the same site.

The aim of this policy is to lessen the effect of a critical incident on the staff, students and parents at Hartford Infant and Junior Schools. This Policy follows the Cambridgeshire County Council Responding to Critical Incidents Guidance Procedures for School. It is anticipated that by adopting the procedures outlined in this policy it will be possible to provide a more secure environment for everyone associated with the school.

## **2. WHAT IS A CRITICAL INCIDENT?**

A critical incident is one which arises suddenly. Critical incidents may occur in school or out of school, but both types will have a major impact on staff and students. An incident may be designated as critical where the result is likely to be serious disruption to the running of the school, or where there is likely to be significant public and/or media attention on the school.

There can, of course, be no rigid formula for responding to incidents, but broadly speaking, it has been assumed that where damage to premises is the focus the LA will take the leading role in managing the crisis in collaboration with the school and other agencies. Where the crisis is related to people, such as in the event of a death or serious injury, the assumption is that the school is likely to take the lead, with the support of the LA as necessary. The nature of the incident will be decided by the senior person in charge – usually the headteacher.

## **3. EXAMPLES OF IN-SCHOOL CRITICAL INCIDENTS:**

- Major fire or explosion at a school;
- Significant vandalism;
- Destruction of part of the school building;
- Incident involving an intruder, believed to be armed, or violent on or near school premises;
- A serious illness or accident involving a child or adult;
- The death of a student or member of staff through natural causes, such as an illness;
- Abduction/disappearance of a student;
- Allegations or actual incidents of abuse;
- Floods;
- Incidents that attract the attention of national and international media over prolonged periods;
- Terror threats or incidents.

## **4. EXAMPLES OF OUT-OF-SCHOOL CRITICAL INCIDENTS:**

- An accident, injury or death of a student or staff while out of school on a visit or trip;
- Tragedies involving children from many schools, e.g. major natural disasters or accidents causing multiple deaths or injuries;
- Civil disturbances;

## **5. PRACTICE WITHIN SCHOOL**

Individual class teachers have an important role to play in managing critical incidents and may well be the best people to deal with the students in their classes. The main role of specialist agencies is one of support, empowerment and to support students who cannot be helped by the teachers within the school alone. In times of crises, teachers must react as they feel is appropriate and there can be no easy formula for dealing with critical incidents but by, ensuring good communication within school, a crisis may be managed more effectively.

By outlining the appropriate actions to be taken in the event of a critical incident the school aims to reduce this effect.

## **6. CRITICAL INCIDENTS TEAM**

A central component of this policy is the identification of the composition, roles and responsibilities of the Critical Incidents Team. Usually the expectation will be that the headteacher will chair the Critical Incidents Team

The role of the team is to review and direct the handling of the incident and the response and recovery process in order to:

- Ensure the safety and security of pupils, staff, other users of the premises and visitors;
- Minimise the loss to the school in physical, human and financial terms;
- Manage an incident to minimise disruption to regular operations;
- Liaise with appropriate agencies, including the Media.

The Critical Incidents Team will comprise the following personnel:

- Headteacher;
- Chair or Vice Chair of Governors;
- Member of SLT;
- Schools Designated Child Protection Officer;
- Caretaker;
- Health and Safety Officer.

Not all members of the team need to be in attendance for the team to operate. Critical incidents, by their very nature, develop quickly, and action should not be delayed if all team members are yet to be on site.

The Critical Incidents Team will, dependent upon the nature of the incident itself, be concerned with any of the following issues:

- Adequate assessment of hazards and situations which may require emergency action;
- Analysis of requirements to address these hazards; establishment of liaison with all relevant emergency services; development of an effective management plan;
- Dissemination of planned procedures;
- Organisation of practice drills to test the plan;
- Regular review of this plan;
- Assisting the Headteacher with all aspects of the implementation of the plan;
- Arranging staff development activities, where necessary.

## 7. PROCEDURES DURING AN INCIDENT

- The Headteacher or member of the SLT must be informed of any critical incident as soon as possible - **see Appendix 1 for emergency invacuation or evacuation procedure to be adhered to immediately**;
- As soon as an incident is confirmed, the Critical Incidents Team will meet to decide strategies;
- The rest of the staff will be informed as soon as possible, preferably at a specially convened staff meeting;
- All staff should share the same information;
- Pupils will be told information simply and sensitively, without fabrication, preferably in smaller group situations;
- The school will try, as far as possible, to keep to the normal routine.

## 8. ACTION PLAN

Essentially major incidents require the following procedures:

- Establish who is in charge
- Set up a communication network;
- Convene the Critical Incidents Team;
- Identify and inform First Aiders;
- Inform immediately the Chair of Governors, LA and any other appropriate officers including CAM Academy Trust;
- Collect, record and convey as much accurate information as possible;
- Identify two telephonists to staff;
  - school phone for incoming calls;

- mobile phone for outgoing information/staff use;
- Office area to be used for enquiries;
- Use the up to date list of students' next of kin and contact parents of affected children;
- Record all actions;
- Headteacher, alone, to act as 'press officer'. LA/CAM Academy Trust advice to be sought with this;
- Refusal of access to press/television on school premises.

**Action Plan Timing:**

<b>Action</b>	<b>Timescale</b>
Establish who is in charge of the incident – usually the headteacher	Immediately
Obtain factual information at the start	Immediately
Senior staff meeting with support personnel	Immediately
Advise LA/CAM	Immediately
Convene the Critical Incidents Team in the headteacher's office, context dependent	Immediately
Contact families	Immediately – at discretion of Headteacher, context dependent.
Carry out quick appreciation of immediate response required	Within first hour
Select and set up control arrangements – decide roles and responsibilities of Critical Incident Team	Within first hour
Call a staff meeting to give information	Within hours if practicable
Inform pupils in small groups	Same day if possible
Arrange debriefing meeting for staff involved	Same day if possible
Arrange debriefing for pupils directly involved	Same day if possible
Identify high risk students and staff	Following day
Promote discussion in classes	Following days and weeks
Identify the need for group or individual treatment	Over days and weeks
Organise counselling	As required
Mark anniversary (discreetly)	Annually

It is expected that LA/CAM Academy Trust will:

- Advise Public Relations Unit so that appropriate assistance is made to the school
- Ensure that the appropriate officers, including Health and Safety are advised of the crisis so that the best possible level of support can be made immediately available, as appropriate
- Ensure that those agencies or services who are skilled in offering counselling are alerted to the crisis so that support is available as soon as seen to be appropriate

In determining the timing of the above response by the LA the Headteacher needs to offer guidance making certain that the support offered is timed to acknowledge the school's own response to the tragedy.