

CRISIS MANAGEMENT POLICY

Date	Review Date	Contact	Proprietor
01.09.18	01.09.19	Principal	Till Gins

Please also refer to the document Foreseeable Crisis Plans for additional information.

If a crisis should occur, the School must ensure that all know what their role would be and what support is available should there be a tragedy or crisis of any kind. We have to be prepared to cope with and respond to the following (which may well be in combination):

- Personal bereavement/loss for an individual student/member of staff. This may not be directly associated with the School or necessary for the school to deal with in an immediate way, but the grieving process may well have an effect on the individual in a way which impacts on his/her performance.
- The death through accident of an individual or several students/staff:
 - on site;
 - off site, as part of a School activity/transport arrangements; and
 - off site, not connected with a School Activity.
- Serious injury through accident of an individual or several students/staff:
 - on site;
 - off site, as part of a School activity/transport arrangements; and
 - off site, not connected with a School activity.
- A major incident within the School which affects an individual, a group or the whole School (such as threatening behaviour from an intruder, bomb alert, fire).
- A major disaster which involves directly or indirectly students, staff and the community (such as a major fire, a large scale road accident).

This document therefore attempts to provide:

- guidance and plans as to the action to be taken
- information as to where support can be obtained
- procedures and information to support people in the immediate and longer term

It must be recognised that a family divorce may well affect a student in such a way that staff will need to support and understand in order that the guidance offered here will be helpful.

In the event of a major incident offsite:

1. Render First Aid as soon as possible
2. Alert the Emergency Services
3. Contact the School – 01635 36879 during office hours. Out of office hours contact the Principal, Mr Crocker on 07725 592258 or the emergency number 07776 420902

In the event of a major incident on site:

1. Render First Aid as soon as possible
2. Alert the Emergency Services
3. Report to the Principal or Student Services Manager. If out of office hours contact the Principal, Mr Crocker on 07725 592258 or the emergency number 07776 420902.

Office Procedures

Should there be an emergency, the office staff will:

- ensure that there are lines clear for incoming and outgoing calls.
- ensure that internal lines are kept clear; and
- set up an 'incident room' and team in the Office. These people will need to be relieved of their other duties for the necessary period and there may need to be 'reserves' to take over.
- It is vital that there is only one source of information.
- There must be clear understanding of the message which is being given (checked with both the giver and the receiver).
- It must be made clear when further information will be made available.
- It must be clear what (if any) other contact and information numbers will be passed on e.g. hospital.
- A record should be kept of all calls both in and out so that it is possible to check who has been contacted or made contact.
- Access will be needed to School records/telephone numbers/addresses etc.

Emergency / Critical Incident Procedures

A Critical Incident may be defined as a single incident or sequence of incidents which:

- Are sudden and unexpected
- Contain real or imagined threats to a person
- Overwhelm usual coping mechanisms
- Cause severe disruption
- Are traumatic to anyone

Critical Incidents affecting Schools may include:

- The death of a pupil(s) or member(s) of staff through sudden accident, murder, terminal illness or suicide.
- A serious accident involving pupils and school personnel on or off school premises.
- A violent attack or violent intrusion onto school premises, e.g. involving an armed intruder or a bomb alert.
- Fire, flood, building collapse or major vandalism in school.
- A hostage situation.
- A disaster in the community, e.g. transport accident, terrorism.

The Critical Incident Management Team

Mr Crocker, the Principal, heads the Critical Incident Management Team and nominates the members. This automatically includes the Student Services Manager, the Lead Educator and the Operations Lead according to immediate availability.

On duty Houseparents liaise between the School and the emergency services on the ground and keeps the Principal up to date as events unfold, until such times as he can avail himself. The on duty Houseparents ensure the buildings and grounds are secure to prevent new entry and investigates any incident on site, if appropriate, having due regard to personal safety.

The Principal, or after hours, the duty houseparent, co-ordinates staff and students. The duty houseparent may receive information from the Principal and agree appropriate actions. For example assembling all students or requiring them to remain indoors depending on the nature of the incident. A nominated member of the Critical Incident Management Team is charged with getting messages to parents as necessary.

Team Coordination will ensure all supporting information and forms are available. For example personnel lists such as the Fire evacuation procedures, Registers, and list of staff who have agreed to attend the site out of hours and the emergency telephone contact list and form for recording contacts made with parents.

If an emergency/critical incident were to occur, the Principal will nominate a staff member to inform all staff. This person will be a senior member of office staff will be informed of this by one of the senior members of staff.

The following procedure should be followed:

1. List of staff contact telephone numbers will be posted on the notice board in the Main Office. This list will include all those who have agreed to assist in the event of an emergency. In the event of an emergency/critical incident, contact the Principal, Mr Crocker on 07752 592258 or the emergency number 07712 272857.
2. Office staff will follow directions of the most senior member of staff available.
3. The main number will be used for incoming calls, and outgoing calls can be made from mobiles in the event of the telephone network being down.
4. Office staff should record contacts made with parents.
5. The telephone should be covered by staff who have been instructed beforehand with what information should be given to callers.
6. No member of staff should give any information to the media. This will be undertaken, if appropriate, by the Principal or Proprietor. Usual procedures to maintain confidentiality will be followed.
7. The media should not be permitted onto the premises without direct invitation and should not be given access to staff/students/parents.
8. It may be necessary to arrange specific times for press briefings so that there is less harassment.
9. It is vital that the privacy of all individuals be respected at all times.

Parents/Carers

When necessary a list of parents/agents to be contacted should be available. A careful check must be kept as to who has been informed of any incident. If there has been a very serious/life threatening injury the most senior member of staff available should speak with the parent(s) or ETO(s). It may be necessary to refer the parent(s)/ETO(s) onto the agencies involved, probably the hospital or the police. If parents arrive at the school (perhaps to wait for information or out of concern) then an appropriate room and refreshments should be provided. Arrangements may need to be made for the use of a telephone.

Information and guidance about coping with a crisis - Bereavement/Loss:

Grief will be experienced to a greater or lesser extent by students or staff when a close relative/friend dies or is 'lost' through separation or divorce. For every two marriages there was one divorce in 1991. One child

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in five will have experienced parents' divorce by the age of 15. Following separation about two thirds of children will show marked changes in their School behaviour which may be:

- deterioration in work
- restlessness; and
- low concentration

There is no predictable pattern and adolescents are particularly vulnerable. Boys tend to re-adjust more slowly than girls and so are often more vulnerable though they may not appear to be so. Recuperation may take 3 – 5 years.

Staff can help by:

- being available (at an appropriate time and place)
- making contact with the surviving/custodial parent
- providing routine stability
- monitoring the stress and grief process; and
- providing information

The School should ensure that 'someone' is available to support the student/member of staff. The individual's choice for a preferred listener should be respected.

If a student or a member of staff dies it may be appropriate to consider using:

- assemblies
- tutorial time; and
- a 'memorial' service, e.g. tree planting as part of the grieving and remembering process.

After the event(short and long term)

Most people show emotional disturbance as in immediate reaction to a disaster but usually recover quite quickly if there is sympathetic management. Different people respond differently according to their constitutional predisposition and previous life experiences. At the time perhaps 12 – 25% respond in a cool and collected way, 75% are stunned and bewildered with restricted responses to the event and maybe 12 – 25% show responses such as confusion, anxiety crying, screaming and panic.

General advice is that:

- those involved should be kept together
- provided with 'physical comforts'
- given companionship, reassured and, if possible, given purposeful activities
- those with them should be sensitive and alert to a wide variety of possible responses
- time and space should be allowed for feelings to be ventilated

After the immediate stress there is a gradual return of awareness, recall and emotional expression which is not predictable. Survivors need to be with others, appear very dependent and continue to benefit from venting their feelings.

There are seen to be three main groups of symptoms or reactions:

- the event is persistently re-experienced in thoughts, dreams or flashbacks where the individual thinks it is all happening again.
- there is persistent avoidance of stimuli associated with the trauma, or there is numbing of general responsiveness, perhaps a refusal to talk about the incident or the responses become inappropriate (such as joking and anger).
- "Survival guilt" (i.e. why didn't I die and not...) is a possibility, and there are signs of increased stress such as disturbed sleep, poor concentration, new fears, irritability, depression, possibly even thoughts of suicide...

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Such symptoms can last for months, perhaps years, though children often show remarkable resilience.

Possible effects on staff

At the time of an incident staff may have been concerned for their own safety but usually they will cope with the extra anxiety and responsibility. It is likely that the trauma will be re-experienced in recurrent and intrusive flashbacks and dreams. People can feel numb or apparently feel little response to or be detached from other events/daily life and experience disturbed sleep. They may feel guilty that not all that was possible was done (performance related guilt), their concentration can become impaired and certain activities may be avoided.

Performance guilt is experienced when people judge that they have done something 'wrong' or inadequately in relation to their personal standards. If they consider that the results of this were serious and there is no way to 'put things right' then this can have serious repercussions on their effectiveness thereafter. So they tend to go over and over things in the mind working out how it could have been done differently and are not willing to accept reassurance from others that everything possible had been done. Such anxiety generating 'alternative scenarios' can be very upsetting and can be prolonged.

Irritability:

A lack of tolerance of others because of anger and irritation is common but can have knock-on effects on marriages, work relationships etc. This could be 'one of the most insidious of problems as it tended to erode the support systems at a time when they were most needed'.

Focussed resentment and blame:

This may or may not be justified but could lead to furious and near violent exchanges eg journalists, management could bear the brunt.

Motivational changes:

Understandably other things can seem so insignificant besides the enormity of the disaster that they do not seem worth bothering with. This could be at work or home. So there could be "dysfunction". On the plus side, treatment through counselling seemed to be rapidly effective.

Coping with crises

Guidance and advice – some dos and don'ts:

Don't:

- bottle up your feelings
- be afraid to share what you are thinking
- chase pictures away from your mind
- expect memories to go away. They and the feelings will stay with you for a long time.
- try to get so busy that you haven't time to think about what happened or say how you feel

Do:

- return to the scene, as soon as possible
- express your feelings
- go over your experiences with yourself and others whenever you can
- tell your parents, family, friends and teachers what you feel you need
- try to keep your life as normal as possible and do things you enjoy
- explain to people that you need to be alone at times
- see a counsellor if you think you need to

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Life can be tough. Sometimes there can be an incident or accident where people we know and care about are hurt or even die. You may have been involved in what happened or you may know someone who was hurt or frightened by it. Although what you saw and how you feel is personal to you, it may help to know how others reacted in similar situations.

People often describe the following feelings when they have had experiences like yours:

Frightened – that something like it will happen again, that you and others are not safe anymore, that you will break down.

Helpless – that you can't stop or change things; that you are weak and powerless.

Sad – about your own and other people's injuries and losses.

Longing – for the time before it happened.

Guilty – that you were not involved or hurt; that you were not able or didn't try to stop it happening.

Shame – for thinking about your own safety; for being afraid and helpless; for feeling that you did not look strong; for not having done things you might have wanted to do.

Angry – about what happened; with whoever caused it or allowed it to happen; about being made to feel afraid and ashamed; about other people not understanding how you feel with other people who might not be able to make you feel better.

Let down – by other people

Remembering – people whom you have lost and feeling that frightening events and losses are real again

Why me?

You may not have any of these feelings, but you may be tired and not as well as usual. Normal things like sleeping patterns and a girl's periods may be disturbed for a while. It may be difficult to pay attention. Thoughts and pictures you don't want might get in the way, while you are awake or appear as bad dreams when you are asleep. It might seem that people expect too much of you or that everyone, including yourself, is always angry. This can change the way people around you treat each other for a time. All these things are normal and nature heals by allowing you to get the feeling out. Stopping them may make you feel nervous or become ill. Crying, telling someone what you feel, making drawings or acting out what happened, all help.

Doing this does not mean that you are being weak or dramatic. It may cause pain or sadness, but these things lead to healing. If you feel you cannot handle the feelings or are worried about feeling ill or if things are not settling down after a period of time it helps to talk to a counsellor. You can arrange for this yourself or through the school or ask your parents to do it for you.

Signed:

Date: 01/09/18

Jon Crocker
Principal



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