

Critical Incident Policy and Procedure

Definition of critical incidents:

An incident becomes a critical incident when it creates a serious disruption arising with little or no warning on a scale beyond the coping capacity of the setting rendering it unable to operate under normal circumstances and requires assistance from the emergency services, the Local Authority (LA) or child minder Agency (CA).

Examples of critical incidents that impact on settings can include but is not limited to:

- Death or serious injury as a result of violence, accident, self-harm and/or sudden traumatic illness
- Child protection incident (individual or collective)
- Lower attendance or closure of setting due to specific events, for e.g. Outbreak of epidemic / pandemic
- Major fire
- Building collapse
- Natural disaster (for e.g. flooding)
- Terrorism
- Missing/ lost person including abduction
- Intense media interest from incidents such as these listed
- Environmental factors (for e.g. Loss of heating, sanitation problems, water)
- Flooding

Examples of critical incidents can occur:

- In the setting or setting premises
- In a vehicle used to transport children
- Whilst the children and staff are taking part in activities away from the setting, for e.g. trips and outings
- Within the local community

Introduction and the role of the Critical Incident Management Plan

Many critical incidents are managed appropriately and effectively through the implementation of a 'Critical Incident Management Plan', the plan will identify liaison with specific external agency partners, as well as a representative from the Local Authority.

Preventative and precautionary measures

Settings will be unable to plan for every eventuality however, there are several preventative and precautionary measures that must be understood and practiced by all staff to help minimise the risk, these are as follows:

- All staff and children to be aware and well-practiced with regards to evacuation procedures
- Staff need to be aware of and follow procedures for dealing with emergencies
- Staff, children and parents must be aware of the settings security procedures this includes recording all visitors to the setting, checking identification. All visitors must be accompanied by a member of staff at all times

- When engaging in trips and/or outings a thorough risk assessment must be in place prior to the visit/ outing. This must include appropriate adult to child ratios and circumstances where this may be exceeded, along with appropriate parental consent
- All children and staff must be signed in and out of the setting
- Staff must have a thorough understanding of each child's medical and health needs
- Staff need to follow procedures for dealing with any violence and aggression in the setting
- Staff must be aware and adhere to internal and external safeguarding procedures, this must include how staff understand the importance of safeguarding themselves whilst in and away from the setting
- Staff must respect laws and procedures concerning confidentiality, sensitivity and privacy
- How are staff and children's contact details accessed off site.

Definition of a major incident:

- An accident leading to serious injury or death
- A potential risk of serious illness
- Where normal functionality of the setting is disrupted
- A situation where the local/national press or media may become involved

Major incidents can include but are not limited to:

- Death of a child or staff member
- Death or significant injury whilst on a trip and or outing
- An epidemic / pandemic
- A violent incident towards a child or staff member within the setting or during trips and outings
- A missing and or lost child
- A hostage situation
- A transport accident resulting in a serious injury or fatality
- A community disaster
- Acts of terrorism, religious extremism and or radicalisation
- Major fire
- Incident involving an intruder believed to be armed on the setting premises
- Floods or inclement weather
- Abduction
- Settings environmental factors including; loss of power, lighting, heating, water, plumbing issues

Where a critical incident has taken place, whether in the setting or when on an outing, the senior members of staff must prioritise the following:

- Save life
- Minimise injury
- Safeguard other children and adults
- Provide consistency and continuity to the remaining children

Management of critical incidents needs to be in a timely fashion. The actions below should be undertaken AFTER contact has been made with the police as further guidance may be given by the police, especially if the incident has resulted in a person's death or serious injury. These actions may not necessarily be carried out in this order.

Immediate:

- If it is safe to do so, and within your capabilities, administer first aid to children or staff that require it
- Whether the incident happened on an outing or at the setting, contact relevant emergency services and give as much information as possible in order to ensure help arrives as soon as possible. This would require all staff knowing the location/ address for the outing/ premises
- If appropriate follow the settings lockdown procedure for incidents that result in the setting being closed for safety purposes
- If on a visit/outing, arrange for children and staff to return to the setting or to be collected as soon as possible
- Consider staff and children may have witnessed a traumatic event so may be showing signs of shock if not immediately after the incident, then at some stage, and require support with this
- At the first opportunity record the incident and include; all persons involved, date and time of the incident and any actions taken. Provide a chronology of events and record any further updates as they arise
- Contact Ofsted to report the significant incident as soon as is reasonably practicable or at least within 14 days
- If able to open an individual telephone line to act as an incident line, whilst controlling the escape of inappropriate or inaccurate information
- Contact families of child, adults and staff involved in the incident. In order to carry out this responsibility in an appropriate way the setting must:
 - Designate a member of staff to liaise with parents/ other professionals
 - Ensure the designated person has relevant information and consent to share it. It may be helpful to have a written guide to ensure that appropriate information is shared with people with the right to have that information
 - Provide families with contact numbers for external agencies
 - Check that families have immediate support
 - Where you are unable to make immediate contact with families liaise with the police so they can make contact with them

Medium term action

- The settings management team to meet in order to review the incident, review plans in place, clarify tasks to be carried out, assign roles and responsibilities and create an action plan if required
- Liaise with external agencies who have had involvement with the critical incident
- Caution staff about talking to the media. Ensure all staff are reminded of their responsibilities regarding Data Protection and confidentiality. **Information about the incident and names of those involved in the incident SHOULD NOT be released or confirmed to the media or other callers, without seeking further advice.**
- Provide a confidential space for parents and partnership meetings
- Identify children, adults and staff who are most likely to need support from support agencies

- Where children may require support from support agencies, parental consent should be sought from the person who has parental responsibility or legal guardianship for the child
- Ensure actions taken by the setting will not result in any further upset of families and staff in the setting
- Ensure staffing ratios are appropriate to cope, post incident. Some children and adults may need additional support due to distress caused by the incident, where this is the case ratios may need to be exceeded, these people may include:
 - People who have witnessed an injury/death or violence associated with the incident
 - Siblings
 - People with pre-existing emotional/behavioural difficulties
 - Children with SEND
 - Children, parents or staff with cultural or language difficulties
 - People who have previously suffered bereavement and/or loss

Where a decision is made to close the setting following an incident, all parents should be informed of the procedure in place for collecting their child. Where children cannot be collected immediately, alternative arrangements must be made for these children and parents informed of these arrangements. Ofsted and the Local Authority will also need to be informed of the closure.

- A staff meeting should take place to identify procedures of how children and staff should be supported
- Ensure all staff are alert to identifying any physical and emotional change in children that could give cause for concern, this also applies to colleagues and parents
- Ensure contact numbers of support agencies are available to staff and parents of children in the setting

Long term action

- Ensure arrangements are in place to support parents and/or families of children and staff who have been hurt or bereaved
- Makes plans to attend funerals if applicable
- Make arrangements for staff to visit injured children in hospital or at home if applicable
- Carry out home visits to children who have been injured and are wanting to return to the setting
- Brief staff on how best to support children and parents returning to the setting

Useful contact details

- ❖ Multi Agency Safeguarding Hub (MASH) - 01302 737777
- ❖ Urgent out of office referrals – 01302 796000
- ❖ Emergency services – 999
 - Police (non-emergency) - 101 non-emergency
- ❖ Health Security Agency - 0300 303 0234
- ❖ Public Health Doncaster - 01302 734581
- ❖ DfE helpline – 0800 0468687
- ❖ RIDDOR - 0300 790 6787
- ❖ Ofsted - 0300 123 1231
- ❖ Environment Agency Floodline - 0845 988 1188
- ❖ Prevent:
 - Prevent internal email: Prevent_Inbox@southyorks.pnn.police.uk
 - Prevent Staff operate on call via the 101 at all times
 - Police Prevent Team – 0114 2523217 – 101 or in an emergency 999 -
 - Rachael Long, Crime and Community Safety Theme Manager, 01302 737469 - Rachael.Long@doncaster.gcsx.gov.uk
 - Anti-Terrorist Hotline - 0800 789 321
 - Department for Education helpline - 020 7340 7264 - counter.extremism@education.gov.uk
 - Report Extremist material online - www.gov.uk/report-terrorism
- ❖ Local Authority Designated Officer (LADO) 01302 737332 LADO@doncaster.gov.uk
- ❖ Early Years Inclusion Service:
 - Jayne Bloodworth - Safeguarding and Welfare Officer (Childminders) 07790 390369
 - Amanda Longstaff – Safeguarding and Welfare Officer (Settings) 07977 850155