



Bishop Douglass Catholic School

In Pursuit of Excellence

CRITICAL INCIDENT POLICY

Principles

“But we have this treasure in jars of clay, to show that the surpassing power belongs to God and not to us.”

2 Corinthians 4: 7

A **Critical Incident** is defined as a situation and/or emergency affecting pupils, personnel or property, requiring immediate responsive action because it has a major impact upon both staff, pupils and the stakeholders of the School. There is a risk that the normal coping mechanisms of the school may be overwhelmed. There may be significant public and media attention on the School.

There can of course be no rigid formula for responding to incidents but broadly speaking the School (Headteacher, Associate Headteacher, Governors and the Critical Incident Team) will take the lead in dealing with the incident, possibly drawing on the support of both the Westminster Diocese and Barnet Council but may also consult other agencies eg the Cardinal Hume Academies Trust Board, Regional Schools Commissioner and the Department for Education (this list is not intended to be exhaustive). Kept with this policy is a useful document: [A Guide to Managing Critical Incidents in Schools](#) produced by the Department for Education in Northern Ireland.

The purpose and emphasis of the plan is, through a partnership approach, **to normalise the activities of school** in the event of an emergency with minimal disruption to everyone on site and in the local community to the extent to which this is possible. It may be that different and exceptional arrangements have to be made to continue educational activities in some form or other. Periodically (at least once a year) the senior team in the school will discuss, review and consider testing some of the systems in place for emergencies. Records will be kept appropriately and amendments to protocols made if necessary.

1. Aims

- To respond crisply (but without undue haste) and take appropriate action as necessary, communicating clearly and accurately, sensitively, empathetically and without ambiguity.
- To provide support to all affected by the incident if this is deemed necessary.
- To maintain the normal running of any parts of the school not affected.
- To facilitate effective communication channels between the School, Governors, Westminster Diocese, Barnet Council, and the emergency service.
- To prepare to return the whole school to normal operation.
- To learn from the critical incident to amend plans and policies for the future.

2. Types of Incident Covered by the Policy

It is not possible to plan for every eventuality that may cause disruption to the running of a school, but some of the most common causes are as follows:

- Denial of access or physical damage to facilities such as classrooms and equipment.
- Physical damage to the environment which impacts on the school's activities (e.g. fire, smoke or water damage, a chemical spill caused by an incident in the surrounding area).
- Blanket closure of schools within a defined zone due to an imminent or immediate risk in the surrounding area.
- Prolonged loss of a number of staff.
- Death or injuries on a school journey
- Loss of technical, computer, communications or infrastructure facilities due to a technical or telecommunications problem.
- Loss of utilities services (e.g. heating, water, electricity).
- Serious injury or bereavement within the school ~~to either~~ involving a pupil or member of staff.
- Severe weather or some other event which forces a closure of the school for a prolonged period of time.
- Incidents which affect the operation of public examinations.

3. Alerting emergency services

In the event of an accident on site, office staff are responsible for telephoning the emergency services. The most senior member of staff on site will ensure this is done.

4. Receiving the Alert

The alert may come from a variety of sources, including: a staff member, a pupil, the police, parents, the media.

5. Whoever receives the alert should be prepared to ask for as much information as possible:

- what has happened?
- have the emergency services been informed/are they attending?
- exact location (and any access problems if not on site)?
- casualties?
- actions taken so far?
- name/contact at the scene (if not on site)?
- what assistance is needed?

6. The Headteacher or Associate Headteacher must initially decide on the level of response needed:

- can the school cope alone?
- if not, assistance will be asked for from the Barnet Local Authority and/or Westminster Diocese.

7. In the event of an emergency the Headteacher or Head of School will give consideration to forming a Critical Incident Team most likely comprising some or all of the following personnel (other staff may be asked to be part of the team):

The Headteacher, Head of School, Cardinal Hume Academies Board representative, Chair of Governors/representative, Deputy Headteacher, Staff Health and Safety representative, School Business Manager, Site Manager, Headteacher's PA and the school's ICT Manager.

8. Procedures during an incident:

The Headteacher or Associate Headteacher must be informed of any critical incident as soon as possible.

As soon as the incident is confirmed, if deemed necessary by the Head of School, the Critical Incidents Team will convene to decide strategies and an action plan (The school has guidelines for dealing with critical incidences kept in the School Office with the Headteacher's PA). The latter may include:

- Informing: The Chair of Governors, Barnet Council – through the Director of Education, The Diocese of Westminster, Barnet Press Office (020 359 7039 or 0208 359 3000 - Critical Incident Team)
- Establishing the Main School office as the Incident Room (if possible) or an alternative. (Head of School)
- Establishing lines of communication e.g. phone numbers between the team and appropriate landlines. (Headteacher/ICT Manager)
- Getting printouts of contact and next of kin details for those affected (Headteacher's PA)
- Providing updated information on the school website (ICT manager)
- Informing the staff body as soon as possible at a specially convened meeting and telling the staff what is expected of them (Headteacher or Head of School)
- Pupils to be told information through their subject or form teachers in small group situations. (School staff)
- Dealing with the press/media (Headteacher along with Diocesan and Barnet Press office)
- Refusal of access to press/television on school premises.
- Routines will be preserved wherever possible.
- Identifying the need for group or individual counselling or stress support and organise the same (Critical Incident Team).
- Ensuring a summary report so that the school learns from the incident.

9 Business Recovery in the Event of a Loss of Buildings or site Space

Replacement of the buildings and facilities that have been damaged or made unavailable will be the responsibility of the insurers and the DfE. The local authority has a responsibility to ensure all children are educated and its co-operation may be sought to place children temporarily. Temporary working facilities are the responsibility of the school for which it holds insurance (see below). The school holds insurance to the value of £1.5 million to cover the cost of temporary accommodation.

Replacement Site Facilities

The size and scope of facilities required for the school will vary according to the circumstances.

The location of the temporary accommodation will be determined based on the space required and circumstances at the time.

The team trying to normalise the activities of the school will put together plans to restore the following:

Operational Threat	Action by Whom
Phone and ICT Communications Loss	Network Manager
Finance Process Breakdown – payments to staff & suppliers fail	Business Manager/ Network Manager
Utilities / Energy Supply failure	Headteacher/Head of School
Building Loss – partial or complete (Fire, Flood etc.)	Headteacher/Head of School
Building Denial leading to short term lack of access	Headteacher/Head of School

Service Delivery Loss of General Nature – Bishop Douglass School is unable to provide buildings or ICT support	Headteacher/Head of School
Key Supplier Failure other than Bishop Douglass – e.g. catering, transport	Headteacher/Head of School
Evacuation due to nearby incident	Headteacher /Head of School
Lockdown due to nearby incident	Headteacher /Head of School
Fire	Headteacher /Head of School
Bad weather prolonged	Headteacher /Head of School
Strikes	Headteacher /Head of School
Terrorist attack or threat	Headteacher /Head of School

Important Contact Information

Designation	Name	Contact No
Chair of Governors	Michael Veal	On request from school office
Headteacher	Martin Tissot	On request from school office
Head of School	Michelle Henderson	On request from school office
Head's PA	Manisha Saleem	On request from school office
School Business Manager	Melanie Barker	On request from school office
Site Manager	Brendan Toal	07813 099 454
Data/ICT Manager	Andrew Jones	07772 650 987
Westminster Diocesan Education Service	Peter Sweeney	020 7798 9005
Barnet Children's Services	Barnet Council	0208 359 4066
Barnet Contingency Planning	Barnet Council	0208 359 3000
LA Health and Safety Advice Team	Barnet Council or Safesmart	0208 359 7955/7951 or 0870 1273999
Barnet Council Press Office	Sue Cocker	020 8359 7039 Sue.cocker@barnet.gov.uk

This policy should be read in conjunction with the following documents: A Guide to Managing Critical Incidents in Schools <https://www.education-ni.gov.uk/sites/default/files/publications/de/guide-to-managing-critical-incidents-in-schools.pdf>

Emergency planning and response for education, childcare, and children's social care settings <https://www.gov.uk/government/publications/emergency-planning-and-response-for-education-childcare-and-childrens-social-care-settings>

This policy will be reviewed every 2 years.

Date of last review: Reviewed by the Finance, Personnel and Premises Committee 17th June 2022

Date of next review: Summer Term 2024