



Norfolk County Council

CRITICAL INCIDENTS & TRAUMA MANAGEMENT in schools, academies and other settings

2023/24 Edition

Emergency Information: The Red Book

Approved by:	Local Governing Body	Date: 27 September 2023
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Next review due by:	September 2024	

<http://www.norfolkepss.org.uk/information/preparing-responding-critical-incidents/>

Schools, academies and other educational settings working with children are strongly recommended to prepare plans for a possible critical incident, and to use the Red Book structure with this in mind. Please ensure that your governors/trustees are fully aware of your plans. Please revise this book annually, you will find the latest copy here:

<https://csapps.norfolk.gov.uk/ms/default.asp?folder=/criticalincidents/default.asp>
or <http://www.norfolkepss.org.uk/information/preparing-responding-critical-incidents/> (once registered and logged in)

In particular, settings should consider forming an incident management group. Individuals with specific responsibilities should be identified and recorded in the Red Book in advance of an incident, and revised when an incident occurs.

The book should continue to work as an aide memoir/checklist but also provides space to allow schools/academies/settings to customise it with their own information.

A Critical Incident may be defined as:

An event or events, usually sudden, which involve the experience of significant personal distress to a level which potentially overwhelms normal responses, procedures, and coping strategies and which is likely to have emotional and organisational consequences.

Critical Incident Support Line - 07623 912974 (8a.m.- 6p.m. Mon-Fri)

Norfolk County Council - 0344 8008020 (out of hours – serious incident)

What it's for:

The Critical Incident Support Line should be used to inform and request support from the Local Authority when a **traumatic or tragic** event has occurred. A critical incident may be the unexpected death of a child or an adult closely associated with the school/setting. Equally, it may be an event causing injuries which results in temporary or long-term disablement, for example road traffic accidents involving pupils/staff, or other events such as a fire. Support can also be offered in relation to some incidents where the LADO is involved, as well as when you are expecting the death of a child or member of staff due to illness. If you need an urgent response, please call the CI support line, otherwise use the non-urgent numbers on page 4. This is not an exhaustive list, please do get in touch if you need support.

Who do I speak to?

When you ring the number, an automated voice will say "Welcome to Page One Communications. We are taking messages for the Critical Incident Service, hours of operation are Monday – Friday, 8 a.m. to 6 p.m. If you are calling outside of those hours and need an urgent response, relating to a death or another serious incident, please call the out of hours number for Norfolk County Council on 0344 8008020 and speak to the emergency duty team. Otherwise, please hold the line for an operator."

You will then be put through to an operator, who will take a message. Please provide your details, the name of your school/setting, contact phone number (main school and alternative landline/mobile number) and a brief outline of what has occurred. This information will be immediately relayed to the Critical Incident Lead.

Please be aware that whilst you can leave a message at any time, hours of operation for the Critical Incident response via the pager number are Monday – Friday, 8 a.m. to 6 p.m.

What happens next?

Once you have made contact through the Critical Incident Support Line, you will be contacted by the Critical Incident Lead who will take further information and provide support and advice. A range of key individuals and services can be alerted as appropriate; foremost among these will be professionals trained in offering psychological support/trauma management (Critical Incident Team). They will be able to support the setting as it comes to terms with the consequences of a critical incident (p.11).

While critical incidents are, thankfully, rare, their effects can be profound and schools and others are encouraged to plan for the eventuality, to consider who might be affected and how best they might be supported. Training is available to prepare for Critical Incidents: <http://s4s.norfolk.gov.uk/Search/critical%20incident>.

Out of hours:

The Critical Incident Line is operational Monday – Friday, 8 a.m. – 6 p.m. If you need an urgent response out of hours, relating to a death or another serious incident, please call the out of hours number 0344 8008020 and speak to the Emergency Duty Team.

What the Critical Incident Support Line is not for:

The Critical Incident Support Line is not for events like boiler failures or loss of water. Please follow your business continuity plan. Should you need to close your school through such an incident, please report the closure through the "my schools" section <https://www.schools.norfolk.gov.uk/school-management/emergencies/emergency-school-closures>.

The Critical Incident Support Line does not provide a counselling service for individual staff suffering stress. Check with your employer what is offered as part of your HR Service. If your setting subscribes to Norfolk Support Line you can contact them on: 0800 169 7676.

If you are a professional concerned about a child in Norfolk and want to speak to someone about a safeguarding issue, please call the Children's Advice and Duty Service, on 0344 800 8021, Mo - Fr 8 am – 8pm. Out of hours please call 0344 8008020.

For safeguarding matters involving staff please call the Education Intervention Service Duty Desk (LADO triage) on 01603 307797 during office hours before completing a LADO referral. If you require immediate support because of the significant impact on your setting (see definition of critical incidents), you can also call the Critical Incident Line to access support.

Non-urgent advice:

If you would like non-urgent advice about a parental death or a general bereavement issue, please email the Critical Incident Leads: (Dr Bianca Finger-Berry and Cherie Pointon): criticalincidentservice@norfolk.gov.uk. If you need to call, please phone 01263 739064 or 07887 832413 for Dr Bianca Finger-Berry.

NORFOLK COUNTY COUNCIL CHILDREN'S SERVICES

Emergency Contacts

In the event of a critical incident, you should phone the following number for assistance.

07623 912974 (Mon - Fri 8am - 6pm)

0344 8008020 (out of hours – serious incident)

Please provide the following information:

Name of caller

Name of school/academy/setting

Contact numbers

Brief outline of the incident

Please be aware that the Critical Incident Response operates Monday – Fridays, 8 a.m. to 6 p.m. only. If you need an urgent response out of hours, usually relating to a death or another serious incident, please call the out of hours number (0344 8008020) and speak to the Emergency Duty Team.

Actions in the event of a Critical Incident

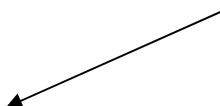
Take immediate action to safeguard pupils, staff and visitors. This may include contacting emergency services, administering first aid if necessary and securing the building.



Contact the Critical Incident Support Line 07623 912974 (out of hours 0344 8008020)



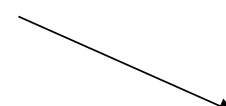
Form an Incident Management Group (see page 6) if possible/necessary



In case of an Educational visit,
refer to Graham Lodge 01603 307744
or 07825 282164 for advice and support
specific to visits



Refer to your business continuity
and guidance if appropriate



Access advice from the CI Lead and
support students and staff



Plan arrangements for the rest of the day



Incident Management Group to meet at the end of the day to review and plan for the next day.

When forming your Incident Management Group, you may consider allocating the following roles, which should be revised in the event of an incident. In a small school, the headteacher might take on several roles. Consider what roles are needed in your specific case and whether you need additional roles, e.g. a community/parent link.

Incident Management Group	Name
Incident Lead	Mark Eastwood
Lead - children's well-being	Sue Campbell
Lead - staff well-being	Mark Eastwood
Designated safeguarding lead link	Sue Campbell
Lead to liaise with affected family/families	Sue Campbell
Senior designated mental health link	Sue Campbell & Kirsty Ward
SENCO	Natalie Paine
Link governor/trustee for incidents	Glen Gates
Property Manager/Business Manager	John Sayer
Communications (Media) Support Link	Mark Eastwood

This document focuses on the needs of children and staff, therefore there will be no other reference to the property manager. Please follow your business continuity plan if appropriate and consider the business continuity guidance on the Norfolk Schools website: <https://www.schools.norfolk.gov.uk/school-management/emergencies/managing-emergencies-and-business-continuity>

- Ensure that essential details of the incident are taken and recorded (Incident Lead)

<p>What has happened?</p> <p>Date and time of the incident?</p> <p>The location of the incident?</p> <p>Details of any injuries at the scene?</p> <p>Who else witnessed the incident/ are at the scene?</p> <p>What advice have the emergency services given?</p> <p>What action has already been taken?</p> <p>Any other important information?</p>	
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- Notify the LA of the incident and request assistance if required (Incident Lead). Liaise with the LA Critical Incident Lead Officer re. support needed (see p.11 for CI offer)
- Ensure a dedicated emergency line is operational (alternative number for services supporting the school, in case the main school number will be busy with parental calls/office closed after hours)

Person Responsible: Mark Eastwood

Alternate telephone number: mobile phone used for behaviour walk (number to be shared when/if needed)

- If the incident is likely to attract media attention, you may wish to contact the Local Authority media support, or your own media officer for advice. You can contact the LA media enquiry desk on 01603 228888 or via pressoffice@norfolk.gov.uk. Out of normal working hours you can get support by calling 07818 454782. If your school has not subscribed to the LA media service you can purchase support on an hourly basis. It is important to ensure that those potentially receiving calls from the media know what the school's response is and are able to respond appropriately.
- Contact governors/trustees as appropriate (Governor/Trustee Lead)

Governors/Trustees to contact (Name)	Phone number
Glen Gates (Chair of LGB)	Available if needed
Lucy Scott (CEO)	Available if needed

- Identify vulnerable children/young people/adults (Welfare Lead) at the time of the incident
- Establish procedure for informing children and young people (*see guidelines, p.10*)
Person Responsible: Sue Campbell
- Ensure appropriate letter/email home to parents (*see sample letter and guidance, p.12*) – normally to be agreed with affected family
Person Responsible: Mark Eastwood

- Review the day and plan arrangements for the next day, consider support required for staff and children (Incident Management Group)

Person Responsible: Mark Eastwood

Suggested guidelines for informing pupils in small groups about a death

Exact words will be shared depending on the circumstances by Mark Eastwood

Preparation

Information about the circumstances (as far as possible/appropriate) of the death/incident need to be shared with staff (remember mid-day, administrative and part-time staff) as soon as you can. There needs to be clarity about what information can be shared with staff and children, e.g. what is in the public domain, what has been agreed with the family. It is helpful if all pupils can be told within the same period. Ideally pupils should be informed in small tutor/class groups, but larger schools may need to consider different arrangements.

If any member of staff feels unable to tell their group, they need to know that this is okay and alternative arrangements should be made.

Be aware of children/young people who have recently been bereaved or who are particularly vulnerable.

1. Preparing to share information with class / group

Take a moment to think about how you are going to share the news. Be aware of children/young people who have recently been bereaved or who are particularly vulnerable.

2. Sharing what has happened – (you may have been given a script)

Always give a warning shot: I need to share some sad news with you all. Xxx (brief description of who/position in the setting) has died/explanation of incident. Explain in small steps as some children may not be able to take in lots of information at once. Give information about the circumstances/cause of death if possible/appropriate. Use age appropriate, simple and clear language, avoid euphemisms.

If children ask questions, be clear about what information can be shared with them. Answer questions open and honestly if you can. It is okay to say 'I don't know' or 'We don't know yet' or 'Maybe we will be able to find out later'.

3. Acknowledge that different people will react/feel differently

All possible responses/ emotions are fine. Say that it is also okay to be happy and have fun, or not feel anything at all.

4. Getting Support

Tell children they should talk to someone if they feel really upset, worried, anxious, can't sleep, etc. Advise where / who they can go to for support (eg pastoral staff, Critical incident team etc.)

5. Peer Support

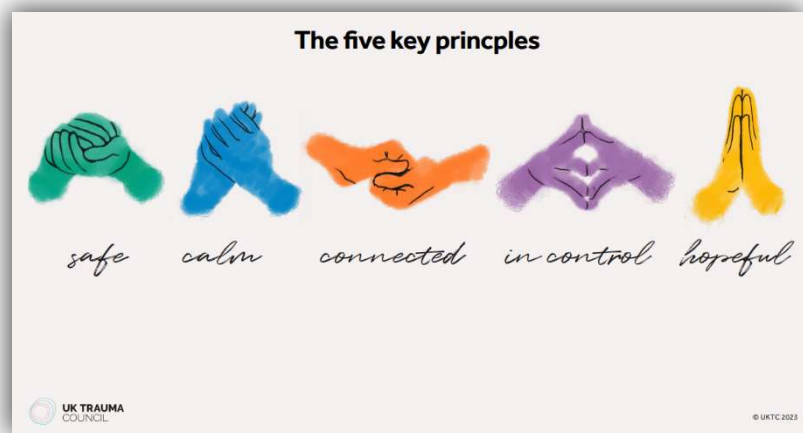
Encourage pupils to support each other –this is a really important time to look after each other; and be kind to others. Remember that we might all react in different ways. If you are worried about a friend, please talk to one of the adults in school.

6. Give time for individual responses

Allow children to talk about the person who died/the incident. Consider facilitating means of expressing feelings such as painting, drawing, writing, etc. Make a decision about whether this is appropriate depending on how close the children were to the person who died, or whether to proceed with lessons.

"There will be opportunities for us all to have time to think, talk and remember ... in our own way. We will talk to you again at some point about how we want to do this."

"Normal routines will continue." Talk about any exceptions and arrangements, e.g. support available for pupils who are very upset, (e.g. Critical Incident Team), how to access this support. Inform pupils that there will be a letter/email home to parents/carers.



Principles to support the psychological recovery of a school community

These principles are based on research by Hobfall et al. (2007) which identifies five principles for recovery after traumatic events.

There is no one-size-fits all road to recover after a critical incident, as every event and every educational community is unique. (UK Trauma Council, Critical incidents in educational communities, 2023)

More information on good practice around medium and ongoing response can also be found in the above linked resource.

Critical incident support team

The Critical Incident Support Team supports schools and settings following a critical or traumatic incident. We are a team of different professionals working for Norfolk Children's Services, with backgrounds in teaching, social work, educational psychology, early years and other relevant areas. We work in partnership with various agencies such as Police, Health, Children's Services, East Anglia Children's Hospices (EACH) and our local bereavement charity Nelson's Journey.

We are a team that provides emotional support, practical advice and containment to promote the well-being of the school community in times of crises, and to empower everyone in building resilience. We use evidence-based approaches to offer a quick response in a compassionate and empathic manner.

Advice and support to the Headteacher/Manager can include helping the school/setting assess the immediate demands of the situation, help identify children and staff who may be particularly vulnerable and need extra support, help consider best ways to share what has happened with the school community, to give information about when children and staff might need additional help, and to assist the headteacher/manager to keep the running of the school/setting as normal as possible in the given circumstances. We can offer psychological support to children, young people and staff in the immediate period following a critical incident or trauma.

We work to the five principles of recovery (Hobfall et al, 2007), which are sense of safety, calming, self- and community efficacy, connectedness, hope.

We will share our knowledge about the impact of traumatic events and bereavement on children and adults, and in addition to providing immediate support we can also discuss further what children and staff might need in the longer term. We can support the school in identifying those who are experiencing symptoms of post-traumatic stress and provide information about identifying and accessing specialist help. In some circumstances we can provide trauma focussed interventions to children/adults.

We can offer follow-up offer support and advice on issues such as funerals, memorials, inquests, anniversaries, etc., as well as training on bereavement and trauma.

Sample letter when a pupil/teacher has died

Feel free to use this sample letter as a basis for a letter from your school/setting, you can adapt and change it to your particular circumstances. You may also want to write a completely different letter, but the following might be useful to consider. We suggest to discuss the content of the letter with the family involved. In some circumstances it may not be appropriate to share the name of the

person who died with the whole school community. Please consider discussing this with the Critical Incident Team. This letter is now available in Portuguese, Lithuanian and Polish, please email bianca.finger-berry@norfolk.gov.uk for details. *If you are sending the letter out electronically, please ensure that it is **not** sent to the parents/carers of the pupil who died.*

Dear Parent/Carer,

It is with great sadness that I have to inform you about the (sudden) death of xxx (name if agreed with the family), one of our pupils/members of staff in Year x. The children were told this morning by their class teacher/form tutor.

Xxx (or a child/member of staff in our school/ in year x) died as a result of/ or the full detail surrounding the death are not known at this stage – but children have been reassured that this is something that does not happen very often. Your child may or may not want to talk about it, but it is likely that they will need your special care, attention and reassurance at this difficult time.

We are all deeply affected by the death, but we are trying, for the children's sake, to keep the school as normal as possible over the coming days, whilst allowing the children opportunities to talk if they want to. Trained staff from the Critical Incident Team are helping to support us through this difficult time. If you feel that your child needs extra support, please let us know.

Our thoughts are with the family, and the whole school community sends them our most sincere sympathy and support.

If you have any questions or concerns, please do not hesitate to contact me.

Yours sincerely,