

Critical Incident Policy



Description: A critical incident can be defined as a sudden unexpected and tragic event or sequence of events which causes trauma and confusion within an academy community, and which, if mishandled, can overwhelm its normal coping mechanisms. This policy and associated plan, although unable to cover every aspect of recovery from a critical incident, details the steps by which the academy can minimise and manage the impact on the community.

I Policy Statement

- I.1 A critical incident is a physical incident or psychological trauma that has a severe, immediate impact and likely long-term effect on pupils, staff or parents. Examples include:
- A death or serious injury on site
 - A death or serious injury off site
 - A serious threat to the premises
 - An immediate threat to persons onsite
- I.2 As a critical incident is likely to have a severe impact upon the academy, both in the short and long term, our aim is to ensure that academy strategies and procedures are in place to protect the physical and emotional wellbeing of every member of KAA.
- I.3 The Critical Incident Policy and Plan cannot cover every aspect of recovery from a critical incident. Occurrences may arise which cannot be foreseen or considered. The critical incident may occur during the academy day, during the evening, during the academy holidays or on an academy trip.
- I.4 It is important that the incident policy is easily understood and swings into action immediately.

2 Responsibilities

- 2.1 The Principal is responsible for organising a response to a critical incident. All staff should be aware of the person responsible in the Principal's absence.
- 2.2 All staff should remember the following in relation to the incident policy:
- that it is followed as closely as possible
 - that designated personnel understand their tasks and are competent to carry them out
 - that other people do not take unilateral actions
 - that consideration and sensitivity is shown by all
 - that students, staff and parents are protected from press intrusion
 - that normal routines be resumed as soon as possible
 - there is a realisation that total recovery may take a long time
- 2.3 A Critical Incident Management Team (CIMT) should be established composed of the Principal, Senior Vice Principal, Vice Principal- HR, Vice Principal- 6th form, Assistant Principal Safeguarding– Pastoral, Premises Manager, Principal's EA and Chair of Governors. This team has the responsibility to ensure that procedures are properly addressed at times of high emotion. If the incident involves legal action, a precise response to the incident should be known and is able to be verified by more than one person.

3 Aims of the Critical Incidents Policy

- To maintain a duty of care
- To minimise educational and administrative disruption within academy
- To enable normal working to be resumed in the shortest possible time

4 Objectives

- To ensure that swift and appropriate action is taken in the case of the academy being made aware that a critical incident has occurred
- To ensure that the welfare of pupils and staff is paramount
- To ensure that the academy responds in a sensitive, consistent and effective manner which reduces confusion, panic and extreme emotion
- To have in place a Critical Incident Management Team, the membership of which is known to all relevant parties (see Appendix 1)
- To have in place a Critical Incident Management Plan, the details of which are familiar to all relevant parties (see Appendix 2)
- To maintain normality, as far as possible, in parts of the academy which are not affected and to restore normality as soon as possible to the parts which are affected
- To have immediate access to all relevant contact details (including outside agencies)
- To offer sensitive, non-intrusive support in the short and medium term to all those affected directly or indirectly by the incident

5 Examples of critical incidents

- 5.1 A critical incident is likely to involve death or serious injury to one or more members of the academy community and, or, their families either at academy, journeying to or from academy, participating in a academy related activity, at home or in some other context.

e.g.: In Academy:

- The death of a student or member of staff through natural causes
- An accident involving a student or member of staff
- A deliberate act of violence such as knifing or the use of a firearm
- An academy fire, flood or an explosion in a laboratory

e.g.: Out of Academy:

- Deaths or injuries through accidents
- Suicide
- Civil disturbance

6 Guidelines for managing a critical incident

The Principal will take charge of the academy's response.

- In the case of the Principal being unavailable, a member of the Critical Incident Management Team (CIMT) will take charge, normally the Vice Principal
- The Principal's office will be the central liaison point
- The CIMT will assess immediate practical needs
- The CIMT will contact next of kin of those directly involved if required
- The CIMT will inform the Aldridge Foundation. The Foundation Press Officer will act as a support to the Principal
- A short simple statement of facts will be prepared by the Principal (see Appendix 3)
- All contacts from the media will be dealt with by the Principal or in his/her absence, the Vice Principal. **No-one else should talk to the media**
- Secretarial staff taking incoming calls will use a statement agreed by the CIMT
- When necessary, all members of staff will be informed and will be guided in relation to informing students
- The CIMT will determine the involvement of parents if appropriate
- Short and long term support will be offered to those affected
- There will be an evaluation of the way in which the incident was managed (see Appendix 4)
- The emergency evacuation plan should always be used in tangent with this policy

APPENDIX I

MEMBERS OF THE CRITICAL INCIDENT MANAGEMENT TEAM

- Principal
- Senior Vice-Principal
- Vice Principal-HR
- Vice Principal-6th form
- Assistant Principal - Safeguarding
- Facilities Manager
- Principal's PA
- Chair of Governors

Other members of staff may be co-opted members of the CIMT as and when required. One/two members of staff may be asked to take responsibility for the normal running of the academy whilst the CIMT is engaged in dealing with an incident.

APPENDIX 2

CRITICAL INCIDENT MANAGEMENT PLAN

In the Event of a Critical Incident:

Initial Response

- The Principal should be contacted first (if not available the Senior Vice Principal)
- The Principal (or Senior Vice Principal) should seek to clarify from the relevant sources the nature and circumstances of the incident
- The CIMT will meet at the earliest opportunity and agree on the procedures for managing the critical incident (See Appendix 4)
- If the incident is on site, health and safety measures will be put in place and the emergency services contacted

Longer Term Issues

- Academy structures and routines will be re-established
- Supportive strategies for pupils and staff will be implemented
- There will be ongoing contact with parents
- Actions taken will be reviewed and policies amended if appropriate
- The PSE and pastoral programmes will be reviewed
- Staff will be mindful of anniversaries and other special dates
- **The use of appropriate outside agencies is crucial to providing long term support as is the use of appropriately trained members of staff who are known to those in need of help**

PREVENTATIVE STRATEGIES

- Regular review of relevant policies e.g. Safeguarding, Health and Safety and Risk Assessment
- First Aid training
- Regular Emergency Drills (eg: bomb alerts)
- Regular Monitoring and Review of PSE Programme

All members of the critical incident management team must:

- have a copy of the Critical Incident Policy at home and at academy
- be aware of the roles of each part of the plan to enable the academy to react swiftly and accordingly
- have contact numbers of each other for 24 hour contact
- in the event of an academy trip /visit, have access to a list of names for staff and pupils
- will have a register of emergency services and relevant outside agencies

All members of staff and pupils will:

- Be familiar with the relevant sections of the academy staff and student handbooks
- Be familiar with emergency evacuation drills which are practiced regularly
- Will have opportunities to explore sensitive issues such as tragedy and through the PSHE and tutorial programmes

APPENDIX 3

SAMPLE ANNOUNCEMENTS

After a known fatality...

We are taking this time to think about, a Year 12 who died last night in a road traffic accident. was travelling with her family to We do not know any details about the accident at this time except that the rest of the family is safe and no one is injured seriously.

.....'s funeral is being held at on A funeral is a special time to remember a person who has died. The academy will let your families know about the specific time and address of the funeral in a written note 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.

After a suspected suicide...

A tragedy has happened., a Year 8 pupil, has died suddenly.

Details of's premature death will not be released to protect the privacy of family members. 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. It is important to respect the way others grieve. Counsellors are available in Feel free to arrange to go and talk to the counsellors. They want to listen to your feelings and concerns.

COMMUNICATION WITH THE MEDIA

The academy does not provide any communication to the media regarding any student in the academy.

SAMPLE LETTER TO PARENTS

Date:

Dear Parent/ Carer

I write with the sad task of relaying the news of NAME passing DATE/PERIOD. NAME, as many of you know, was a KAA student in your child's year group at school. In addition to formally notifying you of this news, I also want to give you all details of the (now confirmed) funeral arrangements.

NAME died of (an asthma attack, meningitis etc) and the children have been assured 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 this time.

Since we received the news, our thoughts have been with NAME's family and friends, and every effort has been made to try and support them. The school has set up a memorial table in our main reception where many, many students have left messages and mementoes for NAME, and indeed continue to do so. We held an assembly with all YEAR GRUP/ACADEMY at the DATE, and careful support has been extended to SPECIFIC FORM, NAME's form, and all of her closest friends. We have also been working with certain staff members to help them try to come to terms with NAME's passing, and remember the many, many positives from her life.

NAME's funeral will take place at LOCATION on DATE/TIME. The funeral reception will take place from TIME/LOCATION. NAME's family have said they would like people to SPECIFIC REQUESTS. We want to make it possible for any student who wants to be there to do so.

Practically, the only way to do this is to allow them to take the day off school, not least because the emotion they will doubtless feel could make learning difficult on that day. If would like your child to attend then please email NAME or call 0207 313 5800 (ext 2) to let us know and we will authorise the absence in advance.

A final and important point is that if you notice your child is suffering from distress about this news, or indeed for any other reason, please don't hesitate to contact, Assistant Principal i/c Inclusion, on EMAIL to refer your child for counselling.

Yours sincerely,

Principal

APPENDIX 4

Procedures for Critical Incident Management - Key Roles

Principal and/or Vice Principal

- ☐ Seeks clarification
- ☐ Calls emergency services if appropriate
- ☐ Summons the CIMT to inform of incident
- ☐ Prepares relevant statements/letters for the media, parents, pupils and office staff
- ☐ Convenes and informs staff
- ☐ Contacts the Aldridge Foundation
- ☐ Arranges staff telephone line if necessary and appropriate
- ☐ Contacts specific external agencies – Local Authority CIMT /appropriate consultants

Assistant Principal – safeguarding

- ☐ Contacts relevant parents
- ☐ Contacts specific external agencies - social services
- ☐ Supports the physical and emotional wellbeing of pupils
- ☐ Oversee evacuation procedures if appropriate
- ☐ Arrange staff cover if necessary and appropriate

Vice Principal (HR)

- ☐ Liaise with Facilities Manager to ensure access for essential personnel
- ☐ Ensure health and safety measures are in place
- ☐ Ensures phone lines are operative and all office staff available
- ☐ Ensures office staff do not vary from the script
- ☐ Liaise with academy first aiders to offer first aid as appropriate

Other Assistant and Vice-Principals

- ☐ Manages the daily arrangements of the academy, website /texts to parents /and academy information