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There is no commandment better than this.



# Critical Incidents & Lockdown Policy

Authors:

DFR Chair of Governors / EAF Principal

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## **Introduction**

Our Academy Vision is "Living Well Together with Dignity, Faith and Hope. We aspire to take dignified decisions and afford dignity to all members of our community, regardless of background or circumstance. Our position as a Voluntary Aided Church Academy means that the Christian faith has a central role in all our actions and decisions. We strive for excellence in all that we do, enabling our students to transform their lives and to hope for happy and successful futures.

At All Saints Academy, our vision is "Living Well Together with Dignity, Faith and Hope and this translates into our everyday practice. The focus on 'Living Well Together', should be paramount in all of our interactions with students and staff as we discuss the critical incidents policy.

A critical incident can be defined as a sudden, unexpected and tragic event or sequence of events which causes trauma and confusion within a school community and which overwhelms its normal coping mechanism. At all times the emphasis must be on a dignified and reflective response to the situations that arise. Strength must be mustered through our faith and shared prayers should reflect the unity and support that can be found in the local Academy community.

It may affect students, staff, parents and governors, may relate directly to the safety of the school community or may involve an incident beyond the school premises. In order to fulfil our vision the Academy will reach out and support the whole community and demonstrate fellowship through being hospitable and strong for however long this is needed.

As a critical incident is likely to have a severe impact upon the school, both in the short and long term, our aim is to ensure that school strategies and procedures are in place to protect the physical, spiritual and emotional well-being of every member of the All Saints Academy community.

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 school day, during the evening, during the school holidays or on a school trip.

It is important that the incident policy is easily understood and swings into action immediately.

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The following must be remembered 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 and responses are dignified;
- 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.

The Critical Incident Recovery Team (CIMT) has responsibility for ensuring 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.

#### **Aims of the Critical Incidents Policy**

1. To maintain a duty of care.
2. To minimise educational and administrative disruption within school.
3. To enable normal working to be resumed in the shortest possible time.

#### **Objectives**

- To ensure that swift and appropriate action is taken in the case of the school being made aware that a critical incident has occurred
- To ensure that the welfare of students and staff is paramount
- To ensure that the school responds in a dignified, consistent and effective manner which reduces confusion, panic and extreme emotion
- To have in place a Critical Incident Management Team (CIMT), the membership of which is known to all relevant parties (see Appendix 1)

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- To have in place a Critical Incident Management Plan (CIMP), the details of which are familiar to all relevant parties (see Appendix 2)
- To maintain normality, as far as possible, in parts of the school 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

### **Examples of Critical Incidents**

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

In School:

- 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
- A school fire, flood, wild animal in the grounds or an explosion in a laboratory

Out of School:

- Deaths or injuries through accidents
- Suicide
- Civil disturbance

### **Guidelines for Managing a Critical Incident**

- The Principal will take charge of the school's response.
- In the case of the Principal being unavailable, the members of the Critical Incident Management Team (CIMT) will take charge.

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- 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
- 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
- Administrative 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 for however long they need it. Our vision will be reflected when ensuring  
  
Physical, emotional and spiritual well-being are catered for as we demonstrate the Academy is a place of nurture and support.
- There will be an evaluation of the way in which the incident was managed (see Appendix 4)

### **Monitoring, Evaluation and Review**

The Governing Body has delegated to the Principal the responsibility for reviewing the implementation and effectiveness of this policy. The Governing Body will approve all major changes to this policy. The policy will be promoted and published throughout the Academy.

### **Related Academy Policies:**

- First Aid Policy
- Health & Safety Policy
- Risk Management Policy

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## **APPENDIX 1**

### **Members of the Critical Incident Management Team (CIMT)**

Principal – Mrs Liz Furber

Deputy Principal – Mr Simon Miller

Deputy Principal – Mrs Kate Searle

Deputy Principal – Mr Ben Baines

Academy Services Manager – Mrs Denise Greenhood

Chair of Board of Governors – Mr David Fraser (or another board member in his absence)

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 school whilst the CIMT is engaged in dealing with an incident).

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## **APPENDIX 2**

### **Critical Incident Management Plan (CIMP)**

In the Event of a Critical Incident:

Initial Response:

- The Principal should be contacted first (if not available the Deputy Principals)
- The Principal (or Deputy Principal) should seek to clarify from relevant sources the nature and circumstances of the incident
- The CIMT will meet at the earliest opportunity and agree on 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:

- School 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 PSHCE 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. Child Protection, Health and Safety
- First Aid training
- Fire Drills
- PSHCE Programme

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- All members of the critical incident management team must:
  - have a copy of the Critical Incident Kit and Policy at home and at school
  - be aware of the roles of each part of the plan to enable the school to react swiftly and accordingly
  - have contact numbers of each other for 24-hour contact
  - in the event of a school trip/visit, have access to a list of names for staff and students
  - will have a register of emergency services and relevant outside agencies
- Relevant members of the administrative staff will have a register of emergency services and relevant outside agencies
- Emergency evacuation drills are familiar to all members of the school community and practiced regularly. (see Appendix 5)
- Opportunities to explore sensitive issues such as tragedy and death will be built into the PSHCE and pastoral programmes



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### 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 school 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 student, 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.

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### Sample Press Release 1

Date

School grieves sudden death of student

As reported by the [Dunstable Today], a student at ..... School died tragically on..... The circumstances of ..... 's death are not known at this time and an investigation is currently ongoing. This is a tragic loss to ..... 's family and to our school community. To assist in supporting our staff and students through this time of grief, additional trained staff from the Local Authority have been assigned to the school to provide support. A letter has been sent by the school to parents, informing them of this incident and providing information on the support services available through the school.

A special assembly to remember ..... has been arranged for .....

Contact: ..... Principal, ..... School at .....

### Pro forma letter (for parents)

'With great regret, we have learnt of the death/deaths of ..... and we extend our deepest sympathy to the family circle.

### Prepared Statement for Media

We are sorry to learn of the tragic..... of .....

We hope at this time the school would be given the privacy needed to support our pupils at this difficult time, etc

NB: If the Principal wishes to comment about the student, they may want to gain permission from the family to include:

Sporting achievements, Musical talents, Academic success, Personal attributes

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### **Sample Letter to All Parents**

*Date:*

*Dear Parent/ Carer*

*It is with great sadness that I have to tell you of the sudden death of NAME, (a student in Year ...../ a Year..... Teacher/ Learning Support Assistant, etc). The children were told this morning by their class teacher/ Principal at assembly.*

*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 at this time.*

*Trained staff from the Local Authority 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 individual students 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 children's sake, to keep the school environment as normal as possible. Our thoughts are with NAME's family at this tragic time and the school community sends them sincerest sympathy and support.*

*NAME's funeral is on DAY/ DATE at TIME am/pm at (Name of Church or Crematorium). We are in touch with the family regarding their wishes for the school's representation at the Service.*

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#### **APPENDIX 4**

Procedures for Critical Incident Management - Key Roles Principal (Mrs Liz Furber) and / a Deputy Principal (Simon Miller)

- Seeks clarification
- Calls emergency services if appropriate
- Summons the CIMT to inform of incident.
- Prepares relevant statements/letters for the media, parents, students and office staff
- Convenes and informs staff - Assistant + Deputy Principals (cover)
- Contacts the Diocese.

Deputy Principal (Mrs Kate Searle)

- Contacts external agencies – e.g. Local Authority
- Contacts relevant parents.
- Supports the physical and emotional well-being of students
- Arranges staff line if necessary and appropriate
- Manages the daily arrangements of the school, website / texts to parents / and school information

Deputy Principal (Mr Ben Baines)

- Arranges staff cover if necessary and appropriate

Academy Services Manager (Mrs Denise Greenhood)

- Liaise with Premises 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

Miss Elisa Tolman

- Liaise with school first aiders to offer first aid as appropriate

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## **All Saints Academy Lockdown Procedure**

This procedure has been written using the advice from Central Bedfordshire Council Lockdown Procedures: Guidance for Schools November 2013

Lockdown procedures should be seen as a sensible and proportionate response to any external or internal incident which has the potential to pose a threat to the safety of staff and pupils in the school. Procedures should aim to minimise disruption to the learning environment whilst ensuring the safety of all pupils and staff. It is of vital importance that the school's lockdown procedures are familiar to members of the senior management team, school administrators, teaching staff and non-teaching staff. To achieve this, a lockdown drill should be undertaken at least once a year. Parents too should know that the school has a lockdown plan, and a copy should be placed on the school's website.

Lockdown procedures may be activated in response to any number of situations, but some of the more typical might be:

- A reported incident / civil disturbance in the local community (with the potential to pose a risk to staff and pupils in the school)
- An intruder on the school site (with the potential to pose a risk to staff and pupils)
- A warning being received regarding a risk locally, of air pollution (smoke plume, gas cloud etc)
- A major fire in the vicinity of the school
- The close proximity of a dangerous animal roaming loose

### **In Lockdown**

1. Site Manager or a member of SLT will access the school bell to raise an alarm in an emergency. This will be a different sounding alarm from usual and will be communicated to all stakeholders.

2. Staff will be communicated with through instant messaging (IM) to their laptops.

#### ***First Alert to staff: 'Partial lockdown'***

This may be as a result of a reported incident / civil disturbance in the local community

#### ***Second Alert to staff: 'Full lockdown'***

This signifies an immediate threat to the school and may be an escalation of a partial lockdown. During the lockdown, staff will keep agreed lines of communication open but not make unnecessary calls to the central office as this could delay more important communication.

3. Pupils who are outside of the school buildings are brought inside as quickly as possible and those inside the school should remain in their classrooms

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PE staff teaching outside will move from the outside to the sports hall which can be locked from the inside

PE staff teaching in classrooms/fitness suite/sports hall will stay in their allocated teaching space.

PE staff not teaching will move/stay in the PE office which has a lock on it.

4. All external doors and, as necessary, windows are locked and blinds drawn.

5. Once in lockdown mode, staff should notify the Key Stage Assistants immediately of any pupils not accounted for (and instigate an immediate search for any missing) via instant messaging.

6. Staff should encourage the pupils to keep calm and act in a dignified manner at all times

7. As appropriate, the school should establish communication with the Emergency Services as soon as possible

**8.** Central Bedfordshire Council should be notified via the 'School Emergency' phone Number which is **07964 111942**

9. If necessary, parents should be notified as soon as it is practicable to do so via the school's established communications system which is a text message sent through the RS Connected system.

Parents will be told that pupils will not be released to parents during a lockdown. In the event of an actual lockdown, it is strongly advised that any incident or development is communicated to parents as soon as is practicable. It is obvious that parents will be concerned but regular communication of accurate information will help to alleviate undue anxiety. The communication with parents' part of the plan needs to reassure parents that the school understands their concern for their children's welfare and that everything that can possibly be done to ensure children's safety will be done.

However, it may also be prudent to reinforce the message '..the school is in a full lockdown situation. During this period the switchboard and entrances will be un-manned, external doors locked and nobody allowed in or out...'

10. If it is necessary to evacuate the building, the fire alarm will be sounded

11. Staff should await further instructions which will be sent by Linked messages to their laptop

### **Emergency Services**

It is important to keep lines of communication open with Emergency Services as they are best placed to offer advice as a situation unfolds. The school site may or may not be cordoned off by Emergency Services depending on the severity of the incident that has triggered the Lockdown. Emergency Services will support the decision of the Headteacher with regarding the timing of communication to parents.

In the event of a prolonged lockdown or more severe scenario, Central Bedfordshire Council has the capacity to provide humanitarian assistance by establishing a Reception Centre for friend and family outside of the cordoned area.