



## **Crisis Management Policy and Procedures**

### **Scope**

The School has adopted policies and procedures to minimise risks to pupils and staff and has a Health and Safety Policy and Procedures that are reviewed regularly. The Governors recognise that not all circumstances are under the control of the School and that emergencies and disasters may happen. This Crisis Management Policy aims to outline our response to major incidents that affect the health, safety and welfare of our pupils, staff and others involved in any incident.

By 'crisis' we mean a sudden unexpected event that has caused death or serious injury to a member or members of the School community (staff, pupils, visiting professionals and other adults closely associated with the business of the School) or events that have the potential to result in death, serious injury and disruption to business continuity.

Such events may include but are not limited to:

- Destruction of part of the school
- Violence or assault in the school
- Hostage situation
- Natural disaster in the community
- Death or injury on school journeys or residential visits
- Civil disturbance or terrorism
- A serious accident involving pupils and/or school staff
- A violent intrusion onto school premises either in person or by means of arson or a bomb
- Denial of access to school premises
- The release of a hazardous substance near or on the School site
- Severe weather such as floods, snow, high winds, extreme storms.
- The death of or major injury to a pupil, staff member, governor (whether accidental or otherwise)

Incidents can occur:

- During and out of school hours
- On and off school premises
- Within the local community
- On school transport
- In another country

### **Aims**

The aims of this policy are:

- To prepare Governors, staff and pupils for any disasters that may occur
- To ensure that there is a plan that can be implemented swiftly in the case of an Emergency so that staff can react quickly and take control of the situation
- To help all involved in identifying when this policy should be activated



- To prevent/minimise the loss of life/injury to all pupils, staff and visitors
- To support the welfare of pupils, staff and parents following any incident

### **Roles and Responsibilities**

In term time the crisis will be managed by a Critical Incident Management Team (CIMT) that will include:

- The Chair of Governors
- The Head Teacher
- The Deputy Head
- The School Secretary
- Other members of the Senior Leadership Team (SLT) and support staff as deemed necessary by the Head Teacher

The Head Teacher or, in their absence, the Deputy Head or member of the SLT will be in overall command of strategy during any critical incident.

The CIMT will convene in the Head Teacher's office or another appropriate location as advised.

Bomb threats and other threats received by mail, email or telephone should be immediately referred to the police and their advice sought on the likely credibility of any such threat. A 'Bomb Call Checklist' will be kept readily available in the School Office.

Both the Fire Evacuation Procedure and the Lockdown Procedure are to be practised at least once each term and all staff made aware of routes to places of refuge.

All staff and pupils are encouraged to adopt a 'Run, Hide Tell' attitude when faced with a threat of violence.

A copy of this policy should be held on the mobile telephone of all CIMT members

Out of term, the first thing for the person in charge on site to do will be to contact as many members of the CIMT or SLT as soon as possible.



<b>Task</b>	<b>Responsible person</b>	<b>Data required</b>
Contact emergency services	School Secretary	
Evacuation/Lockdown/No Action necessary	School Secretary	
Inform all staff on and off site of required action	School Secretary	Messaging system/ Telephone numbers
Evacuation 'Go' Bag	School Secretary	
Registers taken	Teaching staff	ISAMS/Hard copy
½ hourly log	Head Teacher	
Inform all parents	School Secretary	Contact details
Liaise with media/parents	School Secretary/Head Teacher	Statements
Monitor local media	School Secretary /Admin	
Prepare statement updates	Head Teacher	
Inform Governors	Head Teacher	Telephone numbers
Debrief staff and pupils	Head Teacher	
Arrange pastoral support	Head Teacher	
Bomb Call Checklist	School Secretary	Hard copy

### **Incidents Occurring Off-Site**

When a disaster occurs off site it is critical to know quickly who has been involved, therefore all trip leaders will make sure there is a list in the school office with the names of all pupils and staff as well as contact numbers for parents.

Every member of staff on the trip (not only the leader) will keep with them at all times a list of pupils on the trip. This may be the only starting point for identifying pupils and the leader may be incapacitated.

It is also vital that information is passed to the school as soon as possible so that support can be given to the staff on the ground and parents and that accurate information can be given to the media.

All staff on a trip will:

- Know how an alarm is to be raised
- Have to hand contact numbers to report any incident. These will be the school's main switchboard number plus an emergency number in case the media jam the phone lines. This emergency number must be kept absolutely confidential and not be used for any other purpose.



- Give priority to looking after the injured and ensuring that they are in the hands of competent assistance. Once that has been done the priority of those on the ground will be to look after pupils and each other. Dealing with the media, with parents and all other issues must be handled by the CIMT.

If the incident affects our pupils while they are abroad, then a contact will be opened up to authorities in the foreign country through the appropriate embassy or the Foreign Office and arrangements made to get a senior member of staff and someone familiar with the language (if possible) out to the scene of the disaster as a matter of urgency to take charge from the staff involved.

### **‘GO’ Bag**

A ‘GO’ bag should be prepared and should contain the following resources:

- Emergency registers
- Contact details for all pupils, staff and Governors
- Details of pupils and staff with medical conditions
- First Aid kit
- Torch with spare batteries

This bag will be kept in the School Office and must be taken out during any evacuation.

### **Communicating with Parents**

Only nominated members of staff/Governors have the authority to contact parents. Such persons, when answering or contacting parents will have a written list of known facts issued by the Head Teacher (or Chair of Governors).

The nominated person will only:

- Say what is known for a fact
- Say how parents will be updated as information becomes more complete
- Say how parents should contact hospitals, etc.
- Check whether any help is needed with transport

While the School's main responsibility is to parents whose children are involved, there will be other parents who, for one reason or another, will want to know what has happened. Depending on the circumstances, the Head Teacher (or Chair of Governors) will decide to send a written account and/or text via ParentPay or post information on the school website.

### **Communicating with Pupils**

If the incident occurs during term, it will be essential to make sure that pupils know what is true. This is important, as the media often target pupils and their families at this time, even if not directly involved. It will also be important, when appropriate, for the school community to share its shock and/or grief.



The procedure will be:

- Pupils will be given plain facts (no speculation) in their classrooms by selected staff or through a full school meeting
- To give absolutely honest responses to questions that may be difficult to answer immediately.
- If a disaster occurs during the holiday, there may have to be special arrangements to allow families, friends and others to come into school, and for an appropriate member of staff to be available to inform and support. This will be determined by the Head Teacher (or the Chair of Governors) and put into place by the CIMT.

### **Communicating with the Media**

Media interest will seem intrusive and unhelpful. It is important to realise, however, that their interest is legitimate. Used properly the media can help to communicate important messages to parents and the community. It is important to do everything to be helpful, short of compromising the essential interests of the school. The School Secretary will explain to the press what is happening but will stress that pupils' and parents' interests must come first. He/she will ask for the press's co-operation in achieving this aim.

All statements to the media will be made after discussion with the Head Teacher (or Chair of Governors). In ideal circumstances, the Head Teacher will act as press officer. If he/she is not present, he/she should be contacted if possible. The Chair of Governors will make a statement at the earliest appropriate moment. Governors and staff will refer all questions to the Head Teacher (or delegated representative) and must refuse to make any comment or react to any statement put to them by the media.

It should be remembered that the media will be looking for a story and headlines. A 'story' only lasts for a short time in media terms so they will be looking for a quick result: grief to dramatise or blame to allot. However, there are possible stereotypes which we can use to help to get sympathetic treatment. As such, the following will be the principles to guide dealings with the press:

- staff trying to hold things together under difficult circumstances
- caring school trying to do what it can
- bolt from the blue overwhelms all sensible precautions

NB We must remember that we have to be careful that nothing we say should increase grief or wrong-foot ourselves in possible legal action.

The media will not normally be invited onto the school site and if they do make their way into the school uninvited they should be referred to the Head Teacher, who will normally ask them to leave, and will explain why. The assistance of the police could be sought if necessary.

It is the responsibility of the Head Teacher, in consultation with the CIMT, to determine whether a press conference should be arranged in a place away from the pupils. If there are signs of devastation on the school site, it may be inevitable that they will have to be allowed to take pictures, but the CIMT will attempt to ensure that these do not add to the grief of parents and others.



Pupils will be kept away from the media, for their own protection, and the importance of this will be explained to the pupils. No addresses or personal details will be given to the media.

### **Data Recovery and Business Continuity**

Financial and personal data relating to the school, its pupils and staff must be held securely and electronic data backed-up wherever possible. The school backs up network data daily and backups are stored separately.

### **Policies and procedures to be read in conjunction with this policy**

Health and Safety, Fire Emergency Evacuation Procedure, Lockdown Procedure

Signed by Chair of Governors

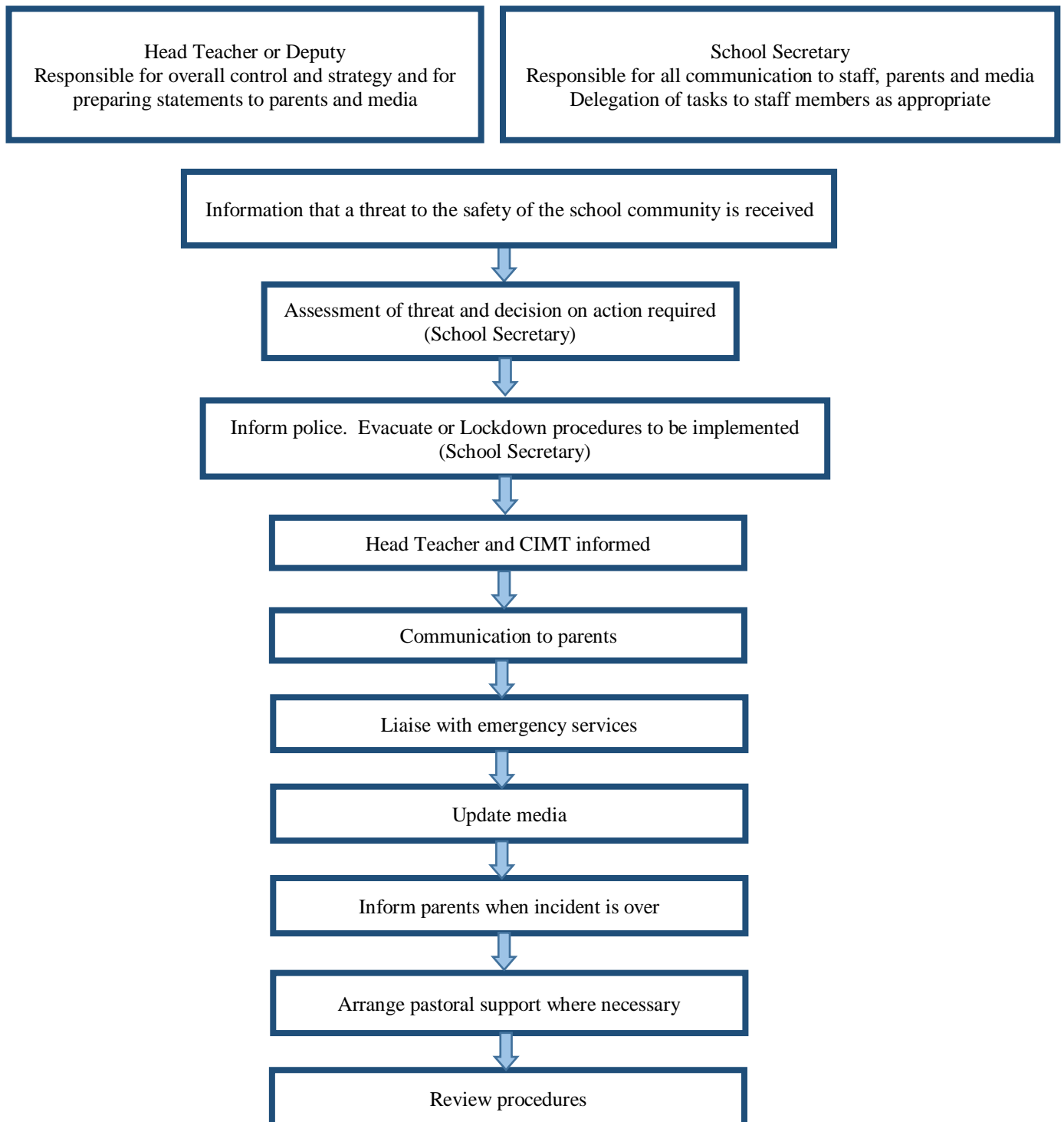
Signed by Head Teacher

Date:

Reviewed July 2019 AC  
Reviewed November 2019 NB/EA  
Reviewed August 2020 NB  
Next due for review August 2021

## Appendix I

### Critical Incident Action Plan





## Appendix II

### Prepared Statements

Example statement to be used in the event of an incident at school:

*Dear Parents,*

*I am writing to give you details of an incident that happened today at Avon House that affected everyone in the school.*

*A bomb threat was received and after contacting the police it was deemed not to be credible and a thorough search of the premises did not uncover any suspicious objects or packages.*

*All threats to the school are taken seriously and our security procedures are always implemented. We would like to reassure you that the safety of your children is paramount and that all necessary measures are in place to ensure their safety at all times.*

*Should you have any questions I would be happy to speak with you.*

*Yours sincerely,*

*Head Teacher*

Example statement to be used in the event of an incident occurring during a school trip:

*Dear Parents,*

*This afternoon there was a serious accident involving a school minibus (carrying Year 5 pupils to a hockey tournament) and a lorry. The incident occurred on the M11 near Harlow and at this stage the cause of the crash is unknown. Casualties have been taken to local hospitals and details of injuries are at this point unknown.*

*The parents of those children on the bus have been contacted separately and I am sure you will appreciate their need for privacy at this time.*

*We will of course update you as and when we have further details of this incident.*

*Yours sincerely,*

*Head Teacher*





## Comments to the Media

Comments to the media can include:

- We are in contact with the victim's family and are doing everything we can to support them
- We are investigating the incident
- We are co-operating with the authorities
- We will be reviewing our procedures and making any improvements necessary to help prevent a repetition of this incident
- We will immediately put in place any recommendations
- We are devastated, we pride ourselves on our excellent safety record and this is the first time anything like this has happened in our 60 year history

Example statements to the media:

This afternoon there was a serious accident involving a school minibus (carrying Year 5 pupils to a hockey tournament) and a lorry. The incident occurred on the M11 near Harlow and at this stage the cause of the crash is unknown. Casualties have been taken to local hospitals and details of injuries are at this point unknown. The parents of those children on the bus have been contacted separately and I am sure that you will appreciate their need for privacy at this time and ask you not to contact them directly.

We will of course update you as and when we have further details of this incident. The School will fully cooperate with any subsequent inquiry.

We have assured parents that safeguarding procedures and guidelines were followed at all times and that the safety and welfare of pupils and staff members remains of utmost concern to us.

All school staff are committed to the emotional wellbeing of pupils affected by this incident and we will provide support for as long as it is required.



## Appendix III

### Guidelines

#### Guidance to The Head Teacher (or representative) on dealing with the media

The Head Teacher will say that the school will:-

- tell them everything known definitely as soon as we have told parents;
- tell them what we do not know at this stage;
- tell them when further information will be available;
- not speculate or go along with their speculation; and
- not give or confirm any names

Within these limits the Head Teacher has the responsibility to give quotable statements and go on air.

#### Interview Technique

Generally it will be important to 'come in under the question', being calmer and quieter than the questioners. Two points clearly made and repeated are worth many made in a confused way. It is crucial to remember that you are talking to the audience beyond the interviewer while answering the interviewer's questions. Meet aggressive questions with facts, e.g.

- 'all trips go through a vetting procedure'
- 'we have fire evacuation and lockdown practices termly'

Generally the school will be saying over and over again that the school will turn its attention to causes and lessons to be learned when we have done what we can do for pupils and parents.

#### Short Term Action

The Governors will meet as soon as practicable to be briefed by the Head Teacher and CIMT and to decide how any inquiry should be carried out. The CIMT will seek advice on this as appropriate. It will be the responsibility of the Head Teacher to make an announcement about any inquiry. The Head Teacher will ensure that included in any public statement will be the Governors' resolve to co-operate fully with any external inquiry.

The CIMT will determine in the circumstances how to help the school community come to terms with the shock and grief, and which appropriate agencies to use. The CIMT will bear in mind in all its decisions the importance of enabling normal life to be resumed as soon as possible without denying or minimising what has happened.

Immediate steps should be taken to restore the situation in the case of fire etc. and lessons should be as normal as possible as soon as possible. The Chair of Governors will immediately



seek alternative accommodation arrangements for teaching, to maintain the continuity of learning.

The Head Teacher (or Chair of Governors) will seek legal advice, as appropriate.

### **Medium Term Action**

The CIMT will determine how best to ease the return of pupils and staff involved and what support they will need. Appropriate consultancy/counselling will be sought where necessary.