Bright Futures
EDUCATIONAL TRUST
The best *for* everyone, the best *from* everyone

CRISIS/ CRITICAL INCIDENT MANAGEMENT POLICY

This is a Trust-Wide Policy
which applies to all the schools within the Trust

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Owner of Policy:	**Chief Operating Officer**
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DISASTER CRISIS/CRITICAL INCIDENT MANAGEMENT POLICY

Bright Futures Educational Trust's (BFET or the Trust) Strategy underpins all aspects of this policy and the way in which it will be applied. Our vision is: the best ***for*** everyone and the best ***from*** everyone. This is underpinned by our core values which are:

- **Community** – we work together for a common purpose acknowledging our diversity as strength
- **Integrity** – we do the right things for the right reasons
- **Passion** – we take responsibility, work hard and have high aspirations

Our commitments are: to foster collaborative and strong relationships; for professional learning; to be supportive, challenging and fair; for effective communication; for strong governance and accountability; to achieve value for money and to be united behind decisions; equality

The Crisis and Critical Incident Management Policy supports our business continuity planning, aims to safeguard our children and staff and is to ensure that our work is maintained as quickly as possible in the event of a serious incident.

What is the Policy for?

The over-arching purposes of this Policy is to:

- prevent / minimise the loss of life / injury to all students, staff and visitors
- swiftly inform emergency services and relevant organisations with good, accurate information so that the right support can be mobilised
- take control of the incident until the emergency services arrive, thus minimising stress and discomfort
- swiftly carry out measures to ensure actions by other following the original incident do not further damage the Trust, students or staff
- fully support the Principal and leaders on site
- fully support students and staff following any incident, so that they are able to return to fully participating in education at the academy as soon as possible
- provide reassurance to parents/carers
- ensure that key events, actions and decisions taken are properly logged

Who is the Policy for?

The policy applies to all staff employed by the educational establishments which form part of Bright Futures Educational Trust (BFET), as well as members of the Local Governing Bodies of those establishments, Trust central staff teams, Members and Trustees.

Policy

1. Some types of emergency in the Academy

- Accidents or deliberate acts of violence/criminality
- Academy fire or explosion
- A student or member of staff being taken hostage
- Explosive device or suspected device being discovered
- Health: Medical Condition or Infectious Condition, e.g. Meningitis, Influenza, COVID-19
- Serious gas or water leak
- An outbreak of legionella
- Death or serious injury of a student or members of staff, particularly sudden or unexpected deaths

Off site:

- The death of a student or member of staff either by accident or natural causes
- Transport-related incident to students or staff which result in hospitalisation
- Severe weather: snow, storms, terrorist act which results in injury or death
- An incident within the local community requiring a BFET school to be used as an emergency centre

2. Preparation

In order to minimise the effect of any emergency, the Principal at each relevant academy will thoroughly prepare to ensure that all emergencies are dealt with smoothly and efficiently, with the minimum of stress to students, staff and bystanders.

The establishment of an Emergency Management Team will be one of the first steps to be taken in the event of a critical incident; this may need to be Trust wide or academy specific, dependent upon the particular situation. The Emergency Management Team will carefully consider all possible scenarios and prepare contingency plans at each academy to respond to the incident and how it unfolds.

3. Implementation of the academy's plan

The plan will need to be discussed with key staff who are nominated within it to ensure they are fully aware of their roles and responsibilities.

Plans will be shared with all staff occasionally and will be published for reference at least annually.

Training will be considered for appropriate staff, in relation to some of the main types of incident below, including, for example, dealing with bereavement.

Support for staff and identification of ways of accessing support will be planned for. There are times when it will not be appropriate for some members of staff, regardless of their professional roles, to be involved in critical incidents (for example, if someone is dealing with

personal grief aside from the incident.) It is useful therefore to have some nominated reserves.

A senior member of staff will be nominated to regularly review and update the academy plan.

Current lists of contact phone numbers will be available in electronic versions – both staff and student details.

All staff will be instructed not to give interviews or comments to the media. We will ask staff to direct all media enquiries to the Principal (or nominated person in the first instance who will refer to our Marketing/PR company.

Secure physical or remote access to the following resources must be available and clearly communicated to the Emergency Management Team:

- Contact numbers/methods for all students, staff and key organisations, Emergency Planning Team etc.
- List of students who have medical conditions (where relevant)
- Emergency registers if students are onsite
- First-aid equipment if necessary and, if available, specific medication for students with medical conditions.

4. Communication

It is important to have clear lines of communication to all stakeholders and external agencies, including the media.

- **Land-line telephony**
  It is likely that pressure will be placed on the academy phone lines and switchboard arrangements could hamper the ability of the academy to receive and send information. Mobile phones can be used.

- **Mobile phones**
  The Trust maintains 'Useful Contact Numbers' schedule as do school administrators. This list will be kept up to date and regularly be shared with Senior Leadership Teams at each academy.

- **Briefings**
  The Trust's nominated media/communications contact should consider providing or advising on scripts for people who are having to deal with enquiries.

  If digital communications are compromised, staff my be kept updated by regular verbal or written communications shared in a central place.

  School websites can be used.

All information should be factual: Time and location of incident; numbers of students and staff involved (no names); summary of action taken. Staff should not be drawn into speculation, just stick to the facts. Provide the time of next update.

All media coverage should be monitored for accuracy and any inaccuracies corrected. The Trust media contract includes support with critical incident communications

- **Students' mobile phones**
  Whilst students should be strongly discouraged from using personal mobile phones to ring parents/carers or others. It is likely, however, that information will 'leak' so a clear, factual official account of any incident should be signposted at all times. Any risk of unofficial images/video of an incident needs to be managed.

- **Local radio stations**
  In the event of any emergency, we will make full use of local radio stations and social media channels to communicate effectively with all families and other stakeholders. Regular updated passwords will be supplied by local media outlets but school staff should be careful to ensure that they are speaking to authorised media personnel.

5. Emergency Cascade System

If the academy cannot be opened for whatever reason, utility failure, severe weather, etc., an emergency cascade system should be used enabling all staff to be briefed and informed in a timely way.

6. Lessons learned

Following an Incident, a full review of the Risk Management and audit will take place as follows:

Trust Executive Team	Review Trust Risk Register
Chief Operating Officer	Review Trust Financial Risk Strategy
Trust media/comms contractor	Review/Mitigate Reputational Risk Review
Director of Education/Local Governing Body (for central Trust CEO/COO)	Succession planning review

Roles and Responsibilities

The overarching legal accountability for health and safety rests with the Board of Trustees who discharge this function through the Chief Executive Officer (Accounting Officer). The CEO will ensure that the Board is appropriately briefed in the event of a critical incident/emergency. Board members have no operational role in emergencies.

Bright Futures Executive Team delegates responsibility for the 'on the ground' management of such incidents to the designated academy Principal where it is an incident either at a single academy or a general occurrence that impacts more than one academy but with separate, school-specific implications (e.g. a pandemic, a local incident that impacts the geography of three academies in Gorton)

The Principal will identify key members of staff, who will form an Emergency Management Team and the Principal will communicate the names, roles and responsibilities of this team to the whole academy staff. The Principal will, at his/her discretion amend this team as appropriate to any situation. At all times, the Principal (and/or their designated senior leaders) can call upon the Trust's Executive Team for additional support. One team member should be responsible for logging key events, actions and decisions – date, time and rationale for decisions taken.

RESPONSIBILITY	ACTION
Executive Team	Has overall responsibility for the ensuring the Principal is supported in managing the incident.
Individual Academy Principal /Head of school	Responsible for the immediate management of the incident, with support from the Executive Team. This will involve liaising with Academy personnel, emergency services, council officers, etc.
Individual Academy Principal /Head of school	Responsible for the immediate management of all students and staff, assisted by other leaders and support staff.
BFET's preferred Marketing Company and Communications Nominee	Under the direction of the Principal, is solely responsible for liaising with the Media and organising communications with parents/carers and other stakeholders including statutory agencies who may limit communications. May need to call on official 'spokesperson' (Principal/CEO)
Relevant Executive Team personnel	Under the direction of the Principal will carry out any necessary tasks to ensure the smooth functioning of the school e.g. appointment of health support, IT support, psychology support, finding temporary accommodation

Further Information

Other associated Trust/Academy documents:

- Critical incident plan for each academy and the central teams
- Child Protection and Safeguarding policy
- Risk Management Strategy
- Health and Safety Policy
- Educational Visits/Trip Policy
- First Aid policy

Appendix 1 - Immediate to Long Term Tasks in the Event of an Emergency

Please refer to the 'Critical Incident Response' in Appendix 3

ACTION: IMMEDIATELY: The first priority for all is the safety of students and staff; once that is secured:

- Obtain as much factual information about the state of the emergency
- Alert the Principal; the Principal should alert and liaise with the Trust's CEO or COO
- The Principal will activate the emergency management team and determine any additional capacity/support required
- Carry out necessary briefing to staff as required at that moment
- Decide on immediate communications and assign responsibilities (e.g. handling television/press interviews, immediate comms to parents/carers)

ACTION: WITHIN THE FIRST HOUR

- Select and set up control arrangements to manage the incident and ensure students and staff in the academy remain safe and checks are made
- Involve and liaise with any external agencies (e.g. police, social care. health services) – depending on the scale of the incident, a statutory agency may assume overall charge of the incident
- Consider wider communications requirements/responsibilities/clearance required – WHO, WHAT, WHEN and HOW
- Inform the Chair of the Local Governing Body – and any other relevant local representatives such as councillors and MPs

ACTION: WITHIN HOURS

- Continue providing information to staff via the most appropriate method
- Determine any 'next day' and medium term arrangements, e.g. school closure
- Provide information for parents/carers and students via the most appropriate and sensitive methods/channels
- Arrange a debriefing meeting for any staff involved in the incident
- Arrange a debriefing meeting for any students involved in the incident

ACTION: WITHIN THE NEXT FEW DAYS; IT COULD BE LONGER

- Facilitate support for high-risk students and staff
- Arrange and communicate ways in which people can express their feelings about an incident (e.g. book of remembrance, place to gather)
- Monitor public communications (e.g. websites set up about the incident)
- Attend / organise funerals, services, memorials

ACTION: AS SOON AS POSSIBLE FOR AS LONG AS NECESSARY

- Decide and agree on a range of responses and support measures
- These have the potential to run for several weeks or months
- Refer affected students and staff to appropriate psychological/mental health support

Appendix 2 - Arson

Prevention Strategy

Every year a number of schools suffer arson attacks, usually during the holidays or out of hours. The loss of school buildings can cause significant disruption to student's learning. It is important, therefore, that we take all possible measures to reduce the risk of arson.

Normal Academy risk assessments will include an assessment of the risk of arson.

General school policies will describe how students access and move around different parts of the building both during the day and after hours.

Regular site security reviews will help to identify and control:

- Risk of unauthorised entry onto the academy site: mitigated through the installation of appropriate signs, fencing, vigilance and, if appropriate, CCTV;

- Risk of unauthorised entry into the Trust buildings: mitigated through ensuring all doors, windows and skylights are secure, lighting, an effective intruder alarm system is fitted and good quality CCTV cameras and digital recording facilities are fitted where necessary. Formal entrances/reception arrangements are secure and compliant with good safeguarding procedures.

Any new building work seeks to 'design out' potentially vulnerable areas.

Procedures are applied to ensure that access to any combustible material is strictly limited.

Full, safe procedures to 'close-down' areas of the Academy are applied at the end of the day and after any out of hours lettings/events as appropriate.

Appendix 3 - Critical incident response procedure checklist

This critical incident response (CIR) procedure checklist outlines the essential tasks that should be completed by the CIR team in the event of a critical incident (CI). It should be used to guide the roles and responsibilities of individuals' in the CIR team. School staff should utilise this procedure alongside BFET's Disaster Crisis/ Critical Incident Management Policy and Business Continuity Management Plan, and arrangements within your local authority.

Guiding principles

- The school community best-placed to deal with the majority of critical incidents.
- Effective responses to critical incidents are collaborative and not the sole responsibility of a school's principals.
- We acknowledge and respect the range of human responses to trauma and/ or bereavement.
- Research and good practice are used to inform the critical incident response to support individuals and reduce the risk of psychological harm.
- The CIR procedure is designed to support staff, parents/ carers and pupils.
- The CIR procedure has an overarching focus on Psychological First Aid and actively avoids Psychological Debriefing:
    - Psychological First Aid is used in the immediate aftermath of a critical incident to reduce initial stress and support short- and long-term functioning/ coping and does not assume that all those who experience a critical incident will develop mental health difficulties as a result. Psychological First Aid seeks to: establish human connection; ensure physical safety and emotional comfort; gather information about the critical incident; support those whose mental health has been affected as a result of the critical incident; provide information about supportive services.
    - Psychological Debriefing involves grouping together similar individuals (e.g., staff; parents/ carers; pupils) who have experienced a critical incident and encouraging them to express their individual reactions to the critical incident, discussing likely reactions to the critical incident and identifying individuals who may require further intervention.

Role of the EP

EP role when attending school may include: supporting CIR team in coordinating/ managing plan; provide support to staff, parents/ carers and/ or pupils in designated safe spaces/ times; liaise and/ or share information with LA services.

CIR team

The CIR team at [*school name*] consists of:

- [*name, role in school and role within CIR team*]
- [*name, role in school and role within CIR team*]

- [*name, role in school and role within CIR team*]
- [*name, role in school and role within CIR team*]

This CIR procedure was developed on [*date*]. It should be reviewed/ updated on [*date*].

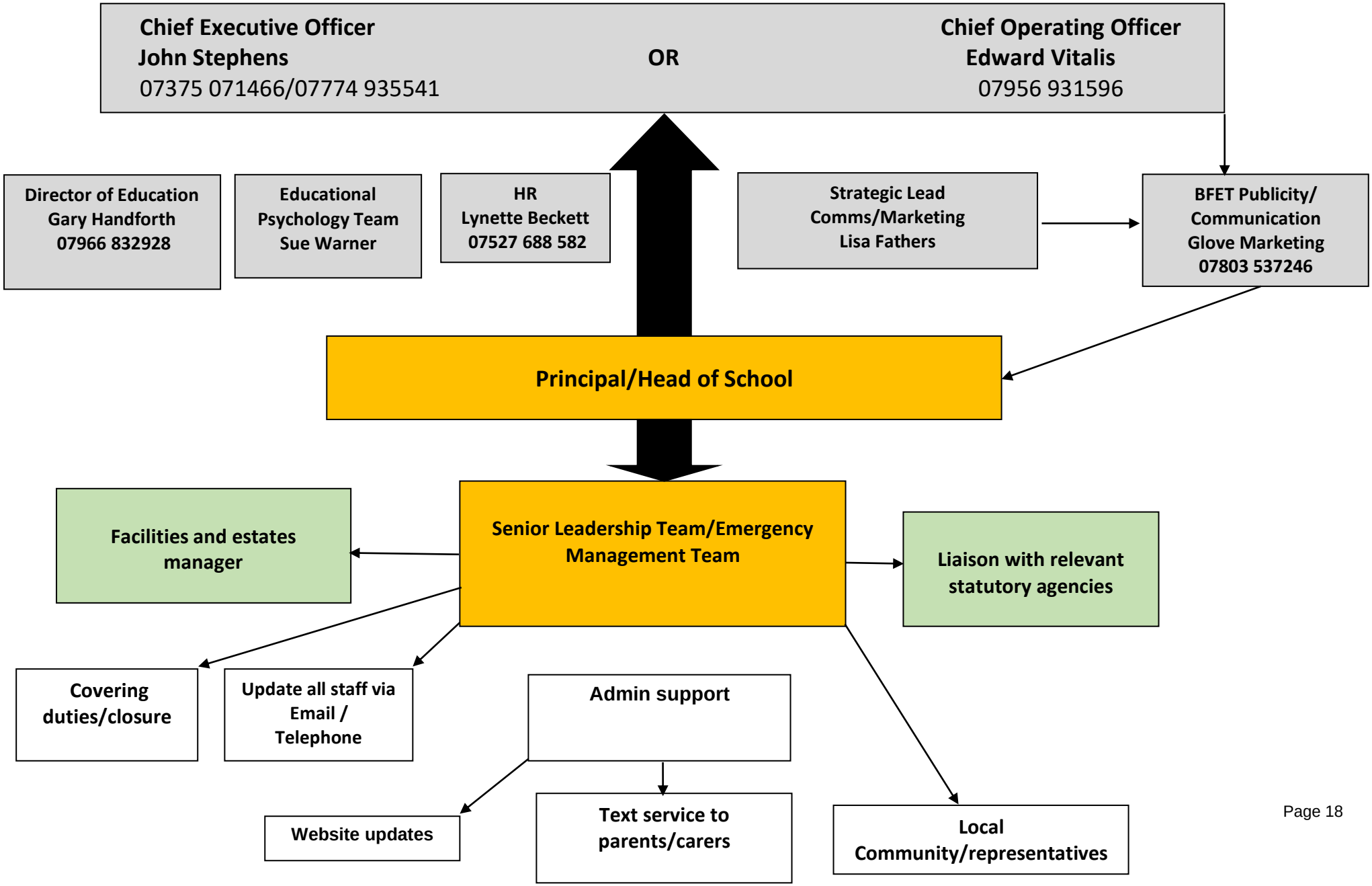
BEFORE	Who?	When by?	Completed?
Develop a 'communication strategy' in the event of a CI (both within/ outside of school hours/ term dates), including the following actions: • **To share/ discuss known facts within the CIR team;** • **To contact CEO (John Stephens) and Director of HR (Lynette Beckett) to share/ discuss known facts;** • **To liaise with other services as appropriate (e.g., the police; Social Services; LA HR services; etc.);** • **To manage media/ social media in liaison with Glove Marketing (John Brennan).**			
Cross-reference the CIR procedure with the BFET Disaster Crisis/ Critical Incident Management policy			
Disseminate the CIR procedure to all school staff			
Prepare/ collate information leaflets/ resources in case of a CI			

ON THE DAY	Who?	When by?	Completed?
Gather and establish known facts			
Implement the BFET Disaster/ Crisis Incident Management policy if necessary			
Implement the communication strategy			
Refer to the criteria below to decide whether the event constitutes a critical incident: **1) Sudden and unexpected;** **2) Serious, significant and outside the range of normal human experience;** **3) Markedly distressing;** **4) Has the potential to challenge or even overwhelm the coping mechanisms of the whole school or members of the school community.** **If yes to all of the above, contact Sue Warner (swarner@mhs.bfet.uk, 0161 223 9915 or 07795245425) or Jill Cinan (jcinan@mhs.bfet.uk, 0161 223 9915 or 07884170820), who will clarify key facts and then contact your link EP.**			
Agree CIR plan for the day with reference to the points below			
If the CI involved suicide, refer to *postvention response plan*.			
EP to contact school (within 1 hour of contacting Sue Warner) and determine level of involvement: **1) Agreed no further action;** **2) Support via various mediums;**	EP		

3) Attend school by invitation in pairs; 4) BFET-mandated intervention in event of CIR team incapacity.			
Identify vulnerable staff, parents/ carers and pupils. This includes staff, parents/ carers and pupils deemed to be generally vulnerable (e.g., SEND; SEMH), those with prior/ recent experience of similar trauma and/ or those who witnessed the critical incident			
CIR team to communicate CIR plan to: • all staff (including those who are absent); • parents/ carers; • key pupils (if appropriate). *Where possible, any communication to take place within an aspect of the normal school routine (e.g., staff briefing; parent/ carer letter/ text; form/ class time).* *Vulnerable staff, parents/ carers and pupils may benefit from facts being communicated on a 1:1 basis rather than in a group.*			
Other school staff to implement their aspect of the CIR plan with parents/ carers and pupils, accounting for vulnerability and normal school routine as outlined above (e.g., disseminating information to pupils in form/ class groups) *Whilst staff outside the CIR team may be called upon to reinforce key messages, all should be given the opportunity to voluntarily withdraw from this responsibility.*			
All communication to staff, parents/ carers and pupils to be informed by *conversation starters/ scripts* and *information leaflets*			
Make available designated safe spaces for staff, parents/ carers and pupils. This should be a calm environment, staffed by EP and/ or staff trained in mental health first aid, where people can individually reflect and self-regulate (e.g., mindful colouring; toys/ games; tea and biscuits; tissues). It should include a *sign-in sheet* and avoid psychological trauma debriefing techniques (Aucott & Soni, 2016).			
Teaching should continue as normal but with some flexibility (i.e. normal lessons for most, quiet/ reflective activities for some).			
Manage media and social media.			
If necessary, secure staff/ pupil possessions.			
If necessary, facilitate police interviews.			
CIR team to hold end of day review/ check-in with all staff.			
End of day CIR team meeting.			

SHORT-TERM FOLLOW-UP	Who?	When by?	Completed?
Agree CIR plan for each day.			
Continue CIR team communication.			
Continue CIR plan implementation.			
Re-establish, as quickly as possible, normal school routine.			
Continue, where appropriate, previous activities around: • **Managing media and social media;** • **Liaison with police/ HR;** • **Designated safe space.**			
Track, using the *monitoring matrix*, the wellbeing of: • **staff, parents/ carers and pupils identified as vulnerable;** • **those who are more distressed/ overwhelmed than others;** • **those who are coping less well than others.**			
Provide staff, parents/ carers and pupils with information about how they can access external support services within the community using *information leaflets*.			
If the critical incident involves death: • **Support any cultural/ religious practices around death (e.g., funerals; community events);** • **Engage in secular rituals to acknowledge the death within school (e.g., remembrance book; memory box; plaque/ memorial);** • **The use of social media is not advised.**			
CIR team to hold end of day review/ check-in with all staff.			
End of day CIR team meeting.			

LONG-TERM FOLLOW-UP	Who?	When by?	Completed?
CIR team to plan and communicate end of CIR response.			
Maintain normal school routine.			
Continue, where appropriate, previous activities around: • **Managing media and social media;** • **Liaison with police/ HR.**			
Review use and availability of designated safe spaces.			
Tailored reintegration for pupils/ staff who have had time off.			
For staff, parents/ carers and pupils who continue to cause concern (e.g., within the *monitoring matrix*),			

consider referral to internal support services (e.g., school counselling services) or external support services (see *information leaflets*).			
Where appropriate, EPs may work directly with staff and/ or pupils who have been referred			
Plan remembrance for significant occasions (e.g. birthdays, anniversaries, celebration events).			
Reflect on critical incident plan and response using *CIR review proforma*, potentially with invitation for involved parties (e.g., staff; parents/ carers; pupils; TaSS Team).			

APPENDIX 4: CRITICAL INCIDENT COMMUNICATION PATHWAY