**Renfrewshire’s Critical Incidents and Sudden Bereavement Guidance**

**Children’s Services**

Context for Guidance

Below are operational details that are helpful to consider when responding to a critical incident or sudden bereavement within your educational community. These have been developed by Leadership Teams in Renfrewshire based on their experiences of critical incidents and also with reference to research that has identified how best to respond to traumatic incidences over the short, medium and longer term. Social Work colleagues have also contributed to the document, as Renfrewshire will have young people in establishments for whom we have corporate parental responsibility.

The rationale for having critical incident guidance, which includes sudden bereavement, is to provide support for staff and pupils. Not all sudden bereavement is a ‘critical incident’ for the whole of the educational community. As noted above, the impact of the death will depend on the circumstances around the death and who is affected by this loss. Helpful materials are referenced throughout the guidance.

Definition

We consider that a critical incident is an event that is potentially traumatic, and affects a large part, or the whole of an educational community, rather than just one or two individuals. Such events are likely to cause many adults and children distress and may threaten to overwhelm their capacity to cope.

UK Trauma Council

Operational Guide

In preparation for any future critical incident, Senior Leadership Teams should familiarise themselves with this guidance and the links below and integrate any response to a critical incident with an establishment bereavement policy.

[A Whole School Approach to Loss and Bereavement (glowscotland.org.uk)](https://blogs.glowscotland.org.uk/glowblogs/public/glasgowpsychologicalservice/uploads/sites/4587/2022/01/12122302/A-Whole-School-Approach-to-Loss-and-Bereavement-December-2021.pdf)

[Guidance on creating the best environment for recovery - UK Trauma Council](https://eur01.safelinks.protection.outlook.com/?url=https%3A%2F%2Fuktraumacouncil.org%2Fresources%2Fci-guidance&data=05%7C01%7Csandra.menary%40renfrewshire.gov.uk%7C47bac2d4e5c347a73e7608dbe5e7acda%7Cca2953361aa64486b2b2cf7669625305%7C0%7C0%7C638356555560028869%7CUnknown%7CTWFpbGZsb3d8eyJWIjoiMC4wLjAwMDAiLCJQIjoiV2luMzIiLCJBTiI6Ik1haWwiLCJXVCI6Mn0%3D%7C3000%7C%7C%7C&sdata=rpaKfEK7gpNni1G%2Fb24Irl5DVfLfoj2cqKFX0tRQb9I%3D&reserved=0)

The following steps should be considered when a sudden death or critical incident takes place:

**Confirmation of Death/Incident**

* Establish credible information from rumours/social media.
* Contact Headquarters. Directorate may be able to speak directly to the Police and confirm information.
* Assemble a critical incident team – establishment staff and HQ contact.
* Undertake a Risk Assessment (where required).
* Contact the family to offer condolences and/or support. As part of this discussion, ensure that consent is sought over what information can be shared publicly and what can be shared internally.
* Information should not be cascaded until confirmation of details of incident/death.
* Alert SMT who are not in critical incident team/religious leaders.
* HQ to contact Principal Psychologist
* Make contact with the Communication Team
* Organise a room for students/staff to allow those affected to gather and provide consolation.
* Brief clerical staff to note any queries and refer any members of the media to Renfrewshire Communication’s Team. Give clerical staff a form of words as a ‘holding position’ for any inquiries.

**Inform Staff/Parents/Students**

* Identify vulnerable staff and pupils who may have suffered recent bereavements, loss or who worked with the young person. Consider staff who are part time or who may be off sick or on maternity leave. Include ancillary staff in any information sharing.
* Staff briefing to be arranged as quickly as possible – consider how staff will be called together. SMT to visit all departments to inform the Principal Teacher/Head of Faculty/Class Teacher of briefing.
* Senior Leaders from HQ are likely to attend establishment. The Communication Team are also available to attend establishment as required.
* Educational Psychology Service (EPS) Team to support and attend establishment to provide advice and guidance. There will be a focus on helping staff to identify distress and manage this.
* SMT/Educational Psychology offer staff support and guidance about talking to students. Distribute EPS leaflet.
* If incident is the sudden death of a child/young person and suicide has been suggested, the reference should be to a ‘sudden unexplained death’ until circumstances have been confirmed. Staff who taught the child/young person are likely to be the most affected. As noted above, those staff members who have experienced their own loss or are vulnerable may require additional check-ins/support.
* [A Whole School Approach to Loss and Bereavement (glowscotland.org.uk)](https://blogs.glowscotland.org.uk/glowblogs/public/glasgowpsychologicalservice/uploads/sites/4587/2022/01/12122302/A-Whole-School-Approach-to-Loss-and-Bereavement-December-2021.pdf)
* Please see Glasgow City Council’s policy on loss and bereavement for more detail. This covers how children and young people understand loss at different developmental stages as well as examples of what establishments can do to support.
* Inform children and young people on the incident/death. This can be done through assemblies, class input or small groups for those who were very close to the young person or staff member(see Resources section below for examples). Give appropriate factual detail avoiding euphemisms. Explain how the establishment can support everyone and (if sudden death) how the establishment will show its immediate respect e.g., condolence book, religious service, flowers to family etc.
* Younger people can blame themselves if a death has occurred and it is important to reassure them that they are not to blame.
* Identify groups of staff or young people who are likely to be most affected by the incident and develop a plan of support – use EPS/SMT to develop plan.
* Plan for the return to school of those most affected or who have experienced a close bereavement.
* Advice from HQ on SEEMIS recording – avoiding any standard information going out to the parent e.g. notification that a child/young person has not turned up to school

**Written Communication**

* Prepare letters for parents. Letter to be prepared with Communication Team – digital format may be the most time efficient.
* If an initial message to parents is required for awareness or reassurance – for example ‘there was an incident at the school. All pupils are safe. We will provide more info’. This could then be followed up with a more detailed communication with more details once confirmed. Communications team will advise on output.
* If there is a press statement, the Communication Team will guide content. Class Teacher/Pastoral Care Teacher can contribute to this should there be a need to pay a personalised tribute to an individual.
* Office staff to be prepared to get letter out as a priority
* Consider which other establishments need to be notified – younger/older siblings may be in other establishments
* Establishment staff should monitor establishment and local social media channels to ensure awareness of any ongoing commentary on the incident and flag any issues of concern. However any response should be agreed with the Communications Team before being posted online.
* If an ongoing police incident, or one where criminal charges may follow, extra care should be taken with any communication. HQ and the Communications Team will advise in this case.

**Ongoing support after incident**

* Depending on the nature of the incident, a risk assessment of the building may need to be considered. Tightening of procedures of entry/exit to building to ensure that staff/young people feel safe.
* If Police involvement in the incident and staff/young people are spoken to about the incident, there is a potential for an SMT member to sit in on the interview, as staff/young people can feel, understandably, stressed by this.
* After Police have spoken to the young people/staff, an SMT member should offer to meet with the young people/staff.
* Consider establishment events/activities that may require to be cancelled.
* Balance support for children/young people/staff with the need to ensure that the usual routine is followed.
* Ongoing use of a room for staff or pupils to gather in. Use of/numbers in room should be monitored.
* The names of those most affected by the incident should be gathered for ongoing check in by SMT/Pastoral Care.
* If sudden death, liaise with the family and ensure they are aware of how the establishment will be marking the loss. If there is a funeral, consideration of which staff/pupils will attend. Link with other Education Managers/Head Teachers/Heads of Establishment to request cover. Ensure parents give permission for their child/young person to attend.

**Support continuing after incident**

* Ongoing identification of staff and young people who are experiencing distress or upset.
* Season for Growth or Counselling support may be appropriate and should be discussed in line with staged intervention.
* If siblings are in the educational community, a focus on them is important.
* Ongoing discussions with EPS regarding appropriate supports for staff and young people

**If incident occurs outwith establishment term**

* Communication is more difficult due to SMT members potentially being on holiday
* If SMT is available, they act as link with HQ and any family involved.
* Most of the steps above will need to be slightly adapted for this context.
* The return of young people to the establishment at the start of term will require planning e.g. sharing of information, providing a room to gather etc.

**EPS Support**

* Once the details of the critical incident have been confirmed, an SMT member or member of the Directorate should contact the Principal Psychologist.
* In the immediate aftermath of the incident, staff wellbeing support will be the focus of the input as well as how to support young people.
* Advice on resources to support staff, children and young people and parents/carers will be given.
* In the medium to long term, plans can be developed in relation to how a school supports loss and trauma. Direct work should always follow the staged intervention policy.
* EPs are available for advice/consultation as establishments require it.
* Training in critical incidents/nurture & trauma is available.

**Social Work**

* If a young person involved is care experienced, advice and guidance can be sought from Social Work colleagues.
* If the young person has brothers or sisters in the community who are care experienced, advice and guidance can also be sought from Social Work.

**Self-Care for Staff**

* All staff should feel the ability to show and express emotion related to the incident. Emotional feelings can often happen sometime after the incident – support can be provided at any time. This may be particularly important for staff members who live in the vicinity of the school community.
* There is no corporate expectation that Heads of Establishments will give press responses or speak publicly about the incident. Any requests for public statements should be discussed with the Communications Team.
* The document below gives a way for all staff to assess their wellbeing. This tool can be used individually, or in conjunction with the link EP or SMT member.
* <https://learn.nes.nhs.scot/30741/psychosocial-mental-health-and-wellbeing-support/taking-care-of-myself/wellbeing-planning-tool>
* Staff can also access Time for Talking, a resource to support emotional wellbeing. [www.timefortalking.co.uk](http://www.timefortalking.co.uk)

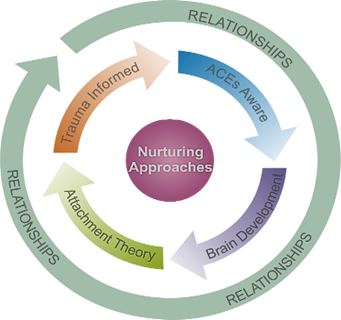
**Principles of Renfrewshire’s Nurturing Relationships Approach (RNRA) underpinning critical incidents**

It has been identified that social factors, such as the quality and strength of relationships and connectedness within individual and group support networks are key in coping with adversity, including critical incidents. Most children and young people will be best supported through their existing networks, including their educational establishment and the adults there that they know and trust.

Education Scotland 2018 makes the links between nurturing approaches, Adverse Childhood Experiences (ACEs) and trauma informed practice, recognising the

importance of relationships in helping to reduce the negative impact of adversity and trauma and to build resilience.

[Nurture, Adverse Childhood Experiences and Trauma informed practice: Making the links between these approaches (education.gov.scot)](https://education.gov.scot/media/qorfmno3/inc83-making-the-links-nurture-aces-and-trauma.pdf)



Renfrewshire establishments are in a particularly strong position to support children and young people through the relational and nurturing environments and approaches developed through RNRA. Staff should be confident that through their RNRA development they already have the ethos, knowledge, skills and practice in place that will help to support children and young people, staff and communities in the immediate aftermath of a traumatic event, and to promote coping and resilience through the medium term and on-going response. The nurture principles provide a framework for supporting children and young people.

**The 6 Nurture Principles   
(The Nurture Group Network)**

**Learning is understood developmentally** – children and young people’s understanding of the critical incident and of death (if this has occurred), and how they are likely to respond and grieve will be linked to their developmental stage (it is important to think about developmental stage rather than chronological age). Information about how children and young people react to loss at different developmental stages, the type of support they need and resources that could help, including for children and young people with additional support needs can be found here:

* [A Whole School Approach to Loss and Bereavement (glowscotland.org.uk)](https://blogs.glowscotland.org.uk/glowblogs/public/glasgowpsychologicalservice/uploads/sites/4587/2022/01/12122302/A-Whole-School-Approach-to-Loss-and-Bereavement-December-2021.pdf)

**The environment offers a safe base** – helping children and young people regain a sense of physical and psychological safety following a critical incident will help them to cope and build resilience. Psychological safety, refers to an environment where children and young people feel safe to express their feelings and are confident that adults will support them to understand and manage these. The strong relationships and connections built up through RNRA will really support with providing this psychological safety.

**Nurture is important for wellbeing** – this nurture principle highlights the importance of key adult relationships in buffering the impact of adversity and stress and supporting children and young people to develop positive coping strategies and resilience.

Research indicates that the reliable presence of at least one supportive relationship and multiple opportunities for developing effective coping skills are essential building blocks for the capacity to do well in the face of significant adversity.

**Language is a vital means of communication** – the use of nurturing language will help to promote a sense of connectedness and belonging (You are safe; We care about each other; We’ll get through this together). Through attuned interactions adults will be able to acknowledge, validate and help children and young people to understand their emotions, and to seek support if they need this (I know this is really hard for you; It is okay to feel …; I am here if you need me).

**All behaviour is communication** – children and young people may experience very strong emotions in response to a critical incident and are likely to show their emotional distress through their behaviour.

Changes in behaviour are typical following a critical incident and information about what could be expected at different developmental stages is detailed under ‘Learning is understood developmentally.’ Those who have experienced previous adversity and trauma may be more vulnerable to the impact of the additional emotional distress that a critical incident may trigger and may show more marked changes in behaviour.

Dr Bruce Perry’s **regulate relate reason** model could support in helping everyone to keep calm following a critical incident, and for adults to help contain the strong emotions that children and young people may be experiencing.

**Regulate**: Help the children and young people to regulate and calm their fight, flight, freeze stress response. Offer soothing comfort and reassurance.

**Relate**: Connect with the children and young people through an attuned, sensitive relationship. Accept and validate the children and young people's feelings so that they feel listened to and understood. Offer compassion, empathy and comfort. Reassure children and young people that the feelings they are experiencing are normal in this situation.

**Reason**: Support the children and young people to understand what has happened and to see the world as safe, despite what has happened, and offer hope that the community will get through what has happened together.

[The Three R's (beaconhouse.org.uk)](https://beaconhouse.org.uk/wp-content/uploads/2023/09/The-Three-Rs.pdf)

Lesson plans for emotional regulation following a critical incident can be found here:

[Lesson plans for emotion regulation following a critical incident - UK Trauma Council](https://uktraumacouncil.org/resources/ci-lessons)

**Transitions are important in children’s lives** – keeping familiar routines and structure is important in helping to re-claim a sense of normality, safety and control. Teachers will know their children and young people well and be skilled in getting the balance right between the time needed to take in information about a critical incident and provide support with the emotional response to this, and the comfort provided by returning to familiar routines. Consulting with children and young people about the return to learning will help them to gain a sense of control. Children and young people are unlikely be able to focus to new/complex learning at this time.

RNRA and the 6 nurture principles link very closely with the 5 evidence-based Principles that the UK Trauma Council recommend to guide the response to a Critical incident:

1. Safe
2. Calm
3. Connected
4. In control
5. Hopeful

[Guidance on creating the best environment for recovery - UK Trauma Council](https://uktraumacouncil.org/resources/ci-guidance)

This document contains guidance on how to put these 5 principles into practice in preparation for and over the immediate, medium and longer term response to a critical incident. There is also guidance on using these principles to write a Critical Incident policy [Developing a critical incidents policy - UK Trauma Council](https://uktraumacouncil.org/resources/ci-policy) and resources for staff training [Running a critical incidents INSET session for staff - UK Trauma Council](https://uktraumacouncil.org/resources/ci-inset).

The UK Trauma Council has identified that following critical incidents very broadly children and young people react in one of four ways:

Unaffected some children and young people will appear to be unaffected

Delayed some will appear to be doing well but develop distress and difficulties later

Enduring some will experience high levels of distress and difficulties that endure

Recovery some will struggle at first, but over time their difficulties/distress will decrease

**Identifying those who may need more help**

The majority of children and young people will be supported through universal supports but some children and young people may require more targeted or specialist support. This UK Trauma video and guide gives guidance on how to identify, monitor and support children and young people who are experiencing enduring distress and difficulties.

[Traumatic Bereavement - UK Trauma Council](https://uktraumacouncil.org/resources/traumatic-bereavement)

[Traumatic-Bereavement-Schools-Guide-v02-UKTC.pdf (uktraumacouncil.link)](https://uktraumacouncil.link/documents/Traumatic-Bereavement-Schools-Guide-v02-UKTC.pdf)



**Resources**

[Critical Incidents in Educational Communities - UK Trauma Council](https://uktraumacouncil.org/resources/critical-incidents)

Assembly

<https://www.childbereavementuk.org/Handlers/Download.ashx?IDMF=7ff209c6-7dc6-4e30-9fca-96b73f4197ee>

Teacher Tips

<https://www.richmondshope.org.uk/wp-content/uploads/2018/05/Glasgow-Support-at-School-Card.pdf>

Lived Experiences of CYP expressing grief through the creation of comics

<https://discovery.dundee.ac.uk/ws/portalfiles/portal/40776534/Comics_Bereavement_Final_a_compressed.pdf>

Advice about talking to your child about loss.

<https://kidshealth.org/en/parents/death.html>

<https://www.barnardos.org.uk/get-support/support-for-parents-and-carers/mental-health/grief-and-loss/how-to-talk-to-your-child-about-grief>

<https://www.childbereavementuk.org/explaining-to-a-child-that-someone-has-died>

Seasons for Growth

Training opportunities are available locally via the Family Well Being Service contact Morag McGuire morag.mcguire@renfrewshire.gov.uk and also nationally at [Home - Seasons for Growth](https://www.seasonsforgrowth.org.uk/)

Agencies & Helplines:

Renfrewshire Bereavement Network at [support@renfbn.org.uk](mailto:support@renfbn.org.uk) or call us on [0800 038 6020](tel:0800%20038%206020)

<https://www.renfrewshire.gov.uk/article/10528/Renfrewshire-Bereavement-Network#:~:text=Contact%20us,us%20on%200800%20038%206020.&text=If%20you're%20referring%20someone,form%20for%20professionals%20%5B114KB%5D%20>.

Samaritans:

[Step\_by\_step\_support\_-\_Help\_when\_you\_needed\_it\_most\_booklet\_UK\_EDS08UK\_2020\_WEB.pdf (samaritans.org)](https://media.samaritans.org/documents/Step_by_step_support_-_Help_when_you_needed_it_most_booklet_UK_EDS08UK_2020_WEB.pdf)

Chris’s House:

[Chris's House – Centre of Help, Response and Intervention Surrounding Suicide (chrisshouse.org)](https://chrisshouse.org/)

Supporting People Who Are Experiencing Bereavement Grief, Trauma, and Loss (affected by murder, culpable homicide, and suicide):

[PETAL Support – Supporting People Experiencing Trauma and Loss](http://www.petalsupport.com/)

[How to explain suicide to a child | Winston's Wish | Advice & resources (winstonswish.org)](https://www.winstonswish.org/explain-suicide-to-children/)

[Supporting children and young people bereaved by murder or manslaughter | Child Bereavement UK](https://www.childbereavementuk.org/information-bereaved-by-murder-manslaughter)

[Homicide: Bereavement support for children | Winston's Wish (winstonswish.org)](https://www.winstonswish.org/death-through-homicide/)

Children’s Developmental Understanding:

[Children's understanding of death at different ages | Child Bereavement UK](https://www.childbereavementuk.org/childrens-understanding-of-death-at-different-ages)

[Do children grieve differently to adults? | Winston's Wish (winstonswish.org)](https://www.winstonswish.org/do-children-grieve-differently/)

[NAIT Supporting Autistic Learners with Bereavement Draft Guidance FINAL (thirdspace.scot)](https://www.thirdspace.scot/wp-content/uploads/2022/06/NAIT-Supporting-Autistic-Learners-with-Bereavement-Guidance-2022.pdf)

[Grief and Bereavement Resources | Autism Speaks](https://www.autismspeaks.org/grief-and-bereavement-resources)

[Supporting bereaved children and young people with special educational needs | Child Bereavement UK](https://www.childbereavementuk.org/information-bereaved-children-with-special-needs#:~:text=Supporting%20bereaved%20children%20and%20young%20people%20with%20special,6%20Remembering%20the%20person%20who%20has%20died%20)

[Bereavement support for children with SEND | Winston's Wish (winstonswish.org)](https://www.winstonswish.org/supporting-children-with-send/)

Useful Videos:

[Traumatic Bereavement - UK Trauma Council](https://uktraumacouncil.org/resources/traumatic-bereavement)

[Talking to children who are bereaved - YouTube](https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=vUS89lFr0XA&t=6s)

[How do you help a grieving friend? - YouTube](https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=l2zLCCRT-nE)

[Puddle Jumping Animation | Child Bereavement UK](https://www.childbereavementuk.org/puddle-jumping)

[Supporting a child after a frightening event | Child Bereavement UK](https://www.childbereavementuk.org/supporting-a-child-after-a-frightening-event)

Understanding different cultural contexts for loss:

[Faiths, beliefs, cultures and communities | Child Bereavement UK](https://www.childbereavementuk.org/pages/faqs/category/faiths-beliefs-cultures-and-communities)

**Appendix 1**

**UK Trauma Council Critical Incidents policy template for schools**

**This policy template is yours to adapt, brand and edit as best fits the needs of your school, staff and pupils.**

We would appreciate you acknowledging the UKTC in your completed policy.

|  |  |
| --- | --- |
| 1. | **Introduction and five guiding principles including definition of a critical incident.**  We consider that a critical incident is an event that is potentially traumatic, and affects a large part, or the whole of our school, rather than just one or two individuals.  Such events are likely to cause many people in our community distress and may threaten to overwhelm our capacity to cope.  *This policy might also be useful to support our school’s response to serious incidents that affect just one or a few pupils by using the guidance to shape our response to the specific pupil/s affected.*  This policy is based on five evidence-informed principles that will help us respond to a critical incident in ways that reduce the impact of trauma and create the best environment for recovery. These principles help children and young people to feel:   * *Safe* * *Calm* * *Connected* * *In control* * *Hopeful* |
| 2. | **Purpose and benefits of policy**  The purpose of this policy is to help the Senior Leadership, the governing body (or similar board) and whole staff team respond to critical incidents in a way that will best support the psychological recovery of the pupils and staff and enable the school to function effectively.  Using this policy will benefit us by guiding us to:   * feel confident that the responses we make are underpinned by the best available evidence. * support our staff, children and young people following a critical incident. * facilitate psychological recovery and reduce the potential traumatic impact of the event. * empower our educational community to function effectively. * help identify children and young people who might be more at risk to the potential impact from the trauma of the event. |
| 3. | **Links to other key policies**  This policy will be implemented alongside other relevant school policies including Pastoral Care, Anti racism, Safeguarding, Internet/Mobile Use, Health & Safety, Media and SEND Policies. |
| 4. | **Key staff roles in the event of a critical incident:**  In the event of a critical incident the Critical Incidents Management Team (CIMT) will be formed to undertake the following roles:  *(Enter staff names)*  Overall CIMT lead  Site safety/first aid co-ordinator- including communication with emergency services  Communication with and support for staff  Communication with and support for children and young people  Communication with parents/carers  Liaison with external agencies  Media liaison  CIMT support (person responsible for supporting the above team)  Adaptations to roles might be required depending on the nature of the event and who is involved. Some staff might also take on multiple roles where appropriate. Staff will be able to decline any task that they currently feel unable to do. |
| 5. | **Our response**  At each stage of our response to a critical incident we will ask *what we can do that will help our pupils and staff feel:*   * *Safe* * *Calm* * *Connected* * *In control* * *Hopeful* |
| 5a. | **Preparation**  **In our preparation for a potential critical incident, in order to help our school community to feel safe, calm, connected, in control and hopeful we will…**   1. Use a Senior Leadership meeting to review our current policy. 2. Deliver an INSET session to all staff and governors ([UKTC INSET resource](https://uktraumacouncil.org/resources/ci-inset)). 3. Update our critical incidents policy in light of discussion from the INSET session and drawing on evidence-based principles ([UKTC Critical Incidents guidance](https://uktraumacouncil.org/resources/ci-guidance)). 4. Prepare our CIMT (Critical Incidents Management team) identifying staff who are best placed to undertake key roles. |
| 5b. | **Immediate response-**  **In the first hours and days that follow a critical incident to help our school community to feel safe, calm, connected, in control and hopeful we will….**   1. Contact and use emergency service support as appropriate 2. Ensure that all staff, children and young people are accounted for and that the whereabouts of all people involved is known. If people are missing this will need to be acted upon. 3. Speak to staff, children and young people directly involved in the incident to consider immediate safety needs and any support required. 4. Ensure our children, young people and staff needs for water, food and rest are accommodated. 5. Seek to establish as far as possible the facts of the incident – who, what, where, when? 6. Decide whether the event qualifies as a critical incident. 7. Meet with senior leaders where possible and agree which members of staff will form the Critical Incidents Management Team. 8. Speak to involved professionals such as the police, medical professionals and social care to gather information and to agree any restrictions on what can be said and to whom. 9. Provide staff all with an initial outline of the incident and outline any first steps to be taken at this stage. 10. Make contact with the families of those staff and pupils directly involved to ensure that they are aware of the incident and of what has happened to their family member including where they are. 11. Make contact with key stakeholders: our chair of governors, the local authority or Multi-Academy Trust to inform them of the incident and to seek the support of specialist staff such as the Educational Psychology Service or media officer if appropriate. 12. Inform the rest of our school community, providing accurate and honest information. Consider sharing information in small groups if possible, and by staff who feel confident doing this. ([See UKTC Critical Incidents guidance](https://uktraumacouncil.org/resources/ci-guidance) immediate response for details on giving information). 13. Inform other professionals who work regularly in our setting but who might be missed as part of general staff communications such as peripatetic specialists. 14. Make plans to deal with the enquiries of pupils, families and the press. This can be done in collaboration with a media officer. 15. Decide how our school can operate or whether it will be better to close it for a short while. If being kept open will teaching be suspended temporarily and what alternative arrangements will be put in place? 16. Consider the practical implications of the incident on the running of our school, for example covering the classes of members of staff who are not able to be there. 17. If the critical incident is on a large scale, triggering the involvement of multiple services, decide if a Team Around the School is required to help co-ordinate multiple agency involvement. If so, establish who this will include and schedule initial meetings (see [UKTC Critical Incidents guidance](https://uktraumacouncil.org/resources/ci-guidance) supplement 5). 18. Begin to identify those in our community (staff, children and young people) who may be more vulnerable and need closer attention and support (see [UKTC Critical Incidents guidance](https://uktraumacouncil.org/resources/ci-guidance) medium term response and supplement 4 for further information). 19. Restore our familiar routines and structure within the school day as far as is possible and helpful. 20. Staff to explain and normalise distress, encouraging children and young people to use what helps them feel calmer. 21. Share and teach strategies to help regulate emotions ([UKTC Critical Incidents lesson plans](https://uktraumacouncil.org/resources/ci-lessons) 3-6 years, 7-11 years and 12+ years). 22. Facilitate connection between peers, staff and home. 23. Work to include our school community in decision making to give them some influence and control where possible. 24. Provide parents and carers with information about how to best help their child. 25. Keep a sense of hope visible, explicitly affirming how we will get through this together. |
| 5c. | **Medium term response-**  **In the first weeks that follow a critical incident in order to help our school community to feel safe, calm, connected, in control and hopeful we will….**   1. Update staff, pupils, parents and carers as new information and more details become available. 2. Build on news about how services are working to keep the community safe 3. Present information in printed form for pupils who would benefit from this, using simple text or their preferred symbols. 4. Where appropriate, develop partnerships with external professionals that hold expertise in the event we have experienced. 5. Closely monitor those in our community that may need targeted support including personalised care plans as they are at risk of developing more persistent problems (See [UKTC Critical Incidents guidance](https://uktraumacouncil.org/resources/ci-guidance) medium term response and supplement 4 about those who might be more vulnerable). 6. Monitor staff wellbeing, encouraging personal and collective responsibility to seek help both internally but also ensure information about external services is readily available. 7. Facilitate further opportunities for peer and community support in planning ways to help and /or memorialise those impacted. 8. Make plans that involve discussion about the future. |
| 5d. | **Ongoing response**  **In the months and years that follow a critical incident, to help our school community to feel safe, calm, connected, in control and hopeful we will….**   1. Seek to develop a new normal, embedding routines and structures that have been helpful. 2. Make referrals to services for pupils that might need specialist support, involving them and their parents/carers in the decision making. 3. Acknowledge key dates and triggers that might be more difficult for some in our community and put in measures to identify and support those most affected. 4. Collectively plan how we will mark the first anniversary using this as an occasion to remember what happened, name those who died, were bereaved or affected by the event and also to acknowledge how we have all coped. 5. Consider how we might develop an ongoing legacy of the incident that helps us show the value of those in our school. 6. Seek feedback from our school community about how we responded to this critical incident to identify lessons learned. 7. Record and share these lessons, reviewing our policy considering them. 8. Highlight and celebrate and explicitly acknowledge how far we have come. |
| 6. | **How & when dissemination and review**  This policy was signed by (governors?) finalised on (date) and shared with staff in meeting/briefing. It will be stored in our (shared drive?) and accessible to all staff as needed. HT/ SLT have ownership to review and update it at least every three years. |
| 7. | **Who else can help?**  When seeking outside support, we will draw from those who share our understanding about what can help and empower us to embed the guiding principles. This might also include developing a Team around the School.  Contact details for key services/organisations we may draw on include:   * Local authority critical incidents team * Educational Psychology team * Child Death Lead for local authority * Social care * Police/ other emergency services as appropriate * LEA media spokesperson as appropriate.   Other organisations who hold specific expertise relevant to the critical incident will be identified e.g., following a suicide.  Where our children /young people need specialist support for enduring difficulties we will make referrals to:   * General Practitioners (GPs) * Educational Psychology Service (EPS) * Child and Adolescent Mental Health Services (CAMHS) * Mental Health Support Teams (MHST) * Charities (such as counselling and child bereavement services) * School counsellor * Family hubs * Youth services and youth hubs |
| 8. | **Links to other resources/websites**  [**UKTC Critical Incidents resources**](https://uktraumacouncil.org/resources/critical-incidents)   * UKTC Critical incidents guidance * UKTC Critical incidents INSET session for staff consider and prepare their educational community response * UKTC Critical incidents lesson plans to help children regulate emotions (ages 3-6 years, 7-11 years and 12+ years) * UKTC Working with parents and carers resources * UKTC Traumatic bereavement resources including an [animation](https://uktraumacouncil.org/resources/traumatic-bereavement-for-school-communities) and a [Schools and colleges guide](https://uktraumacouncil.org/resources/traumatic-bereavement-for-school-communities). *These resources help those working with children and young people recognise when trauma might be impacting the ability to grieve. Includes information sheets for young people and for parents/carers.*   See [UKTC Critical Incidents guidance](https://uktraumacouncil.org/resources/ci-guidance) supplement 6 for further resources/ websites and organisations. |

This policy is based on a template by the UK Trauma Council as part of their [Critical Incidents resources.](https://uktraumacouncil.org/resources/critical-incidents)