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 operating under normal circumstances and requires assistance from the emergency services, the Local Authority (LA) or child minder Agency (CA).

Examples of critical incidents impacting 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 due to specific events, for e.g. Outbreak of epidemic
- 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)

Examples of critical incidents can occur:

- On the setting site during business hours
- 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 can be 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 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 dynamic risk assessment must be implemented. This must include appropriate adult to child ratios and circumstances where this may be exceeded, along with adequate parental consent

All children and staff must be signed in and out of the setting

Staff need to 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

**Definition of a major incident**

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

**Major incidents can include but is not limited to:**

- Death of a child or staff member
- Death or significant injury whilst on a trip and or outing
- An epidemic
- A violent incident towards a child or staff member within the setting and or 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

Actions towards critical incidents need to be managed in a timely fashion, these need to be as follows:

**Immediate - these are actions that should be carried out with immediate effect**

- Contact relevant emergency services. In order to ensure this happens appropriately all staff must know the contact details for emergency services, and if not in the setting the place where the incident has happened
- If on a visit/outing, make arrangements to return other children and staff to the safety of the setting. If relevant ensure the remaining staff are safe to drive, if not advise to use public transport
- When appropriate (or safe to do so) complete an incident log to include; all persons involved, date and time of the incident and any actions taken
- Contact Ofsted to report the significant incident
- Open an ongoing log of events (a chronology)
- 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 make contact
  - Ensure this person has appropriate information to share (it may be helpful to have a written guide, to ensure all people are provided with the same information, this needs to take into account what can be shared)
  - Provide families with appropriate contact numbers, for e.g. the number of the hospital
  - Check that families have the correct immediate support
  - Where you are unable to make contact with immediate families, liaise with the police so they can visit the home
All the above should be completed ONLY when contact with the police has taken place.
N.B. Further guidance should be taken from the police when the incident has resulted in a person’s death or serious injury.

Medium term action

- Critical incident 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
- Ensure all media contacts are directed to, or are dealt with following advice from the Local Authority corporate communications team (01302 736071) and/or the police
- Caution staff about talking to the media. Ensure all staff are reminded of their responsibilities regarding Data Protection and confidentiality
- Provide a confidential space for parents and partnership meetings

Names of those involved in the incident SHOULD NOT be released or confirmed to the media or other callers, without permission from the LA or the police.

- 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 activities practiced will not result in any further upset and fully support the children
- 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
  - Cultural or language difficulties
  - People who have previously suffered bereavement and/or loss

Where a setting makes a decision to close following an incident, all parents should be informed of child collection procedures. 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

**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

**Flood risk**

Managers and staff must be aware of any risk to children and staff which may result from flooding. The met office release flood warnings as follows:

- **Flood watch** – Flooding of low lying land and road is expected. Be aware, be prepared, watch out!
- **Flood warning** – Flooding of homes is expected. Act now!
- **Severe flood warning** – Severe flooding is expected. There is extreme danger to life and property. Act now!
- **All clear** – No further flooding is expected. Water levels will start to reduce

**Flood helplines:**

[www.environment-agency.gov.uk](http://www.environment-agency.gov.uk)

Environment Agency Flood line – 0845 988 1188
Useful contact numbers

Doncaster Safeguarding Children Board – 01302 734747

Referral and Response – 01302 737777 – Out of hours – 01302 796000

Referral and Response Helpline Numbers – 01302 737722

01302 737636

01302 737033

Local Authority Designated Officer – 01302 737748

Child Sexual Exploitation Team – 01302 732200

DMBC Corporate Communications Team – 01302 736071

Police – Emergency – 999

Police – Non emergency - 101

Health Protection Agency – 01142 428 850

DFE Prevent Helpline – Non emergency – 020 73407 264

DFE Prevent concerns – counter.extremism@education.gsi.gov.uk

Steve Butler – Prevent Officer – 01302 385095

Ofsted – 0300 123 1231

Environment Flood line – 0845 988 1188

www.environment-agency.gov.uk

Bereavement Services (Cruse) – 01302 814647