



ST. MARY'S  
ACADEMY TRUST

# **DSJ Critical Incident Policy**

Our Schools Approach to (CIP)

Date agreed by Governors.....

Date to be reviewed.....

## Introduction and Background

Dodworth St. John The Baptist Academy (DSJ) takes the safety and welfare of everyone on our site seriously and in the event of an incident or emergency either on site or involving our staff and pupils off site (undertaking school related activities) we will invoke emergency procedures in line with our school policy and plans. If the incident relates to matters of pupil safeguarding, then the SMAT Safeguarding policy and procedure should be followed.

Our Incident Management Team (IMT) takes the responsibility in our school for putting a Critical Incident Policy (CIP) and Business resilience Plan in place. DSJ aims to protect the wellbeing of its children and staff by always providing a safe and nurturing environment.

*At DSJ we are proud of our happy, caring, and hard-working school. We provide a safe, respectful, and inclusive environment and have high expectations of our whole school community. We strive to ensure all learners achieve well, regardless of their starting points. We provide our learners with memorable experiences and a high-quality curriculum, which fosters a love of learning and prepares our pupils for life in today's world.*

The Senior Management Team and key governors have drawn up a CIP as one element of the school's policies and plans for the management of incidents/emergencies and disasters. Our IMT will take the lead on the development and implementation of our plan, including how communications flow and with whom communication/liaison responsibilities lie across the IMT/CEO/Trust board and other relevant stakeholders.

## Aim

The aim of the CIP is to help our school management and staff to react quickly and effectively in the event of an incident, to enable us to maintain a sense of control and to ensure that appropriate support is offered to children and staff. Having a good plan will ensure that the effects on our school community will be limited. It will enable us to affect a return to normality as soon as practically possible.

## Definition of a 'Critical Incident'

The staff and management of DSJ recognise a critical incident to be "an incident or sequence of events affecting pupils, staff or property requiring immediate responsive action beyond that which could be reasonably expected from the school's management team during the day to day running of the school."

Critical incidents may involve one or more children or staff members, or members of the wider local community. Types of incidents our school considers to be critical incidents might include:

- The sudden death of a member of the school community
- A significant accident involving pupils or staff on or off the school premises
- A physical attack on staff or children or intrusion into the school
- Serious damage to the school building through fire, arson, vandalism, floods etc.
- Threat to the school through malicious or authentic intent (e.g. bomb scare)

- A pandemic or other major absence of key staff
- The disappearance of a member of the school community
- An accident or tragedy in the wider community
- An incident in the neighbourhood (e.g. fire, threat of explosion, severe road traffic accident)

### **Creation of a coping supportive and caring ethos in our school**

We have put systems and procedures in place to help to build resilience in both staff and children, thus preparing them to cope with a range of life events. These include measures to address both the physical and psychological safety of the school community. We term this as;

*DSJ Safety Through all*

### **Physical Safety**

DSJ works in partnership with the FM provider 'Norse' to ensure the physical safety of people on-site. The building is designed to ensure swift evacuation yet security from intruders.

To ensure the continued physical safety DSJ has in place:

- ✓ Robust Health and Safety policy and procedures updates including induction
- ✓ Evacuation plans in place and these are routinely communicated
- ✓ Regular fire drills take place
- ✓ Regular lock-down drills take place
- ✓ Fire exits, fire doors and extinguishers are routinely checked
- ✓ Routine checks and service to services such as water and gas
- ✓ Clear safe to work procedure through safer recruiting and DBS checks
- ✓ Supervision and behaviour management is routinely reviewed by stakeholders
- ✓ Access control and physical security of our site, including gate controls and secure boundary fencing and visitor management which are regularly reviewed
- ✓ Control systems to manage responses to pandemic
- ✓ The building is designed to ensure swift evacuation yet secure from intruders
- ✓ Security alarm and monitoring

### **Psychological safety**

The management and staff of DSJ aim to use available curriculum-based programmes and resources to address the personal and social development of children, to enhance a sense of safety and security in the school and to provide opportunities for reflection and discussion.

- Social, Personal and Health Education is integrated into the work of the school. It is addressed in the curriculum by discussing issues such as grief and loss; communication skills; stress and anger management; resilience; conflict management; problem solving; help-seeking; bullying; decision making and prevention of alcohol and drug misuse. Promotion of mental health is an integral part of this provision, which is age specific to our children.
- Staff have access to training for their role in Social, Personal and health education

## Critical Incident Policy

- Key staff have specific training in mental wellbeing
- Staff are familiar with Child Protection Guidelines, policies and Procedures and details of how to proceed with suspicions or disclosures. This is routinely updated through CPD
- Information is provided on mental health in general and such specific areas as signs and symptoms of depression and anxiety. DSJ hosts themed weeks to promote wellbeing
- The school has developed links with a range of external agencies
- Inputs to children by external providers are carefully considered in the light of criteria about student safety, the appropriateness of the content, and the expertise of the providers.
- The school has a clear policy on anti-bullying and deals with alleged bullying instances in accordance with this policy (students and staff)
- There is a leader in place in the school who has a responsibility for pupil pastoral care and wellbeing
- Children and staff who are identified as being at risk are referred to the designated safeguarding lead staff. Concerns are explored and the appropriate level of assistance and support is provided.
- Issues and concerns are discussed regularly with parents, and where appropriate, a referral is made to an appropriate agency
- Online safety through a secure network (Cyber-essential (TBA) and SWGFL360safe)
- Careful management of data through GDPR protocol and practice
- Staff are routinely advised about how to access support for themselves.

### **Incident Management Team (IMT)**

An IMT has been established in our school in line with best practice and advice contained within our CIP/ (Business continuity plan (BCP) toolkit. The members of the team are selected on a voluntary basis and will retain their roles for at least one school year. The members of the team will meet annually to review and update the policy and plan.

### **Preparation of Critical Incident Plan (CIP)**

#### **Roles**

Our school will make arrangements for assigning roles, taking account of such practical issues as school size and complexity and the number of staff available. The incident controller will usually be the headteacher, dependent upon the incident nature. If appropriate our school may double up on roles identified where appropriate. We will actively involve governors in key roles within our IMT. Key roles identified in our school include:

- ✓ Incident Controller
- ✓ Police/emergency services liaison
- ✓ Staff liaison.
- ✓ Student liaison
- ✓ Parent liaison
- ✓ Community liaison
- ✓ Media liaison
- ✓ Administrator

- ✓ Building security management

### **Incident Controller**

- Alerts the team members to the crisis and convenes a meeting
- Coordinates the tasks of the team
- Liaises with the Governing Body and Leadership team and other appropriate bodies.
- Liaises with the bereaved family
- Liaises with the police/emergency services
- Ensures that information about deaths or other developments is checked out for accuracy before being shared

### **Staff liaison**

- Leads briefing meetings for staff on the facts as known, gives staff members an opportunity to express their feelings and ask questions, outlines the routine for the day
- Advises staff on the procedures for identification of vulnerable children
- Provides materials for staff (from their critical incident folder as appropriate)
- Keeps staff updated as the day progresses
- Is alert to vulnerable staff members and makes contact with them individually

### **Pupil liaison**

- Co-ordinate information from staff about children they are concerned about
- Undertakes briefings for pupils on information known (based on age of pupils)
- Alerts other staff to vulnerable children
- Provides materials for children (see resource materials)
- Keeps records of children seen by external professionals
- Looks after setting up and supervision of 'quiet' room where agreed

### **Parent liaison**

- Visits the bereaved family with the team leader
- Arranges parent meetings, if held
- May facilitate such meetings, and manage 'questions and answers'
- Manages the 'consent' issues in accordance with agreed school policy
- Ensures that sample letters are typed up, on the school's system and ready for adaptation
- Sets up room for meetings with parents
- Maintains a record of parents seen
- Meets with individual parents
- Provides appropriate materials for parents (see resource materials)

### **Media liaison**

- In advance of an incident, will consider issues that may arise and how they might be responded to (e.g. children and young people being interviewed, photographers on the premises, etc)
- In the event of an incident, will liaise where necessary with the relevant trade unions etc.

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- Will draw up a press statement, give media briefings and interviews (as agreed by school management/Media Team)

### Administrator

- Maintains up to date lists of contact names/numbers of
  - Parents/Carers/Teachers
  - Members of the Crisis Incident Management Team
  - Emergency support services and other external contacts and resources
- Liaises with agencies in the community for support and onward referral
- Is alert to the need to check credentials of individuals offering support
- Coordinates the involvement of these agencies
- Reminds agency staff to wear name badges
- Updates team members on the involvement of external agencies
- Takes telephone calls and notes those that need to be responded to
- Ensures that templates are on the schools system in advance and ready for adaptation
- Prepares and sends out letters, emails and faxes
- Photocopies materials needed & maintains necessary records

### Building Security Management

- Ensure building security and safety is maintained throughout the incident
- Control access in to and out of the site and school buildings to authorised persons only
- Liaise with emergency services
- Ensure that welfare facilities are maintained (light, heat, water, toilets etc)

### Record Keeping

In the event of an incident each member of the team will keep records of phone calls made and received, letters sent and received, meetings held, persons met, interventions used, material used, decisions taken etc. **The IMT** will have a key role in receiving and logging telephone calls, sending letters, photocopying materials, etc. Any recorded situation resulting in the need of this policy will at a minimum result in the sharing of the appendix (template record) being shared with the chair of governors.

### Confidentiality

The management and staff of DSJ have a responsibility to protect the confidentiality of people involved and information gathered during an incident and will be sensitive to the consequences of any public statements. The members of the school staff will bear this in mind, and will seek to ensure that children do so also. Terminology and disclosures around sudden bereavements will be used with extreme sensitivity and discretion at all times.

### **Critical incident rooms**

In the event of a critical incident,

- **Staff room** will be the main room used to meet the staff
- **HT office** for meetings with children
- **Community room** for meeting/accommodating parents
- **Library room** for meeting/accommodating the media
- **Library** for individual sessions with children and or quiet reflection
- **HT office** for IMT to meet
- **Reception** for other visitors to wait
- **Alternative site for triage of incident TBC**

### **Consultation and communication regarding the plan**

All staff have been consulted in the preparation of this policy and plan. Governors/trust members, parents/carers representatives and pupils (as appropriate) have also been consulted. Our current policy along with our plan has been presented to all staff and is available to download from DSJ network policy folder. All new and temporary staff and volunteers working in our school will be informed of the relevant information from the plan through induction

The plan will be updated annually in line with BMBC Section 175 annual audit or sooner, if following learnings from an incident.

Associated documents and procedure in response to incidents are in the SMAT/DSJ business resilience plan