



# **Marazion School**

## **Critical Incident Policy**

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**Reviewed March 2023 by Headteacher;  
Chair of Governors and Link Governors for Health and  
Safety**

**Approved March 2023 by FGB**

**Review: March 2025**

**Handling crises and dealing with incidents is part of school life.  
However, on occasion schools will experience incidents which by their  
nature and scale could be referred to as 'critical incidents'.**

## **Definition of a Critical Incident which may require the Management Team to Act**

An incident becomes critical when it constitutes a serious disruption arising with little or no warning on a scale beyond the coping capacity of the school operating under normal conditions, and requiring the assistance of the Emergency Services and/or Cornwall Council and others.

Examples of such incidents impacting on the school could include:

- Arson attack
- Major fire
- Significant vandalism
- Acts of terrorism
- Pupil suicides and sudden deaths
- Violent attacks on pupils and staff members
- The sudden death, in tragic circumstances of members of staff
- The sudden death of a member of the school community, for example a governor or a parent
- Terrorism
- Abductions / disappearances
- Incidents involving the murder of school children that attracted the attention of national and international media over prolonged periods
- Natural and/or man-made disaster

These incidents might occur:

- On the school site during school hours
- While pupils are taking part in activities away from the school site
- On school premises outside normal school hours
- On school transport
- Within the local community involving pupils from school

These guidelines are intended to assist us, as a school, to respond to a critical incident.

## **Critical Incident Management Team**

The team will take the lead in an emergency. The structure of the team is as follows:

Head Teacher	Jenny Rainbow
Business Manager	Edna Smith
Chair of Governors	Caroline Peers
H&S Governor	Tanya Tredinnick/Jim Allen

Using this definition as a basis for decision making, an incident is declared to be a critical following consultation between the person(s) managing the incident within the school (Head Teacher and Business Manager) and senior officers from within the LA. If there is any doubt, it is always better to consult and err on the side of caution and declare an incident as critical. **The school must be prepared and able to effectively manage such incidents.**

## **Procedures to manage the incident**

Our objectives are achieved through proactive and reactive practice, ie. what we do on a day-to-day basis to create the conditions that minimise critical incidents, and what we do when faced with such an incident.

In responding to an incident, the aim should always be to ensure:

- Rapid and appropriate action is taken
- Accurate information is provided
- Normal school routines are maintained as far as possible, giving continuity to all members of the school community with special regard to pupils
- Immediate, sensitive and non-intrusive support is offered

Action taking should be:

- It may be most appropriate to take whatever urgent action is needed to ensure the safety of others.
- The emergency services should be contacted immediately.
- As soon as possible, the Business Manager should start to keep a simple log of all events and actions.
- The Headteacher (or next most senior person) should communicate with the LA, emergency services, etc. via the school's mobile phone or via personal mobile phone. This will leave the school's main phone line free for incoming calls from parents, etc. (The same procedure should be used for keeping contact with off-site parties if they have been involved in a critical incident.)
- The Headteacher (or next-most senior person) will deploy staff as necessary to manage the situation and ensure the safety of all concerned. This may involve the Leadership Team being relieved of their classroom duties, and their classes being covered by colleagues.
- The Chair of Governors will be informed as quickly as possible.
- In many cases, the LA's officer and his/her team will take over much of the management of the incident, leaving the Headteacher free to deal with pupils, parents and colleagues.
- The School Secretary will generally answer all calls from anxious parents. They should keep a log of callers and check this against school records to determine who might still need to be contacted.
- Parents will need to be contacted promptly, but the way in which this is done will depend on the nature and scale of the incident. Contact may be made in person or by phone. In very serious circumstances, it may be appropriate for the police to make the initial contact. Before making contact with parents, the Headteacher will confer with those who will be making contact about what to say, possibly rehearsing the message first. We will limit our comments to the known facts, and not speculate on the causes or responsibility for the crisis.
- The School Secretary will keep a strict log of those parents who have been contacted, noting date and time of call, the number called and the person who was spoken to (or if there was no answer). This list should be cross-referenced with those who have contacted us.
- We will ascertain if there are any colleagues who might offer help with transport to the school if required.

- We will endeavour to delegate these calls to those not actually involved in managing the incident.
- When calling, we will check as far as is reasonable that parents are not left alone in distress, perhaps making suggestions for making contact with relatives or neighbours.
- We will offer any important phone numbers such as hospitals.

It is important to protect children, parents and staff from publicity. Press and television will not be given permission to enter the school premises or be given access to staff or children. One of the Headteacher's/Business Manager's first tasks on hearing of a crisis will be to contact the LA's support services. All enquiries by the media will be directed to the officer, who will give factual information to the media whilst maintaining the privacy of staff, children and their families. In any event, the only other persons to speak to the media would be the **Headteacher or Chair of Governors**.

Pupils should be told simply and without fabrication what has happened, in the smallest group possible - usually within their class. Questions should be answered as straight forwardly as possible. Information (preferably by letter) should be sent to parents and children should be informed by the end of the day if school has to be closed. As far as possible the school's normal routine should be followed to maintain security and continuity of the children.

In the event of deaths or serious injuries, the Headteacher will maintain close contact with the families involved and make arrangements for the school's representation at funerals, respecting the view, customs and wishes of parents.

If an incident happens off-site, the Headteacher will arrange for all contact with the party to go via the school. It is also highly probable that the best course of action will be for the children to be re-united with their families as soon as possible. The Headteacher, with advice and help from the police and the LA, will arrange to get the children home. In some instances, it may be appropriate to arrange for parents to be taken to the children.

The leader of an off-site party may need to act 'in loco parentis' to authorise emergency medical treatment. However, they may only do this if every reasonable effort has been made to contact the parents.

The whole school will be affected by a tragedy. The Headteacher will arrange debriefing sessions for directly-affected staff, check that procedures are in place for monitoring staff and pupils, and activate strategies for allowing all involved to express their feelings if they wish.

In the case of prolonged absences of anyone injured in an incident, the Headteacher will ensure that a member of staff makes contact with the child or colleague at home or in hospital, and subsequently make sensitive arrangements for their return to school, and thereafter check that monitoring procedures are in place. Consideration must also be given to arrangements for a special assembly or memorial service.

In the longer term, the Headteacher may need to introduce strategies to continue to monitor vulnerable pupils and staff, consult and decide on whether, and how,

to mark anniversaries, and to ensure that new staff are aware of which pupils/staff were affected and in what way.

### Summary of Action Plan

<b>Task</b>	<b>Responsibility</b>	<b>Timing</b>
Obtain immediate information at the start of the crisis	Headteacher/Business Manager	Immediately
Call the emergency services	Business Manager/ School Secretary	Immediately
Take whatever urgent action is needed to ensure the safety of others	Headteacher	Immediately
Senior Leadership Team and office staff meet to decide on key actions to be taken.	Headteacher	Within an hour
Establish links with the LA and Chair of Governors	Headteacher/ Assistant Headteacher	Within an hour
Contact families	Headteacher/ Assistant Headteacher	Continue until all informed
Call staff meeting	Headteacher	ASAP
Inform children in class	Class Teacher	As appropriate
Arrange de-briefing for children involved	Headteacher/ Assistant Headteacher	Same day if practical
Arrange de-briefing for staff involved	Headteacher/ Assistant Headteacher	ASAP
Identify high risk children and staff	Headteacher/ Assistant Headteacher	ASAP
Identify the need for group or individual support	Headteacher	In following days and weeks
Arrange memorials, etc	All	In following days and weeks