



CRITICAL INCIDENT & INVACUATION POLICY AND PROCEDURES

Personnel and Curriculum Committee



Finance and Premises Committee



Full Governing Body



Christian Character Committee



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Date ratified: 23.3.21

Review date: Spring Term 2023 (or earlier if considered necessary)

Our Vision: To be guided by God's wisdom, to embrace challenge and to strive to achieve our best, enjoying all that we do together.

St. Augustine's Junior C of E (VA) Junior School Critical Incident & Invacuation Policy



CRITICAL INCIDENTS

Introduction

Schools, under normal circumstances, provide a safe and secure environment for all children to learn, develop and grow in. Unfortunately, crises or tragedies can occur and can result in significant distress for all individuals involved as well as for the school as a whole. A school can be affected in a number of ways, for instance, if a pupil or member of staff dies the whole school may feel the loss; or, when pupils who have suffered shock or injury return to school they may need to be treated with particular sensitivity. There are any number of possibilities requiring any number of responses and this policy outlines some of the procedures the school will take if such an incident presents itself.

What counts as a Critical Incident?

There are three levels of incident.

Level 1 – Major incident involving a large number of children/adults e.g. bus/train crash, major violence

Level 2 – Incident involving death or serious assault or other traumatic incident witnessed by children or staff

Level 3 – Distress/trauma resulting from an incident such as the sudden death of a teacher or classmate through a road traffic accident for example, but not witnessed by the pupils.

Pupils may be affected by crises that occur either in or out of school. For examples:

In-school

- the death of a pupil or member of staff through natural causes, such as illness;
- a traffic accident involving a pupil or staff member;
- a deliberate act of violence, such as a knifing or the use of a firearm;
- a school fire or flood;
- allegations or actual incidents of abuse against pupils by staff and staff against pupils;
- an arson attack on the school.

Out-of-school

- deaths or injuries on school journeys, trips or residential trips;
- tragedies involving children from many schools at public events such as football matches;
- civil disturbances;
- refugee children joining a school, uprooted from their countries and perhaps shocked by wars or atrocities;



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- abductions / disappearances;
- Incidents involving the murder of school children that attract the attention of national and international media over prolonged periods;
- a transport accident involving school members.

The emotional effects of disasters on children are not always immediately obvious to parents/carers or school staff. Indeed, at times children find it difficult to confide their distress to adults as they know that it will upset them. In some children the distress can last for months, even years, and may additionally affect their academic attainment.

At St Augustine's C of E Junior School, we take all children's needs seriously and ensure all children receive the help they require to explore such matters as death and significant harm or injury in an environment of trust, care and safety. We also recognise the impact such incidents can have on the well-being of staff and parents/ carers and will do our utmost to support any recovery needed and to work with any agencies required.

Preventative and Precautionary Measures

Whilst no amount of planning can totally prevent accidents and problems occurring, it is hoped that some can be prevented and the effects of others minimised by taking sensible precautionary measures.

At St Augustine's C of E Junior School we expect that:

- Staff and pupils will be familiar with the schools routines for fire and the evacuation of the school building on hearing the fire alarm
- Staff will be familiar with the routines and procedures for dealing with emergencies (as detailed in this policy);
- Staff and pupils will be familiar with the school's security procedures, in particular that all visitors not wearing a visitors badge should be questioned and escorted to the school entrance area;
- Staff organising school trips and visits follow the guidelines and write a risk assessment to be signed off by the Headteacher;
- Staff are aware of pupils with medical needs or health problems;
- Staff are aware of school policy in dealing with violence at work;
- Staff are aware that they should assess associated risks to children before carrying out a curriculum or other activity;
- Staff are aware that they are responsible for assessing risks to themselves before undertaking an activity.

Additionally, in the event of a critical incident the priorities of those adults in charge of the school or trip will be to:

- Save life
- Minimise personal injury
- Safeguard the interests of all pupils and staff

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- Minimise loss and to return to normal working as quickly as possible.

A list of useful contacts will be published in the school office to improve the effectiveness of communication during an emergency. Staff will be informed as to the specific location of this.

Plan to Minimise the Impact of a Crisis

At St Augustine's C of E Junior School, we will follow any guidance given by the Local Authority as well as any advice given by Cambridgeshire Police. The school's reaction to a critical incident can be divided into the following categories:

- a) Immediate action
- b) Short term action
- c) Medium term action
- d) Longer term action

IMMEDIATE ACTION – When a crisis occurs:

1. Obtain accurate information relating to the incident and relay this to the Headteacher (or Assistant Headteachers in his absence)
2. Ensure staff have an emergency number (mobile) to contact the Headteacher as outside lines may be jammed as a response to any incident outside of the school.
3. The Headteacher will contact the parents/ carers of the children involved and ask them to come into school for a full briefing if this is appropriate. Parents/ carers need to be informed of all available facts as early as possible.
4. The Chair of Governors and appropriate officers in the Local Authority will be contacted and notified of the incident so that appropriate assistance can be given.
5. Staff will be informed as early as possible.
6. Ensure any incoming calls by other parents or agencies are answered. A record of who has phoned will be kept so the school knows who else needs to be contacted.
7. All other parents/ carers will be informed that a significant accident has occurred. Any parent who is distressed will be offered support and telephone numbers given of agencies which can help.
8. A telephone call will be made to inform our neighbouring schools that an incident of significance has occurred.
9. The school will contact the Local Authority press officer for advice regarding dealing with the media. All guidance will be adhered to. No member of staff or member of the Governing Body will talk to the media unless previously arranged. Additionally, all parents/ carers and children will be asked not to talk to the media in the best interests of the children, staff and school as whole. It is expected that the LA press officer will deal with any request for television, radio or newspaper interviews. All enquiries will be directed to and through the press officer who will (if required) arrange to have a briefing session with the press.
10. Pupils will be informed of what has happened in a factual but sensitive way so to avoid any misunderstanding. It is preferable to do this as classes so that children can ask any questions they

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may have. Facts only will be shared and staff will not share any personal comments or speculations. They will be told as close to the time that parents/ carers are informed.

11. School routines will continue (as far as possible) to ensure the children feel secure.

SHORT TERM ACTION

Once it is confirmed that St Augustine's is facing a major crisis the following procedures will be actioned:

1. Ensure children receive any medical or first aid support they require and that they are physically safe from any further harm.
2. Ensure children are re-united with their families as soon as practicable. If necessary, organise for families to be taken to their children.
3. Ensure all staff, teaching and non-teaching, have an opportunity to express their emotional reactions to the crisis.
4. Make contacts with other professionals and organised support for any member of staff or child who requires professional help. The Headteacher has responsibility for ensuring that the right professional support is in place for the children. If appropriate, set up a regular support group, counselling sessions and someone who will monitor and access the children's and/ or staff's needs and their well-being.
5. Organise for appropriate agencies and/or the local clergy to come into school to talk to all the children in Worship if this is required and will be helpful.
6. After a few days or when deemed appropriate, organise for a designated person in school to be available to listen to any of the children's reflections, thoughts and feelings on the prior events. If a child feels more comfortable talking to another member of staff, this will be acknowledged and organised.
7. Staff need to be aware that children may show a reaction in their play and learning and that this can be a normal reaction to significant events. Staff need to make observation notes and keep careful records of any behaviour that is unusual for the child and share these with designated personnel.

MEDIUM TERM ACTION

Careful and sensitive planning is required to ensure pupils, staff and the whole school community recover as quickly as possible and that stability is recreated.

At St Augustine's C of E Junior School we will:

1. Make sensitive arrangements for the return to school which may include:
 - the possibility of part time or flexible attendance
 - preparing re-entry into the class
 - ensuring the curriculum is well thought through
 - a catch up package is planned
 - organising visits by the class teacher and friends to give confidence and a clear message of a support network at school

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- set up 'sanctuary' arrangements for any pupil if they feel upset or become overwhelmed by the recent events

2. Arrange alternative teaching if necessary.

3. Arrange support for affected staff. Staff may need to have their own needs met and the Headteacher will contact any appropriate outside consultants or agencies to assist with this. Advice will always be sought from Health or Local Authority personnel.

4. Liaise with parents which will include the sending of bulletins. These may include what help has been put in place, a list of people who can offer further support and who to contact if parents have any further concerns about their child.

5. Decide about attendance at funerals. This will usually be the Headteacher, the Chair of Governors and other members of the staff if available.

6. A special Worship or memorial service will be planned to allow the whole school community to acknowledge the events and to ensure there is a moving on from these if this is deemed appropriate.

7. Ensure staff and parents/ carers are aware of how they will be kept up to date with their child's progress in school. The Headteacher will contact any parent/ carer personally and establish a plan of communication.

LONGER TERM ACTION

At St Augustine's C of E Junior School we recognise that the effect of any crisis can last for many years. The following will be considered:

1. Introduction of strategies to continue monitoring the most vulnerable pupils and staff. All new members of staff will be informed of the events that took place and additionally, have access to any monitoring notes made. New staff will additionally know how to obtain further help if this is necessary.
2. Consult on whether and how to mark the anniversary of the event.
3. Plan how to deal with any legal processes, enquiries and even news stories that may bring back distressing memories and cause temporary upset within the school.

Curriculum Planning

At St Augustine's C of E Junior School, we believe that the subject of death and how to deal with death should not be left for when a critical incident happens in school. Most children will have experienced death in some way, whether this is the demise of a loved family member or a family pet. Death should be seen as a natural part of our life cycle and needs to be discussed sensitively through the curriculum we deliver. The discussion and coverage of these issues in the curriculum will mean that pupils will already have had some familiarity with them. Whatever the age of the children, the issues can be embedded in the curriculum, so that our young people are used to talking about such subjects. In this way they will not be shrouded in mystery and taboo and may feel more open to talk about their feelings and any fears, worries or anxieties they may have. The subjects of death and bereavement are explored through our Religious Education, Science and PSHE.

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We recognise that some teachers may find it uncomfortable to explore ideas and feelings they are not completely at ease with themselves. Additional development support will be sought from the Diocese/Local Authority (LA) who will help to develop strategies for dealing with difficult questions and personal feelings. We will always seek advice from professionals within the Diocese/LA who will help us to best support all the children within the school.

Multi-Cultural and Multi-Faith Issues

We recognise that we need to have a clear understanding of all of our pupils' backgrounds. This includes having an informed understanding of different cultural and religious attitudes to disability, disaster, death, bereavement, mourning and funerals. Such awareness of diverse views and expectations contributes towards creating a supportive ethos within the school. We aim to discuss these as part of our focus on Spiritual, Moral, Social and Cultural learning (SMSC) which is central to our curriculum. We continue to strive to deliver a curriculum that best prepares all of our young people for situations they will face during their lives. We value any feedback from children, as well as from parents/ carers. There is always an opportunity to talk to the Headteacher if there are any issues connected with serious injury, death or bereavement which families feel the school needs to be aware of. By working together, it is hoped that every child will be well supported.

Significant Damage to the School Premises

If the school building is not safe to be used as a place of learning the Headteacher will contact the Local Authority and Diocese for guidance in the hope that alternative arrangements can be made quickly. Parents will be informed that the school has been closed at the earliest opportunity so that appropriate child care can be secured. Information regarding the closure of the school will be through contacting the local radio station, contacting parents through an alert on the website Home Page and through phone calls and text/ email messages if these are available. The school will not reopen until all health and safety regulations have been met. We will always put the safety of our children and staff first. The Remote Education Policy may be implemented in the event that alternative premises cannot be secured.

INVACUATION PROCEDURES

Introduction

On very rare occasions, it may be necessary to seal off the school so that it cannot be entered from the outside. This will ensure that pupils, staff and visitors are kept safe in situations where there is a hazard in the school grounds or outside the school in the near vicinity. An "invacuation" will be implemented when there are serious security risks for the premises due to for example:

- A nearby chemical spillage;
- Proximity of unaccompanied dogs;
- Serious weather conditions;

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- Attempt by unauthorised persons to access the site.

Notification of Invacuation

Staff will be notified that invacuation procedures should take effect immediately on hearing the sounding of a horn.

Invacuation Procedures

At St Augustine's, the CLOSE procedure is followed during invacuations.

C – CLOSE ALL WINDOWS AND DOORS;

L – LOCK UP;

O – OUT OF SIGHT, MINIMISE MOVEMENT;

S – STAY SILENT, AVOID DRAWING ATTENTION;

E – ENDURE (be aware that you may be in invacuation for some time)

- 1) Once the horn has sounded, any children in the playground will be escorted inside as soon as possible and taken to their designated "invacuation" area:

Murray – Whiteboard end of classroom

Simmonds – Whiteboard end of classroom

Ross – Lower school corridor

Welby – Cupboard area of classroom

Attenborough – Art bay

Newton – Art bay

Glennie – Lovelace room

Farah – Art bay

Children in Peterborough Hall when invacuation signal is given, will be led to music room/cloakroom.

Children in Ely Hall when invacuation signal is given, will be escorted to Sharman/ Elgar Room.

Children not in class eg. In the toilet, when invacuation signal is given, will proceed to the nearest class room.

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- 2) Staff will ensure that all external windows and doors are locked and screened where possible.
- 3) Children will be positioned away from any external doors/windows against a wall/ under a table if possible.
- 4) Lights, Smartboards and computer monitors will be switched off.
- 5) Staff will support children in keeping calm and quiet.
- 6) Everyone will remain in invacuation positions until informed by SLT that it is safe to stand down.
- 7) As soon as possible after invacuation, teachers will return to their classrooms and register their children. SLT must be notified immediately of any pupils not accounted for.

Staff Roles

- Office staff will ensure that main reception door is secured and call police if necessary.
- Class staff will ensure that all external doors and windows in their lock down area are secure.
- Headteacher/ SLT will check all external doors.

Communication with Parents

- Parents will be informed as soon as it is safe to do so via text/email. Parent will be told:
“The school is in a full lockdown situation. During this period, reception will be unmanned, all external doors locked, and nobody allowed in or out. Please do not call school as this may tie up emergency lines. If we need to extend the school day, you will be notified in due course.”
- Depending on the type and severity of the incident, parents may be asked NOT to collect their children from school as it may put them/ their child at risk. Pupils will not be released to parents during lock down.
- A letter will be sent to parents as soon as is practically possible following invacuation, to inform parents of the context of the incident and reassure them that agreed protocol was applied.

Invacuation Drills

At least once a term, a whole school invacuation drill will take place to ensure that everyone knows exactly what to do in the event of an invacuation The Headteacher will monitor and record these alongside Fire Drills. Following a drill, staff and pupils will be debriefed and area for improvement will be identified.