

HULME GRAMMAR SCHOOL

CRITICAL INCIDENT RESPONSE POLICY

This policy is applicable from EYFS through to year 13

Principles

A critical incident could involve

- serious injury or death of a colleague;
- suicide of a colleague or pupil
- serious self-harm of a colleague or pupil
- serious injury or death of a child;
- circumstances involving or likely to involve unusual attention from the media;
- circumstances involving serious threat;
- a significant outbreak of an infectious disease at the school.

No policy can anticipate all future events but a critical incident management team (CIMT) which has planned their response to a major incident is likely to manage a response more effectively.

The CIMT at Hulme will be based on the Senior Leadership Team (SLT). Members of the school's Senior School Management Team (SSMT) may also be used as circumstances dictate. Names, contact numbers, procedures and checklists will be updated regularly by the Principal's PA. Contact details during school holidays will be collated and circulated prior to the holiday by the Principal's PA. The school's SLT has a WhatsApp group to facilitate speedy communication for emergency situations.

Procedures

In the event of a critical incident, the following action should be taken *as soon as possible after notifying the emergency services*:

1 Members of staff at the incident site, or the first to be informed should: obtain and collate information about what has happened (Refer to Appendix 2)

- What has happened?
- Where and when?
- Name and contact numbers (landline/fax/mobile/email) of an adult at the incident site
- Extent of injuries, numbers and names
- Location of injured, name and contact number of the adult present
- Location of uninjured, name and number of adult present
- Is help required from the school?
- Who else has been informed?
- What else has been said?

2 The Principal should gather together and brief the CIMT (in the event of the Principal's absence this should be undertaken by the Deputy Principal)

- In the event of the critical incident occurring during the school holidays the Principal, or Deputy Principal co-ordinating the CIMT, should first establish the staff resources available for handling the incident
- Other adults, not necessarily teaching staff may be used where appropriate
- Appropriate governors should be informed
- The Principal, or Deputy Principal co-ordinating the CIMT, should allocate tasks as appropriate to ensure that points 3-8 below are covered

3 Allocate an incident management room and dedicated telephone lines

- Contact may be required with the media, medical, health and safety and maintenance personnel
- Therefore a separate dedicated line will be needed for outgoing calls and for incoming calls from key individuals
- The telephone lines may be inundated with incoming calls from anxious parents. Therefore the person dealing with incoming calls should be provided with an agreed factual statement with

reassurance about action taken at the incident site. This may be prepared in consultation with our PR advisors

4 Contact families whose children are involved

- Consistency of information is vital – where possible a chain of communication should be avoided, otherwise an agreed statement must be used
- If a parent cannot be contacted by phone, it may be necessary to use a reliable third party. Any message should relay known information and assurances of appropriate action taken
- The passing of all messages must be recorded

5 Make arrangements to inform other parents

- Careful consideration should be given to the possibility of legal liability, police action or health and safety issues before information is issued to other parents
- A letter sent with students may be sufficient to inform parents but a meeting in school may be required if there will be serious concern about some aspect of the school's organisation

6 Inform teaching and support staff

- All adults in contact with children must be kept well informed so that they feel confident and secure in handling questions and comments
- A schedule for updating should be arranged; meetings should ensure that knowledge is common but staff should be cautioned about talking to the media

7 Inform pupils

- Where possible this should be done in small groups with care being taken to protect pupils close to someone involved in the incident. We will use pastoral staff, the Nurse, the school counsellors and external agencies as appropriate.

8 Prepare to deal with the media

Unless otherwise agreed, contact with the media will be made by the Principal only; in the event that other members of the CIMT have to deal with media enquiries, then do

- respond to what and when questions
- give information quickly, accurately and with key messages highlighted
- choose our own time to report to the media
- prepare and rehearse the information to be released

but do not

- reply to how and why questions
- speculate
- bluff or lie
- make off the record comments
- make excuses or blame others
- respond to blind quotes
- say no comment – explain why you cannot comment
- as part of the school's public liability insurance it is entitled to £10,000 of free PR advice from Quantum Public Relations (01233 500200). The CIMT will decide whether it is appropriate to take professional PR advice in dealing with the media.
- The school has an ongoing contract with Rumpus PR who should be contacted for advice

Action to be taken in the aftermath of a critical incident

- Inform all staff and give guidance on how to support and talk to pupils, ie, take care with the form of words used
- Provide information to families on the kind of help and support available to them and their children
- Provide advice, as appropriate, to pupils, parents and staff as to what should, and should not, be discussed on social media.
- Encourage staff to ensure continuity and normality whilst at the same time allowing pupils to talk about their feelings; the normal school day will be maintained as far as possible to avoid unsettling the pupils

- Make arrangements to express sympathy to families directly affected by the incident
- Seek support from an appropriate local faith leader(s)
- Make plans to attend a funeral
- Discuss the desirability of holding special assemblies or memorial services
- Be sensitive to pupils directly affected returning to school after an incident
- Be sensitive to anniversaries
- Notify the school's insurers

APPENDIX 1

Critical incident notification record

Day _____ **Date** _____ **Time** _____

Person receiving the call/information _____

What has happened?
Where and when?
Name and contact numbers (landline/fax/mobile) of an adult at the incident site
Extent of injuries, numbers and names
Location of injured, name and contact number of the adult present
Location of uninjured, name and number of adult present
Is help required from the schools?
Who else has been informed?
What else has been said?

APPENDIX 2

Critical incident communication record

Name of recorder _____

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(I = incoming, O = outgoing; please tick appropriate column)

I	O	Caller / receiver / Designation	Action

Reviewed: May 2023

Next Review Due: May 2024