Malvern Wells CE Primary School

Critical Incidents Policy

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'Let Your Light Shine.'

We aspire for everyone at Malvern Wells to be the BRIGHTEST version of themselves, equipped with the knowledge that they are unconditionally loved by God who sees their intrinsic value, free to take risks, make mistakes and grow in the safety of his forgiveness ready for the plans and purposes He has in store for their bright future.

Let YOUR Light Shine by Letting His Light Shine through You!

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Date approved by Governors:	
Next annual review date:	November 2027

INTRODUCTION

The aim of this policy is to lessen the effect of a critical incident on the staff, students and parents at Malvern Wells CE Primary School. This Policy follows the Worcestershire County Council Responding to Critical Incidents Guidance Procedures for School. 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.

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 (if in the UK) is declared as a major incident by the Police, who will take control, and where the relevant Local Authority's Major Incident Plan is initiated, or where (if outside the UK) the relevant authorities take control.
  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 Worcestershire County Council 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 School

- 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.

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- A hostage situation.
- A disaster in the community, e.g. transport accident, terrorism.

Practices within school

Individual class 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 School Finance & Business Manager/Executive Head) 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 Incidents Response 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 in order 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:

- Executive Head
- Head of School
- School Finance & Business Manager
- Chair of Governors
- Governor for Health and Safety

Not all members of the team need to be in attendance for the team to operate. 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 Executive Head with all aspects of the implementation of the plan
- Arranging staff development activities, where necessary.

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Procedures during a Critical Incident

The Executive Head 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.

Action Plan

Essentially critical incidents require the following procedures:

- Convene the Critical Incidents Response Team
- Establish who is in charge of the incident and establish clear roles and responsibilities within the CIRT
- Set up a communication network with clear channels
- Identify and inform First Aid personnel as appropriate
- Inform immediately the Chair of Governors, The Diocese and LA and any other appropriate officers,
- Collect, record and convey as much accurate information as possible
- Brief office staff regarding management of:
    - incoming enquires (telephone calls, email and social media)
    - outgoing information (telephone, email, website and social media channels)
- Set up an area for enquiries
- Use the MIS data for students' next of kin to contact parents of affected children
- Establish incident recording logs for all actions
- Lockdown the school premises to all visitors without prior approval of the Executive Head.

It is expected that the Local Authority will:

- Advise Public Relations team so that appropriate and timely assistance is provided to the school
- Ensure that the appropriate LA officers, including Health and Safety, are advised of the incident so that the best possible level of support can be made immediately available, as appropriate
- Ensure that appropriate outside agencies e.g. counselling services, are alerted to the incident so that support is available as soon as seen to be appropriate

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The Executive Head will liaise with LA officers and PR services to ensure that the timing of information sharing is coordinated appropriately.

Action Plan Timing:

Action	**Timescale**
Convene the Critical Incidents Response Team in the head's office, context dependent	Immediately
Establish who is in charge of the incident – usually the Executive Head	Immediately
Obtain factual information at the start	Immediately
Senior staff meeting with support personnel	Immediately
Advise LA	Immediately
Contact families	Immediately – at discretion of Executive Head, context dependent.
Establish clear roles and responsibilities within the CIRT	Within first hour
Carry out quick appreciation of immediate response required	Within first hour
Call a staff meeting to give information	Within hours if practicable
Inform pupils in small groups	Same day if possible
Arrange debriefing meeting for staff involved	Same day if possible
Arrange debriefing for pupils directly involved	Same day if possible
Identify high risk students and staff	Following day
Promote discussion in classes	Following days and weeks
Identify the need for group or individual treatment	Over days and weeks
Organise counselling	As required
Mark anniversary (discreetly)	Annually

The next scheduled review date for this policy is October 2027.

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