

CRITICAL INCIDENT POLICY

Author/reviewer responsible:	AXB	Last amended:	February 2025
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AIMS OF THE POLICY

The aim of this policy is to lessen the effect of a critical incident on the staff, students and parents Blanchelande College. It is anticipated that by adopting the procedures outlined in this policy it will be possible to provide a more secure environment for everyone associated with the school.

OTHER RELEVANT SCHOOL POLICIES

Other School policies relevant to health and safety should be read in conjunction with this policy:

- Safeguarding and child protection policy
- Behaviour policy
- Fire safety policy
- First aid policy
- Supervision policy
- Educational visits policy
- Health and Safety policy
- Risk Assessment policy

DEFINITION OF INCIDENTS

A school may experience a range of incidents that have to be managed.

- Incident: a situation that can be dealt with by the staff team. This may involve some communication with the School's Leadership Team and/or to parents, but individual staff members remain in control and are able to cope.
- Emergency: an incident which overwhelms the coping mechanisms of the staff team, and which requires the school's Emergency Plan to be initiated. This may involve some communication with, and possible support from, outside agencies but the school takes control of the situation and is able to cope.
- Critical Incident: an incident which overwhelms the coping mechanisms of both the staff team and the wider school systems and procedures, and which requires the school's Critical Incident Plan to be initiated.
- Major Incident: an incident which is declared as a major incident by the Police, who will take control, and where the relevant States of Guernsey Incident Plan is initiated. The school's Critical Incident Plan will be required to co-ordinate with the police or other authorities.

CRITICAL INCIDENTS

A critical incident is usually one which arises suddenly or escalates rapidly. Critical incidents may occur in school or out of school, but both will have a major impact on staff

and pupils. An incident may be designated as critical where the result is likely to include serious disruption to the normal running of the school, or where there is likely to be significant public and/or media attention on the school. The normal coping mechanisms of the staff team and school's operating procedures are likely to be overwhelmed and require the school's Critical Incident Plan to be initiated. Such incidents will usually require the assistance of the relevant emergency services and/or States of Guernsey and others. The incident or event may be unanticipated, imminent or in progress. It may occur on school property, in the local community or out of school.

EXAMPLES OF CRITICAL INCIDENTS IN SCHOOLS

- The death of a student(s) or member(s) of staff through sudden accident, murder, terminal illness or suicide.
- A serious accident involving students and school personnel on or off school premises.
- A violent attack or violent intrusion onto school premises, e.g. involving an armed intruder or a bomb alert.
- Fire, flood, building collapse or major vandalism in the school.
- A hostage situation.
- A disaster in the community, e.g. transport accident, terrorism.

PRACTICES WITHIN THE SCHOOL

Individual teachers have an important role to play in managing critical incidents and may well be the best people to deal with the students in their classes. In times of crises, teachers must react as they feel is appropriate (under the direction of the Principal) and there can be no easy formula for dealing with critical incidents. By ensuring good communication within school, a crisis may be managed more effectively. The main role of specialist agencies is one of support, empowerment and to support students who cannot be helped by the teachers within the school alone. By outlining the appropriate actions to be taken in the event of a critical incident the school aims to reduce this effect.

CRITICAL INCIDENT REPORT TEAM (CIRT)

A central component of this policy is the identification of the composition, roles and responsibilities of the Critical Incidents Response Team (CIRT). The role of the team is to review and direct the handling of the incident and the response and recovery processes to:

- Ensure the safety and security of pupils, staff, other users of the premises and visitors
- Minimise the loss to the school in physical, human and financial terms
- Manage an incident to minimise disruption to regular operations
- Liaise with appropriate agencies, including the Media.

The Critical Incidents Response Team will comprise the following personnel:

- Principal
- Chair of Governors
- Vice Principal
- Designated Safeguarding Lead
- Bursar

Critical incidents, by their very nature, develop quickly, and action should not be delayed if all team members are yet to be on site.

The Critical Incidents Response Team will, dependent upon the nature of the incident itself, be concerned with any of the following issues:

- Adequate assessment of hazards and situations which may require emergency action
- Analysis of requirements to address these hazards; establishment of liaison with all relevant emergency services; development of an effective management plan
- Dissemination of planned procedures
- Organisation of practice drills to test the plan
- Regular review of the plan
- Assisting the Principal with all aspects of the implementation of the plan
- Arranging staff development activities, where necessary.

PROCEDURES DURING A CRITICAL INCIDENT

The Principal or member of the SLT must be informed of any critical incident as soon as possible so that the correct procedures can be put in place.

- As soon as an incident is confirmed, the CIRT will meet to decide strategies
- The rest of the staff will be informed as soon as possible, preferably at a specially convened staff meeting
- All staff should share the same information
- Pupils will be told information simply and sensitively, without fabrication, preferably in smaller group situations
- The school will try, as far as possible, to keep to the normal routine.