

# A guide for managing Critical Incidents within schools and other educational settings

*Created by Leicestershire's Educational Psychology Service*



## Foreword

Our school and education leaders are living in interesting times. Handling crisis is a routine or normal aspect of school life, but recent events have forced them to become 'masters of chaos' and it is at these times that checklists, guidance and expert advice become critical to allow them to make informed, strategic and wise decisions.

Within this highly complex and fast paced environment, there remain those often rare, but deeply time consuming and stressful decisions for leaders. These incidents are of a more critical, complex and potentially overwhelming nature in which staff, children and parents may experience extreme distress that threatens to disrupt, even damage, the life of the school or setting. Often these events will be 'once in a lifetime' situations for school leaders and they will not have an extensive 'play list' or experience to fall back on. It is with this in mind that it is important to develop procedures that can mitigate against such risks and offer support after an incident to any individuals or groups involved.

This guide from the Leicestershire Educational Psychology Service provides that first port of call to help senior leaders prepare and plan their response to the unexpected. This will undoubtedly ensure that children and young people in Leicestershire can achieve their potential and have their wellbeing supported.



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## Introduction

This guidance aims to support schools in their preparation for a Critical Incident and to ensure effective management in a difficult situation.

Although it is not possible to prepare in detail for every situation, it's essential to have a general plan which outlines the steps that need to be taken.

It is not a statutory requirement to have a 'Critical Incident' plan, but Leicestershire Educational Psychology Service recommends that schools draw up a plan for the unexpected, regularly review its contents and maintain training for staff.

Experience tells us that schools who have a plan for a possible Critical Incident are able to manage the situation better. Being prepared means schools tend to provide greater support to pupils, staff and families and return to 'normality' sooner, while continuing to be alert to the vulnerability of all concerned.

### ***Key questions this guide will explore:***

- What is a Critical Incident?
- In order to feel prepared, what can schools and other educational settings do before a Critical Incident?
- When a Critical Incident happens, what can schools and other educational settings do to support their community?
- Following a Critical Incident, what can schools and other educational settings do to support their community?
- How can the Educational Psychology Service support schools and other educational settings?

*\*For the remainder of this document, 'other educational settings' are included and considered where the term 'school(s)' is used.*

Leicestershire County Council Educational Psychology Service extends thanks and acknowledgement to the Department for Education Northern Ireland (DENI); their guidance document was key in informing the content of this document.

### ***What is a Critical Incident?***

“A Critical Incident may be defined as any **sudden** and **unexpected** incident or sequence of events which causes **trauma** within a school **community** and which **overwhelms** the normal coping mechanisms of that school.”

### **Examples of a Critical Incident**

Sudden death of pupil or member of staff	Severe injury to pupil or staff member as a result of road traffic accident	Serious damage to school building or property through fire, flood or vandalism
Disappearance of a pupil or member of staff	Serious assault on pupil or staff member in school	An incident which affects access/egress for the school
Death or injury of a pupil or staff member on a school outing	Violent/disturbed intruder on school premises during school day	Civil disturbance, or terrorism in local community
Pupil or member of staff with contagious illness	A more widespread emergency in the community for example, the release of hazardous substances, severe weather etc.	Immediate evacuation of the school with no likelihood of return for a number of hours
	Death or serious injury of someone within close proximity of the school	

Not all these examples will require a full-scale response, however plans should consider the long-term effects that can arise following an incident. It should also be noted that, whilst these incidents may be the key concern, children may also suffer secondary losses which could also affect them. Examples of this include losing their home, belongings etc.

Each school's response to managing a Critical Incident will differ according to the nature of the incident, the specific circumstances and previous experiences.

### ***Key points about Critical Incidents:***

- Critical Incidents happen when least expected.
- When a school is affected by a crisis, all staff have an important role to play in supporting the emotional health and wellbeing of their school community and in maintaining a sense of control over the situation within the school.
- It is important that **all** staff:
  - know that they have a significant role
  - feel valued
  - have their contribution acknowledged
- On occasion some members of staff, for various reasons, may not be able to take an active role in managing a Critical Incident.
- The effects of a Critical Incident on a pupil or staff member can be wide-ranging and can impinge upon their family, particularly if the pupil is close to those at the centre of the crisis or the incident.
- A Critical Incident can also impact on the wider community including pupils and staff from other schools.

### **Preparing for a Critical Incident**

#### ***Strategy***

The key areas for consideration in the strategy are:

- What is the **role** of the Head Teacher, the Senior Management Team and the Board of Governors?
- How can key members of the school community be brought together in a '**team**', and what role could each member have?
- What are the steps and **procedures** in place for dealing with different Critical Incidents?
- What external support agencies do we need to **liaise** with in the event of a Critical Incident?
- Do staff need **relevant professional development** in preparation for a possible Critical Incident?

### ***Working together as a Team***

It is recommended that each school identify their own 'team' of staff who can work together before, during and after a Critical Incident has occurred. It is likely that the team will be made up of:

- Senior Managers
- Pastoral staff
- Special Educational Needs (SEN) support staff
- Lead child safeguarding staff
- You may also consult with the Governing Board to see if they wish to be involved

To facilitate and support the team, it is helpful for a member within this group to be identified as the 'Lead'. This position is likely to be held by the Head Teacher, deputy head or another member of the school's Senior Management Team. This person should co-ordinate the school and team's response to any Critical Incident.

### ***Devising a Plan***

Being prepared for a Critical Incident involves careful consideration of two things: managing the incident **and** meeting the needs of the whole school community.

Prioritising actions for each stage of a Critical Incident is key. The following elements may be helpful to consider:

- a school response depending on the nature of the incident
- essential tasks, contingency arrangements and staff deployment
- clear lines of communication
- a resource contact list of external agencies
- support for staff and pupils
- procedures for dealing with the media
- plans for on-going support
- consideration of memorials or commemorations

It is also important that schools designate a central point or points of contact within the school. Appendix 1 may help guide planning in the key areas.

### ***Central point of contact***

A key issue to consider and plan for is, who will people within the school community need to contact and how will they communicate with them. There should be a staffed information point in an easily accessible area to ensure timely, accurate and relevant communication during an incident. A cascade system of telephone contact would enable school staff to disseminate information quickly, without placing the burden of work on one person.

Particular attention should be given to:

- Keeping essential telephone lines clear to receive and send important messages
- How staff should receive incoming calls
- How staff manage distressed parents/carers by phone/ in person
- How staff support distressed pupils
- Use of a prepared statement
- How to deal with possible media
- A log of incoming/outgoing calls; this is to ensure duplication is avoided.
- What support is available to staff and pupils

### ***Helping strategies***

- Have a list of key contacts easily accessible and available to key people e.g. police, school chaplain, Educational Psychology Service, Education Effectiveness Team.
  - Ensure all contact details are regularly checked and updated
  - Since Critical Incidents can happen at any time, all members of the Critical Incident team should have contact details available to them both inside and outside of school
- The Education Effectiveness Team can be contacted for further support and guidance. The number is **0116 305 3365** (6am-9am out of hours line<sup>1</sup>, 9am-5pm duty line, 6pm 10pm out of hours line), and is contactable on weekdays and weekends.
- Whilst people will want to help, too many people can lead to miscommunication and confusion, stick to the plan!

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<sup>1</sup> Your call will be answered during these out of hours times, but it may not be by a member of the Education Effectiveness Team.

- All contact with pupils by any agency or individuals should be governed by current child protection legislation and guidance for schools; Safeguarding and Data protection policies need to be adhered to at all times.
- Because Critical Incidents are often unexpected and could happen at any time, ensure that careful consideration is given to how incidents will be managed during weekends and school holidays.



## During the Critical Incident

### ***Support from Leicestershire Educational Psychology Service (LEPS)***

LEPS can support schools in working proactively to develop a plan for a critical incident (prior to events happening) and in staff training for dealing with loss and bereavement. LEPS can also provide support to schools after a critical incident has taken place.

The team will respond promptly with a level of support which is judged to be appropriate to the nature, size and severity of the event. Professional judgement will be used to respond appropriately.

Below are examples of possible critical incidents that may require different levels of support from LEPS:

#### **Level 1 – Expected Bereavement and Loss**

- Accident, illness, death of a pupil/member of staff/parent, out of school
- Event is not sudden and/or traumatic
- School has support strategies in place
- Low impact/awareness for majority of pupils/staff
- Advice needed for staff – coping with bereavement and loss, normal grieving process

**Possible response:** Telephone conversation with Head Teacher/school senior management team. Possible educational psychologist visit as necessary.

#### **Level 2 – Critical Incident**

- Accident, illness, death of a pupil/member of staff/parent at or near school, or on a school trip
- Event is sudden and traumatic
- High media interest
- Schools feel unable to cope; significant numbers of distressed pupils and staff

**Possible Response:** LEPS may offer for a team of two or more educational psychologists go to the school, to support SLT in their approach to managing the incident and supporting the school community.

### Level 3 – Major Incident/Emergency

- Large scale incident affecting the school and/or the local community
- National as well as local impact – high media interest

**Possible Response:** LEPS response may be part of a much larger multi-agency response from Leicestershire CC. LEPS involvement co-ordinated by PEP/SEP in conjunction with partner agencies.

The response by Leicestershire Educational Psychology Service will be evaluated on a case by case basis, and the appropriate response deployed to the school concerned.

#### ***Implementing A Critical Incident Management Plan in School;***

No incidents are alike. As soon as a school becomes aware of any incident that might have an impact on it, the Head Teacher or Critical Incident Team Leader should find out the facts and assess its significance for the school (this could include the running of the school, the staff, students, and wider school community). The Head Teacher or SLT decision will determine the response. The position can be reviewed as new information emerges.

When a critical incident occurs the school should inform key contacts and keep them updated. These may include the emergency services, the Board of Governors, Leicestershire County Council and other relevant agencies which may have a role in providing support.

The key tasks will include:

- responding to any inevitable risk or threat e.g. evacuation or first aid
- notifying the emergency services/other relevant authorities and agreed parties
- ensuring that key members of the Critical Incident Management Team meet as soon as possible
- agreeing the school routine for that day (e.g. how students arrive and leave the site, breaks, assemblies)
- informing staff
- establishing a dedicated, telephone line
- setting-up recovery/designated room
- informing pupils and parents
- preparing/adapting a media statement
- assessing initial impact of the critical incident on staff and pupils

### Normal school routine

Schools should restore normal school routine as soon as practicable. It may be useful to continue certain curriculum activities at intervals during the days following the critical incident. Sustaining the normal routine, with timetable flexibility to allow pupils and staff to access support, will maintain a sense of continuity and stability for the whole school community.

### Briefing sessions for staff

It is essential that staff receive factual information on what has occurred, how the incident will be handled and how they can contribute to the school's response. A formal staff briefing should take place as soon as possible after the circumstances of the incident are known with a time set for formal debriefing at the end of the school day(s). Absent teachers should also be briefed on the situation.

This information should be given by the Head Teacher or member of SLT. Staff should be kept updated on developments during the course of the day if appropriate and this can be done during morning breaks and/or lunchtime using the staff room.

#### *The initial briefing should:*

- give a brief statement of factual information
- outline the school's response and proposed plan of action
- allow staff to ask questions and to get a response
- outline staff responsibility for monitoring pupil and staff welfare
- identify vulnerable staff and pupils who may be at risk
- clarify specific responsibilities for staff
- advise staff on procedure for dealing with media enquiries
- advise staff on agreed procedure for informing pupils and parents
- inform staff of the support services that are available
- reassure staff and pupils that they will be supported
- advise staff of time/place of next briefing and debriefing session

### ***Supporting pupils in school***

It's important to inform pupils of a critical incident as soon as possible. Delaying a formal announcement may make the situation worse, as rumour can add another aspect to handling the critical incident and pupils may feel that a delay shows a lack of concern or sensitivity by the school staff and could undermine the credibility of information given later.

With social media, it is possible that those outside the school may be aware of the incident before you contact them, and names of those affected may be circulating. This should be taken into consideration when informing pupils of an incident.

Consideration should be given to the range of different groups among the pupils and how they are to be informed. Very young children and those with special educational needs must be informed in a way which is appropriate, using language and methods of communication already familiar to them.

In some cases, where emotions may be running high, schools should consider informing pupils in small groups, for example, siblings, close friends, class group, and year group preferably in their regular classroom setting.

Many pupils will likely be in shock so a small group setting will also act as a 'safe space'. The best person to communicate this difficult news will normally be the class/form teacher, the head of year or another member of staff known to the pupils. Staff should be able to decline this task if they feel unable to do it.

Before making the announcement regarding a critical incident, attention needs to be given to what the pupils are to be told as well as how they are to be told. Appendix 2 provides sample announcements and Appendix 3 provides useful information on informing pupils. Teachers should be given a carefully worded announcement to read aloud in classrooms.

Where there has been a death it is important that the bereaved family's right to privacy is respected. The family should be consulted as to what information is shared in school. This communication should be via one identified member of staff.

In this instance the announcement made to pupils will usually include a statement of condolence and this should be sensitive to the different religions and cultures present in the school community. The announcement should also advise pupils of the support arrangements to be put in place and how these can be accessed.

Staff should be aware that young people's understanding of death will depend on their cognitive and developmental stage. Appendix 4 provides information on the concept and common reactions to death in various age ranges.

### 1. Making the announcement to pupils

Teachers should make the announcement simultaneously, where possible, to ensure that pupils attending school hear about it at the same time. Before making any announcement, teachers should be mindful of vulnerable pupils in the group including those recently bereaved, those in care or who are looked after, those with special educational needs and those with English as an additional language. When making the agreed announcement teachers should pass on the facts that are known, never speculate on the cause or causes of the incident and be truthful when questions cannot be answered.

After the announcement, teachers should always allow sufficient time for pupils to begin to discuss their feelings. Teachers do have a listening, supportive and containing role and should be encouraged to remain calm and to listen to the pupils.

### 2. Supporting pupils

After making the announcement teachers should allow time for discussion. Allowing pupils to share experiences helps with recovery, Appendix 5 "How School Staff Can Support Pupils at A Time of Crisis" provides useful guidelines for teachers (see Appendix 5) There is also a need for on-going monitoring of pupils while in class, corridors and school grounds to ensure they are supported.

A school might want to think about providing a designated area/areas for pupils should they wish to come out of class.

Children and young people should be allowed to talk about their feelings to someone, for example, a member of staff, someone from the school's pastoral care team, a counsellor supporting the school or a school nurse if known to the pupils. It is best that pupils have the opportunity to discuss their feelings with someone they know. Although most pupils would benefit from remaining in school with their friends, consideration may need to be given for these pupils to go home. Arrangements should be made directly with parents to ensure that the pupils are supported at home.

### 3. Pupils absent from school

Pupils who are absent from school due to illness, work experience, educational trips or fixed period exclusion should also be informed. This is of particular importance if a pupil has died and the absent pupil is in the same class or is a known friend. In such a case, early contact should be made with the pupil's parent by the class or form teacher. A pupil's return to school in any of these circumstances requires sensitive management.

### 4. Vulnerable pupils

Schools should acknowledge that the critical incident may act as a trigger for an extreme response by some pupils who are vulnerable even though they are not directly involved.

Vulnerable pupils include:

- close friends and relatives of those affected
- pupils with a history of self-harm or suicidal thoughts
- pupils who have experienced recent bereavement, separation or other significant loss
- pupils with mental health difficulties
- pupils with a history of substance abuse
- pupils with child protection needs (including those in care)
- pupils with learning, communication or sensory difficulties
- non-communicative pupils who have difficulty talking about their feelings
- pupils experiencing serious family difficulties including mental/physical illness

These students will require special consideration from staff. They may be at a different developmental level to their peers, which may affect their understanding of trauma and death. These pupils should be told the news separately if possible, by using short simple sentences in language appropriate to their level of understanding. They may ask the same questions repeatedly and need extra patience and support. Non-verbal approaches such as pictures, drawings and photographs may help them to explore and express their feelings and concerns. The school's Special Educational Needs Co-ordinator (SENCO) should be asked about the best approach for pupils with special needs. LEPS can also provide advice regarding this if needed.

### ***Informing parents***

When a critical incident occurs, parents must be informed. The type of critical incident will determine the nature of contact with parents, who is best placed to inform parents and the urgency with which this is done.

Parents of pupils directly involved should be initially contacted, via telephone. If the death of a pupil has occurred, one has to be mindful of the bereaved parents' needs. It is important for the Head Teacher or another school representative to make contact with the parents as soon as possible to express sympathy, and to consider their wishes regarding how the news is managed. This will depend on the specific incident, and timeliness needs to be considered.

Other parents also need to be informed; this is likely to be done most effectively by letter. Appendix 7 provides a letter and Appendix 8 gives practical and constructive suggestions on how parents can support their children. Schools should consider issuing the information in Appendix 8 along with this letter.

When making contact with parents it is important that any letter issued should give the facts of the critical incident and ensure that only accurate information is shared. Schools should also consider the needs of parents whose first language is not English.

Schools also need to have a contingency plan where the critical incident requires all parents to be contacted as a matter of urgency. It may be useful to provide those making the calls with a 'script', so that all parents receive the same message and avoid any confusion.

### Role of parents

Parents can play a supportive role in helping pupils cope at a time of crisis. It is helpful for the school and parents to communicate shared messages when supporting the children. A unified approach will make things easier to manage and it is important that those with parental responsibility know how to access support both within the school and externally.

In all cases, giving parents some information on how young people react to a traumatic event will be helpful and reassuring, for example, pupils may be anxious, lack concentration and be restless or unable to sleep. Where there are vulnerable pupils, some parents may need to be contacted personally.

### ***Media management***

While schools are under no obligation to speak to the media, co-operation with the media can make the difference between accurate and inaccurate reporting. Agreed necessary procedures must be in place to deal with the media before a critical incident occurs. It is important that a structured approach to media management is developed to ensure a positive and supportive response from the media. Leicestershire County Council may be able to provide support in dealing with the media. Additionally, if your school is part of a MAT, you may be able to draw upon the Trust's communications team.

It is, however, strongly recommended that before making a statement:

- a check is carried out with the police, ambulance, and fire and rescue service
- the relevant Leicestershire County Council communications officer for schools is contacted for advice on the statement for the media or an interview for radio or TV.
- a decision is taken on whether all media enquiries and follow up enquiries are handled by the Head Teacher or another designated member of the Critical Incident Management Team
- an accurate, factual report is prepared as background to any questions
- no other staff should make comment or provide comment on the incident



- news media should not be permitted on school property without the prior approval of the Head Teacher – this applies to television, radio, print media and photographers
- pupils should also be advised about dealing with contact from or with the media
- pupils should also be encouraged to use discretion when commenting about the incident on social networking sites

### ***Support for staff***

The impact of a critical incident on staff may be distressing and some may have difficulty coping. The extent of this impact will depend on staff involvement in the incident and the particular circumstances surrounding it.

The impact will also vary according to staff experience and training, coping skills, past trauma history and current stresses.

Sources of help and support need to be in place as an integral part of the Critical Incident Management Plan and not hastily arranged at times of tragedy. A school ethos that promotes a caring, supportive community is an important pre-requisite for helping all staff to feel valued and to cope at times of great stress. In addition to support arrangements for all staff from within the school, external sources of help should be identified and made known to all. Any practical and emotional support, and potential longer-term counselling, should be considered within the framework of a whole school approach to managing a critical incident.

The needs of the Head Teacher and other senior members of staff, who are expected to exercise sensitive and strong leadership during the incident, must also be provided for in the plan. While this group of staff may be well supported from within the school, it may be that support could also come from outside the school.

During a crisis, consideration needs to be given to the provision of opportunities for staff, as individuals or in groups, to discuss their own reaction to what has happened, to assess the climate of the school and to share their observations on the monitoring of vulnerable pupils.

Staff must be well supported during a crisis. In order to support pupils effectively, staff need to be kept informed, to understand the importance of their role and to be supported themselves. The needs of all staff must be monitored and appropriate support provided.

## **After a Critical Incident**

The aim of the work carried out in schools following a critical incident, is to help its immediate and broader community to **cope** with and **recover** from the critical incident.

This work may continue at some level for weeks, months and sometimes for years following the incident.

Staff will need to be prepared to manage issues as they arise during teaching and learning sessions. The classroom provides opportunities to deal with these issues in a more extensive way. It would be unwise to focus obsessively on the critical incident, yet issues arising from the event should not be avoided.

### ***Communication with families following the death of a pupil.***

A member of staff from school will need to liaise with the family of the pupil to offer condolences from staff/pupils at the school, and to sensitively enquire about funeral arrangements. The wishes of the family need to be considered before sending school representatives (including pupils) to a funeral. There needs to be sensitive consideration to different religious practices and cultures.

### ***Support for bereaved families***

The family of a pupil who has died may require support for a long time after the tragic event. Family members may be at the same school and have difficulty in adjusting to their loss. Some of the things that school staff need may need to sensitively consider and manage include:

- Providing the family with mementos of their child's involvement in the life of the school and his/her achievements.
- The return of personal belongings and/or school work to the family, perhaps in a 'memory folder' or 'memory box' needs to be handled sensitively.
- The management of public examination results and the return of coursework.
- Dealing with key events that would have involved the deceased pupil, such as award ceremonies.

It should be remembered that whatever precedent the school sets should be applied to similar incidents in the future and be in line with the wishes of the family.

### ***Supporting return to school for pupils***

Returning to school for some pupils after a critical incident may be very difficult. A return to normal routine requires careful and sensitive planning, timing and implementation by all involved.

To plan for the return to school, a member of school staff should consider arranging a home visit to speak with the bereaved pupil and parents in the first instance. This will give them the opportunity to check out how the pupil feels about returning to school and to explore options (e.g. sending work home, a phased return to school where appropriate).

Arrangements to support a return to school may include:

- Briefing staff and pupils on how best to support individuals returning to school. There will need to be a plan for the first day of return.
- Ensuring staff monitor possible changes in emotional responses, behaviour concentration etc. Normal routines and approaches to discipline should be continued with sensitivity.
- Discussion with pupils in class to talk about their feelings and what support they could offer e.g. setting up a rota of support from school friends
- Discussion of normal grief reactions. Consider sharing information on normal grief responses with the pupil, as appropriate.
- Planning support for emotional needs e.g. leaving the class when distressed to access a quiet space and /or access to a member of staff on the pastoral team.

Arranging support for temporary or permanent mobility difficulties or disfigurement.

If public examinations are imminent for pupils it is important to make the examining boards aware of the situation.

Please refer to Appendix 9 (Pupils returning to school after bereavement – information for teachers) for further information.

### ***Longer term support for pupils***

It is a priority for staff involved to continue to monitor pupils' emotional wellbeing and to be attentive to pupils with on-going difficulties.

In some cases, a pupil may continue to show signs of significant distress after a number of weeks and find the return to normal school routine particularly difficult. In these cases, a referral for specialist support may be required.

A record of the bereavement should always be placed on the pupil's file and passed onto any receiving school in the future.

### ***Support for school staff***

Some staff may need support in the longer term. The strain on staff of leading a school through a critical incident can be extremely difficult and may not be identified until after the crisis. Staff (both teaching and non-teaching) can often underestimate the impact on them and may not recognise that they are experiencing difficulty. The Critical Incident Management Team must be alert to this possibility and ensure that staff are directed to sources of support.

### ***Memorials and Commemorations***

Holding a special assembly, memorial or commemoration is a way of celebrating the life and achievement of a pupil or member of staff and gives the school a means of thanksgiving and farewell. The wishes of the bereaved family should always be taken into consideration and schools should be mindful of different religious faiths and accepted practices.

Significant dates such as anniversaries or celebrations may revive deep feelings among pupils and staff and need careful thought and preparation. Additional support for pupils and staff may be required at this time. In addition, it is important to take account of any long-term legal processes, for example, a court case or an inquest, possible media interest and any related public events which may be unsettling for the school.

### ***Review of Critical Incident Management Plan***

A review should be carried out within six weeks of a critical incident. This review should be undertaken in collaboration with involved support agencies and should include consultation with the school community, to evaluate the effectiveness of the plan and to make necessary modifications if required.

The review should address the following questions:

- What went well?
- What was most/least helpful?
- Were there any gaps?
- Have all necessary referrals to support services been made?
- Is there any unfinished business?
- Have all records relevant to the critical incident been secured?
- Are there any identified training needs?
- Does the plan need to be reviewed/changed/updated?

The Critical Incident Management Team should meet on a termly basis to discuss the plan and ensure that it is fit for purpose including considering the recent experiences of other schools. Key contact details should always be reviewed on a termly basis.

There must be a formal review of the Critical Incident Management Plan on an annual basis.

Leicestershire County Council Educational Psychology Service would again like to extend their thanks and acknowledgement to the Department for Education Northern Ireland (DENI); their guidance document was key in informing the content of this document.

## List of appendices and resource materials

<b>Appendix 1</b>	Critical Incident Management Guide
<b>Appendix 2</b>	Announcements to Pupils - Advice for Teachers
<b>Appendix 3</b>	Breaking the News to Pupils - Advice for Teachers
<b>Appendix 4</b>	Children and Young People's Understanding of Death
<b>Appendix 5</b>	How to Support Pupils at a Time of Crisis - Information for Staff
<b>Appendix 6</b>	Understanding Your Reactions - Information for Pupils
<b>Appendix 7</b>	Informing Parents of a Sudden Death - Letter to Parents
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<b>Appendix 9</b>	Pupils Returning to School After Bereavement - Information for teachers
<b>Appendix 10</b>	Publications and websites
<b>Appendix 11</b>	Summary of Critical Incident Guide

### ***Appendix 1: Critical Incident Management Guide Initial Report***

Date: \_\_\_\_\_ Time: \_\_\_\_\_

Information received from:

Contact details:

Name of person informed:

Information passed to:  
*(Name of person with overall responsibility)*

Time: \_\_\_\_\_ Date: \_\_\_\_\_

Facts of incident received so far:

Brief Description of the Incident on (Date)

Unconfirmed reports:



## CONFIDENTIAL

Details of individuals known to be involved

Name	Pupil/Member of Staff or Local Community	Involvement	Known/Suspected	Contact Details

## IMMEDIATE ACTION

Critical Incident Team Management Informed \_\_\_\_\_(Time) \_\_\_\_\_(Date)

Name of Person: \_\_\_\_\_

Arrange Meeting of Critical Incident Management Team

\_\_\_\_\_ (Time) \_\_\_\_\_(Date)

Name of Person: \_\_\_\_\_(Time) \_\_\_\_\_(Date)

### DAY 1

1. Assess the ongoing danger and take necessary action eg evacuation/first aid/ emergency services

Done: ☐ Time: \_\_\_\_\_ Date: \_\_\_\_\_

Name of Person: \_\_\_\_\_

2. Allocate roles to staff members

Lead Roles	Person Responsible	Mobile Number
<b>Establish central information point</b>		
<b>Set up dedicated phone line</b>		
<b>Arrange staff briefing and debriefing (set regular times)</b>		
<b>Inform pupils</b>		
<b>Inform parents</b>		
<b>Manage Media (prepared statement)</b>		
<b>Arrange staff support</b>		
<b>Set up recovery room</b>		

Done: ☐ Time: \_\_\_\_\_ Date: \_\_\_\_\_

Person responsible: \_\_\_\_\_

3. Establish a central information point

*Done:* ☐ *Time:* \_\_\_\_\_ *Date:* \_\_\_\_\_

*Person responsible:* \_\_\_\_\_

4. Set up dedicated phone line

*Done:* ☐ *Time:* \_\_\_\_\_ *Date:* \_\_\_\_\_

*Person responsible:* \_\_\_\_\_

5. Inform key people and seek support as appropriate/link with other relevant agencies

List of Key Contacts (name)	Phone Number	Done
<b>Principal/Vice-Principal</b>		<input type="checkbox"/>
<b>Education and Library Board's Critical Incident Response Team</b>		<input type="checkbox"/>
<b>Chair of Board of Governors</b>		<input type="checkbox"/>
<b>Council for Catholic Maintained Schools</b>		<input type="checkbox"/>
<b>Local Clergy/Faith Workers</b>		<input type="checkbox"/>
<b>Local Police</b>		<input type="checkbox"/>
<b>Fire Brigade</b>		<input type="checkbox"/>
<b>Hospital</b>		<input type="checkbox"/>
<b>Designated Medical Officer</b>		<input type="checkbox"/>
<b>Communications Officer</b>		<input type="checkbox"/>
<b>School Nurse</b>		<input type="checkbox"/>
<b>Educational Psychologist</b>		<input type="checkbox"/>
<b>Educational Welfare Officer</b>		<input type="checkbox"/>
<b>Counselling Services</b>		<input type="checkbox"/>
<b>Key Holders</b>		<input type="checkbox"/>

Done: ☐ Person responsible: \_\_\_\_\_

Time: \_\_\_\_\_ Date: \_\_\_\_\_

6. Brief all staff

Remember:

- Clear factual information
- Advice on how to inform & support pupils
- Team working and practical arrangements (e.g. cover, flexible timetable, recovery room)
- Support for staff
- Identify vulnerable staff
- Inform absent staff
- Set time for debrief session

Done: ☐ Person responsible: \_\_\_\_\_

Time: \_\_\_\_\_ Date: \_\_\_\_\_

7. Inform all pupils

Remember:

- Clear language (no euphemisms)
- Dispel rumours
- Offer support
- Age appropriate factual information
- Assurances regarding updated information
- Identify vulnerable pupils
- Inform absent pupils

Done: ☐ Person responsible: \_\_\_\_\_

Time: \_\_\_\_\_ Date: \_\_\_\_\_

8. Inform all parents

Remember: Appropriate format e.g. by phone, letter, home visit.

Done: ☐ Person responsible: \_\_\_\_\_

How? \_\_\_\_\_

Time: \_\_\_\_\_ Date: \_\_\_\_\_

9. Contact with Media (if appropriate)

Remember: Consult with Communications Officer Return  
media calls  
Use prepared statement  
Use measured tone  
Emphasise school pastoral care support as  
appropriate

Done: ☐ Person responsible: \_\_\_\_\_

How? \_\_\_\_\_

Time: \_\_\_\_\_ Date: \_\_\_\_\_

10. Debrief staff- End of day session

Remember:      Thank staff  
                     Advise about self-care  
                     Information about next day  
                     Time to chat/reflect, tea and buns  
                     Next day arrangements

Done: ☐      Person responsible: \_\_\_\_\_

Time: \_\_\_\_\_ Date: \_\_\_\_\_

11. Meeting of Critical Incident Management Team (End of day session)

Remember:      Support and debrief team  
                     Plan Day 2 – morning briefing for staff  
                     Arrange next meeting of Team

Done: ☐      Person responsible: \_\_\_\_\_

Time: \_\_\_\_\_ Date: \_\_\_\_\_

**DAY 2**

1. Record any further information/details since previous day

*Done:* ☐ *Person responsible:* \_\_\_\_\_

*Time:* \_\_\_\_\_ *Date:* \_\_\_\_\_

2. Maintain central information point

*Done:* ☐ *Person responsible:* \_\_\_\_\_

3. Maintain dedicated phone line

*Done:* ☐ *Person responsible:* \_\_\_\_\_



4. Deal with staff cover/flexible timetable/allocate appropriate rooms as necessary

Done: ☐ Person responsible: \_\_\_\_\_

5. Briefing Staff – Morning session

Think:                      Practical  
                                 arrangements  
                                 Support for  
                                 pupils  
                                 Self-care  
                                 Time of debriefing session

Done: ☐ Person responsible: \_\_\_\_\_

Time: \_\_\_\_\_ Date: \_\_\_\_\_

6. Pupils

- Providing further information (as appropriate)
- Showing care and support
- Providing comforting routine and predictability
- Allowing pupils some involvement/outlet e.g. cards/drawings/poems
- Recovery room
- Refer vulnerable pupils for further action

Details of action taken or any follow up action required should be recorded separately.

7. Parents

Provide further information (as appropriate) e.g. letter/meetings etc

Details of action taken:

Person responsible: \_\_\_\_\_ Date: \_\_\_\_\_

8. Consideration of memorial services

Remember: Times/dates  
Staff involved  
Information to parents

Done: ☐ Person responsible: \_\_\_\_\_ Date: \_\_\_\_\_

9. Debriefing staff - end of Day 2 session

Remember: Ongoing practical arrangements  
Longer term monitoring of pupils who may be at risk  
more detailed self-care advice  
Time to reflect, chat, tea and buns

Done: ☐ Person responsible: \_\_\_\_\_

Time: \_\_\_\_\_ Date: \_\_\_\_\_

10. Meeting of Critical Incident Management Team end Day 2

Remember: Support and debrief team

Plan Day 3 - morning briefing, staff cover etc., if required

Discuss need for longer term actions these will include:

- Memorials, services and ceremonies (e.g. memory books, art work, school event, planting tree)
- Re-establishment of feelings of safety and predictability among school community
- Ongoing support of pupils' emotional coping (eg circle time, Personal Development and Mutual Understanding)
- School support for contact with families affected by the incident
- Ongoing monitoring of children who may be having difficulties – providing support and referring on as necessary
- Ongoing support for staff directly involved and those most affected

Done: ☐ Person responsible: \_\_\_\_\_

Time: \_\_\_\_\_ Date: \_\_\_\_\_

## **Appendix 2: Announcement to pupils – advice to teachers**

Remember announcements should be simple, straightforward and sincere. The following examples provide a suggested structure and are not intended to be adhered to rigidly.

After the announcement pupils should be assured that they will have the opportunity to talk about the critical incident.

### **1. Fatality After A Road Traffic Accident**

We are taking this time to think about \_\_\_\_\_, a Year 10 pupil who died last night in a road traffic accident. \_\_\_\_\_ was travelling with her family to \_\_\_\_\_ when the accident occurred. We do not know any further details about the accident at this time except that the rest of the family is safe.

\_\_\_\_\_’s funeral is being held at \_\_\_\_\_ on \_\_\_\_\_. A funeral is a special time to remember a person who has died. The school will let your families know about the funeral arrangements in a letter which will be sent home tomorrow.

Let’s take a moment of silence to think of \_\_\_\_\_, to remember all the good things about her and to say goodbye. In our silence we will express our loving thoughts.

### **2. After A Sudden Death**

Sadly a tragedy has happened in our school community. \_\_\_\_\_, a Year 12 pupil has died suddenly. We want to respect the family’s need for privacy at this time but you will be given information about funeral arrangements as soon as possible.

This kind of tragic news is hard to accept. You may experience many feelings within the next few days.

Everyone deals with loss differently and it is important to respect the way others grieve. We want to listen to your feelings and concerns so support staff are available in \_\_\_\_\_. Feel free to arrange to go there and talk to someone.

### ***Appendix 3: Breaking the news to pupils -advice for teachers***

Before telling the pupils about an incident consideration needs to be given to issuing the “Information sheet for Pupils” (appendix 6) and allowing time for discussion.

If the incident involves the disappearance or sudden death of a pupil or member of staff it is important to consider the wishes of “the family” and remember their right to privacy.

Teachers should relay the information, agreed at the staff briefing, to pupils at schools - preferably at the same time. Relaying the information to vulnerable pupils and pupils absent from school also needs to be considered. Any “news” should contain appropriate language and factual information only with clear, concise, “bite size” explanations delivered in a calm manner.

#### **REMEMBER**

**Be patient** - you may have to repeat the information many times. Be honest, specific and straightforward - it is acceptable to say you do not have all the answers. Be available for the pupil. Monitor initial reactions.

**Allow time** for pupils to discuss their feelings. Provide reassurance and information about the school support which is available. Inform pupils of a designated area should they be unable to stay in class. Monitor ongoing and developing reactions. Refer on for additional support if in doubt.

**Share your own feelings**, if appropriate; acknowledge the pupil's feelings: if necessary, use pictures and social stories to aid understanding.

**Be prepared** that a pupil may come back and ask more questions.

**Be proactive**: if you can, have information ready for possible questions. Assure pupils they will be kept updated.

#### ***Appendix 4: Children and Young People's Understanding of Death - Information for Staff***

Concept of death	Grief response	Signs of distress	Possible interventions	
<b>2 - 4 years</b>	Death seen as reversible, as abandonment, not permanent. Common statements: “Did you know my mum died? When will she be home?”	Intensive response but brief. Very present oriented. Most aware of changes in patterns of care. Asking questions repeatedly.	Regression: changes in eating and sleeping patterns, bed wetting, general irritability and confusion.	Short, honest answers, frequent repetition, lots of reassurance and nurturing. Consistent routine. Play is their outlet for grief.
<b>4 - 7 years</b>	Death still seen as reversible. Personification of death. Feeling of responsibility because of wishes and thoughts. Common statements: “It’s my fault. I was mad and wished she’d die.”	More verbalisation. Great concern with process. How? Why? Repetitive questioning. May act as though nothing has happened. General distress and confusion.	Regression: nightmares, sleeping and eating disturbed. Possible violent play. Attempts to take on role of person who died.	Symbolic play using drawings and stories. Allow and encourage expression of energy and feelings through physical outlets. Talk about it.
<b>7 - 11 years</b>	Death seen as punishment. This is a difficult transition period, still wanting to see death as reversible but beginning to see it as final.	Specific questions. Desire for complete denial. Concerned with how others are responding. What is the right way to respond? Starting to have ability to mourn and understand mourning.	Regression: school problems, withdrawal from friends. Acting out. Sleeping and eating disturbed. Overwhelming concern with body. Death thoughts (desire to join one who died). Role confusion.	Answer questions. Encourage expression of range of feelings. Explain options and allow for choices. Be available but allow alone time. Symbolic plays. Allow for physical outlets. Listen and allow for talk about the death.
<b>11 - 18 years</b>	A more ‘adult’ approach. Ability to abstract. Beginning to conceptualise death. Work at making sense of information.	Extreme sadness. Denial. Regression. More often willing to talk to people outside of family and peer support. Risk taking. Traditional mourning.	Depression. Anger often towards parents. Suicidal thoughts. Non-compliance. Rejection of former teaching. Role confusion. Acting out.	Encourage verbalisation. Allow for choices. Encourage self-motivation. Listen. Be available. Do not attempt to take grief away.

## ***Appendix 5: How to Support Pupils at a Time of Crisis - Information for Staff***

***Never underestimate the positive effect that concern and support from a caring, familiar adult can have on a pupil.***

At a time of crisis pupils can be distressed, frightened and upset. It is desirable for them, in the first instance, to be supported in a familiar environment by adults who are known to them. School has a significant influence on a pupil's life.

On a day-to-day basis it provides support and a social network for the pupil.

At a time of a crisis, when pupils may be experiencing insecurity and change, it offers security and containment.

Attending school helps to keep routine and maintaining a regular daily pattern.

The way staff respond to a pupil can significantly affect the outcome of their experience. So staff reactions are very important.

Teachers know the pupils already and they are therefore in a good position to observe, change, notice issues which are not being resolved and decide whether onward referral is warranted.

### **Useful tips for staff**

1. Acknowledge the event to pupils.
2. Talk with pupils, giving them honest factual information, not shocking details.
3. Be willing to listen to them and give them time.
4. Remain calm, keep control of the situation and contain their feelings (i.e. allow expression of feelings but not allowing hysteria to build up)
5. Be willing to answer questions. (It is not important that staff answer all questions but that they listen to pupils' fears and worries and take their queries seriously.)
6. Be genuine and professional.
7. Be non-judgemental.
8. Give information to them including the 'normalisation' of their reactions (i.e. their reactions are normal reactions to an abnormal event).
9. Encourage pupils to talk, share their feelings and seek help as appropriate.
10. Maintain a routine in school (flexible, caring and containing).
11. Offer sensitivity, care and empathy.
12. Keep pupils in relevant peer groups.
13. Keep pupils informed and updated.



14. Allow pupils to make a response to the situation, e.g. the making of sympathy cards (for family of deceased) or get well cards (if pupils are injured).
15. Involve them in special ceremonies/rituals/any response the school will make.
16. Do not remove a deceased pupil's belongings/work/name from classroom/s and environment – these should be discussed with pupils at a later stage.

### Restoring normal routine

The resumption of normal routines (in as flexible but as structured a way as possible) re-establishes a pattern and support for the pupil while being sensitive enough to respond to the incident and its aftermath.

It is important to be mindful that life has changed for the pupil as well as for the staff. The healing process involves accepting what has happened, coping with the implications of this and adapting over time to the new situation.

It is necessary to continue to monitor pupils' reactions. Most symptoms should settle over time. These may include sleep difficulties, poor concentration, and loss of motivation in schoolwork, avoiding issues/places, upset, worry and anxiety. If they do not show signs of recovery or if they are becoming worse, a pupil may need more specialist support.

It is important to recognise that parents may need to be informed that a referral to a General Practitioner is necessary. Some pupils may require a more specialist intervention straight away. Early contact with their parents should be sought in order to discuss this further. Other pupils may need specialist intervention some time after the event. If symptoms persist for longer than 5/6 weeks referral for specialist help should be considered.

***Remember that PARENTS, FRIENDS, PEERS and STAFF are the key supporting people for pupils. Make use of all of them.***

## **Appendix 6: Understanding your reactions (information for pupils)**

You have experienced an incident which has been very upsetting for you. Even though this event is over, you may still be experiencing some reactions to it. This is normal. It is unlikely that you have experienced anything like this before and so you may never have been faced with such reactions.

Your reaction may last a few days, a few weeks or longer. Your parents, teachers and friends can help you cope with this and get rid of some of these feelings and reactions. Sometimes this might be a bit more difficult and you might need more help. This does not mean that anything is wrong with you. It only means that the event is just too powerful for you to deal with on your own. Here are some reactions you might experience.

THINKING	FEELINGS
Confused Nightmares/bad dreams Poor concentration Restless Not interested in what is going on Spending a lot of time thinking about what happened	Worried Guilty Angry Sad Easily upset Cross Overwhelmed
BEHAVIOURS	PHYSICAL COMPLAINTS
Loss of appetite Being very quiet Agitated Being quarrelsome/arguing	Feeling tired all the time Unable to rest or settle Feeling sick/knot in tummy Cold and shivery

### REMEMBER

1. Your reactions are normal.
2. They should lessen in time, normally over the next few weeks.
3. If you have any concerns tell your parent or a teacher.
4. People love you and care about you. Let them help.
5. Dreams or other thoughts about the traumatic event will get less over time. They are normal reactions to what you experienced. They are signs that your mind is trying to understand what happened.

### THINGS THAT MIGHT HELP

- 1 Talk to people and tell them what is on your mind. Talk to your parents or to your teachers. Talking is a great way to help at this time. No one can resolve all their worries by themselves. Your teachers, parents or friends may be able to help you.
- 2 Take some exercise – walking, running, playing games. This will get rid of some of the tension in your body and mind.
- 3 Keep yourself busy.
- 4 Keep doing all the usual things – this will also help you.
- 5 Spend lots of time with your friends and your family.
- 6 Do things that you like and that make you feel good.
- 7 Get plenty of rest.
- 8 Do not be afraid to ask for help.

## ***Appendix 7: Information parents of a sudden death – letter to parents***

Date:

Dear Parent

It is with great sadness that I have to tell you of the sudden death of \_\_\_\_\_ (a pupil in Year X) \_\_\_\_\_/a Year \_\_\_\_\_ Teacher). The pupils were told this morning by their Principal/class/form teacher.

\_\_\_\_\_ died of (an asthma attack, meningitis etc) and the pupils have been reassured this is something that does not happen very often. Your child may or may not want to talk about it but it is likely that he/she will need extra love and support from you in the days ahead. This does not mean that anything is wrong with him/her. It only means that this traumatic event has been too powerful for him/her to deal with on his/her own. He/she may be feeling anxious. Take time to listen to your child and try to provide a predictable routine for him/her at home. Avoid too many absences to start with.

We have enclosed an information leaflet for you which may be useful at this time.

Leicestershire Educational Psychology Service Critical Incident Response Team are helping to support us through this difficult time. It is sometimes necessary for a member of the team to speak to a class or to individual pupils who may be distressed. He/she will be guided by the Principal/class teacher in this. If you do not wish your child to receive such support from the team please contact us immediately.

We are deeply saddened by this great loss but are trying, for the pupils' sake, to keep the school environment as normal as possible. Our thoughts are with \_\_\_\_\_'s family at this tragic time and the school community sends them sincerest sympathy and support.

\_\_\_\_\_ 's funeral is on \_\_\_\_\_ at \_\_\_\_\_ am/pm at \_\_\_\_\_.

We are in touch with the family regarding their wishes for the school's representation at the Service.

If you require further clarification or have any concerns please do not hesitate to contact me.

Yours sincerely

**PRINCIPAL**

## ***Appendix 8: Understanding your child's reactions and how you can help – information for parents***

When a child or young person experiences a traumatic incident, it can be very upsetting for them and for you. Even though the event is over your child may still be experiencing reactions to it. It is normal for children and young people to be upset after such a happening. It is unlikely that they have experienced such an event before and so their reaction may be challenging for you.

Their reaction may last a few days, a few weeks or longer. Reassurance, understanding and support from you, along with their teachers and their friends can help them to cope.

Here are some common reactions to a traumatic incident. You might have noticed some of these.

THINKING	FEELINGS
Confused Nightmares/bad dreams Poor concentration Restless Not interested in what is going on Spending a lot of time thinking about what happened Thinking that they cannot cope	Worried Guilty Anxious Fearful Easily upset Cross Panicky Overwhelmed
BEHAVIOURS	PHYSICAL COMPLAINTS
Loss of appetite Being very quiet Nervous Being quarrelsome/arguing	Feeling tired all the time Unable to rest or settle Feeling sick/knot in tummy Cold and shivery

## REMEMBER

1. These are normal reactions.
2. The reactions should lessen in time normally over the next few weeks.
3. If you continue to have concerns some more specialist help may be needed. Talk to your doctor about this.

## HELPING YOUR CHILD

***It is important that you are strong enough to bear whatever your child wants to talk about and to answer their questions.***

DO	DO NOT
Take time to listen and answer questions.	Try to hide your own sadness or grief but try not to overwhelm them with such.
Be honest in your explanations and in showing your own sadness or grief.	Tell your child not to worry or be sad. They cannot control their feelings.
Let them know their feelings are important.	Feel like you have to have all the answers or get it right all the time.
Give plenty of reassurance and affection. Let them know you love them and will be there for them.	Be surprised at your child's ability to set grief aside and alternate between sadness and happiness. Time with friends and playmates enables them to release anxiety about incidents over which they have no control.
Keep to routines and patterns as much as possible. Be aware that changes such as clinging or aggressive behaviour or physical problems may be an expression of grief.	
Take things one day at a time.	

## ***Appendix 9: Pupils returning to school after bereavement – information for teachers***

Returning to school after bereavement can be difficult for a bereaved pupil. It can also be difficult for peers and staff to know how best to support the pupil. The circumstances of the bereavement and the age and developmental stage of the pupil will determine the approach used by teachers.

The following advice may be helpful in planning a positive return to school

1. Speak to the bereaved pupil. Check how he/she feels about coming back to school and what he/she may want to happen. Discuss the support that will be available. Speak to the parents to find out what they may want.
2. Discuss with class peers how they feel and how they can support the pupil. Discuss normal grief reactions. Encourage them to share their feelings and experiences of bereavement and how they coped. They may have sent cards or messages.
3. Ask a group of friends to be supportive during the first days following the return to school.
4. Consider a phased return. Plan for the day of the return of the pupil with a key member of staff taking the lead. When the pupil comes back to school it is important to acknowledge the loss. You may wish to say something like “I am/we are sorry that \_\_\_\_\_ died. I/We know you are sad and I/we want to support you at this time”.
5. Consider giving the pupil age-appropriate information on normal bereavement responses and grief reactions.
6. Allow for possible changes in emotions, behaviours, concentration, and work levels. All teachers need to be made aware.
7. Allow for “time out” when the pupil wants to be in a quiet place or to talk with a school counsellor, pastoral care teacher or another member of staff.
8. Carry on normal routines with normal approaches to discipline, with sensitivity.



## ***Appendix 10: Publications and websites***

Every child and circumstance are different and there is not a 'one size fits all' book. Although in age groups, many of the books will overlap these age groups and may be helpful for children of all ages.

### **Pre-school Age and Upwards**

- *Missing Mummy* by Rebecca Cole
- *Little Mouse's Big Book of Fears* by Emily Gravett
- *Is Daddy Coming Back in a Minute?* by Elke and Alex Barber
- *Little Meerkat's Big Panic* by Jane Evans
- *Rabbityness* by Jo Empson
- *The Rabbit Listened* by Cori Doerrfeld

### **Primary School Age**

- *The Huge Bag of Worries* by Virginia Ironside
- *Badger's Parting Gifts* by Susan Varley
- *Michael Rosen's Sad Book* by Michael Rosen
- *The Secret C: Straight Talking About Cancer* by Julie Stokes
- *Beyond the Rough Rock: Supporting a Child Who Has Been Bereaved by Suicide* by Di Stubbs
- *In My Heart: A Book of Feelings* by Jo Witek and Christine Roussey
- *Only One of Me – A Love Letter from Mum* by Lisa Wells and Michelle Robinson
- *The Invisible String* by Patrice Karst
- *It's Not Fair!* by Jane Foulkes and Wendy Picken
- *No Matter What* by Debi Gliori
- *Laura's Star* by Klaus Baumgart
- *Goodbye Mousie* by Robie H Harris
- *The Rainbow Feelings of Cancer* by Chia Martin and Carrie Martin
- *The Heart and the Bottle* by Oliver Jeffers
- *The Scar* by Charlotte Moundlic
- *Lifetimes* by Bryan Mellonie
- *Drop Dead* by Babette Cole
- *Muddles, Puddles and Sunshine. When Someone Dies Activity Book (2001)*

### **Key Stage 2 and upwards**

- *Goodnight Mr Tom* by Michelle Magorian

### **Secondary School Age**

- *A Monster Calls* by Patrick Ness
- *My Sister Lives on the Mantelpiece* by Annabel Pitcher

## WEBSITES

- <https://www.winstonswish.org/supporting-you/support-for-schools/>
- <https://www.cruse.org.uk/>
- <http://thelauracentre.org.uk/>
- <https://www.childbereavementuk.org/>
- <http://www.childhoodbereavementnetwork.org.uk/>
- <https://www.griefencounter.org.uk/professionals-schools/>
- <https://bodiehodgesfoundation.co.uk/bereavement-support-service/>
- <https://www.startaconversation.co.uk/sac-resources#heading-9294>
- <https://www.samaritans.org/how-we-can-help/schools/step-step/>

## Appendix 11: Summary of Critical Incident Guide

# A guide for managing Critical Incidents within schools and other educational settings

Developed by Leicestershire Educational Psychology Service

“A Critical Incident may be defined as any **sudden** and **unexpected** incident or sequence of events which causes **trauma** within a school **community** and which **overwhelms** the normal coping mechanisms of that school.”

## Introduction

- Critical Incidents happen when least expected.
- **All** staff have an important role to play in supporting the emotional health and wellbeing of their school community and in maintaining a sense of control.
- The effects of a Critical Incident on a pupil or staff member can be wide-ranging and can impinge upon their family, particularly if the pupil is close to those at the centre of the crisis or the incident.
- Although it is not possible to prepare for every situation, it's essential to have a general plan which outlines steps and procedures.

Having a plan that can prepare, before, during and after the event, can support the recovery and wellbeing of a school's community.

## Before an event...

In order to prepare for a Critical Incident, the following need to be established and shared:

- **Strategy –**
  - **Who** will be involved?
  - **What** will everyone's role be?
  - **How** will information be shared?
  - **Where** will staff / pupils / families be able to get information from?
- **Working together as a Team** is critical
- **Plan – steps need to consider –**
  - How the incident will be managed
  - How the needs of the school community will be met.
- **Central point of contact** - how and who will people within the school community need to contact and communicate with?

## During an event...



During a Critical Incident, the Critical Incident Management Plan in School needs to be implemented. Things to consider:

- Maintaining a normal school routine.
- Holding briefing sessions for staff.
- Supporting pupils in school, including: Making the announcement to pupils, supporting pupils, Pupils absent from school and Vulnerable pupils
- Informing parents.
- Media management.
- Support for staff.

## After an event...

Schools need to focus on supporting the immediate and broader community to **cope** with and **recover** following a Critical Incident.

Key things to consider and plan for include:

- Sensitive communication with and respect for the bereaved family
- Supporting pupils to return to school, as appropriate.
- Supporting staff to meet the emotional needs of all pupils
- Meeting the emotional needs of staff in school.
- Planning for a memorial or commemoration.

It should be considered that a Critical Incident can impact on a school and the community for weeks, months and sometimes years.

Emotional well-being of those affected should be monitored overtime with **specialist support** sought if needed.

## Contact details

### Leicestershire Educational Psychology Service

- Children and Family Services, Leicestershire County Council, Room 600, County Hall, Glenfield, Leicestershire, LE3 8RF
- Main office phone: 0116 305 5100
- Main office email: [psychology@leics.gov.uk](mailto:psychology@leics.gov.uk)

