



**MERCHANT
TAYLORS'
SCHOOLS**

For Boys and Girls
aged 4 to 18 years

Critical Incident Policy

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CRITICAL INCIDENT POLICY

It is the duty of every member of the School to be aware of the procedures to be followed in case of a major incident occurring within the School/outside of School/in or out of term time.

A major incident would include such occurrences as:

- the collapse of a building
- hostage situation
- an explosion or fire, flooding or major gas leak
- an intruder threatening damage
- a deliberate act of violence
- a bomb alert
- a death or deaths (student or staff)

Educational visits which result in a major incident will also be considered under the following procedures (accidents, etc).

In the event of an emergency the Head is in overall charge. In the absence of the Head during the school day, the senior Deputy Head should take charge and in her/his absence, a senior member of staff. After school hours or out-of-term time the assigned 'senior member of staff'* will take charge. In all instances the Head's PA should be informed to start the communication process

**A rota will be arranged for each holiday period by the Heads' PAs.*

The Estates and Facilities manager will be in charge of all estates personnel; including caterers, cleaners and contracted workers.

It is important to communicate the nature of an event to the Head immediately. In the event of the Head not being available then the normal chain of command should be employed, unless it is out-of-term time.

EVACUATION PROCEDURES: In most circumstances the School will be evacuated using the Fire Alarm system.

NON-EVACUATION PROCEDURES: There may be occasions when evacuating pupils may make a situation worse. In such situations everyone will be asked to go to agreed muster points or remain in classrooms.

All senior staff should report to the Head's Office to plan further courses of action.

It is very important that as many staff as possible remain with or join the students and occupy them until one of the following occurs:

- The fire alarm sounds – normal fire alert evacuation procedures should follow
- Instructions as what to do next are given by a senior member of staff
- A stand-down instruction is given.

Visitors in school: Each person visiting the site should be made aware of the safety procedures in school by the member of staff who is responsible for the visit and adhere to the procedures. The Appendix contains procedures and contact numbers for disaster recovery at each site.

IMMEDIATE ACTION PLAN [at the scene]

The procedures should include:

- Establish the nature and extent of the emergency – factual information should be relayed to the Head's Office (or designated office) as soon as possible. Relevant details must be written down and given to the Head or person in charge as soon as possible.
- Try to establish that everyone is accounted for.
- Establish the extent of any injuries and administer first aid if competent to do so.
- Establish the names of the injured and call the appropriate emergency service(s).
- Advise senior staff of the nature of the incident and the procedures in operation (and first aiders if necessary).
- Ensure that an adult accompanies the named casualties to hospital.
- Endeavour to create a safe haven for the rest of the party/group/school (this will depend upon the nature of the incident). If deemed advisable arrange for pupils to be sent home.
- Arrange for a senior member of staff to keep in contact with the emergency service(s). The use of a mobile phone may be essential.
- All contact with parents should be recorded*.
- Contact with parents* by the immediate party/group should be controlled by the *Crisis Management Team* to avoid misinformation and unnecessary distress.
- All parents of pupils (or relatives of a member of staff) who have been involved may need to be contacted* by an identified member of staff and may be advised to come into school. The *Crisis Management Team* may call on the services of professionals to lead the support.
- Other pupils should be informed simply and without fabrication. This is best done in small groups. Pupils should be asked to be mindful of their communication with their parents through the use of mobile phones.
- If possible the normal routine should be established as quickly as possible.

Remember: Do not discuss the incident with the media. This is normally undertaken by the Head (or delegated persons) with reference with the Chair of Governors.

In the event of serious injury or fatality, due consideration needs to be given to the most effective and sensitive manner of communication with parents. Other pupils involved in the incident should not communicate with home until permission has been sought from the member of staff managing the incident.

* Remember – Please do not leave a message on an answerphone other than “Please contact me/school urgently” and give the number.

Short term action

- Establish a crisis management team (*this should consist of at least 2 people*) and a control room and allocate roles (see below)
- Inform the Chair of Governors
- Organise reunion of children with parents (and rooms).
- Arrange briefing meeting for staff (to include the facts of the case, arrangements for help/support)
- Arrange debriefing meeting with the staff directly involved in the incident.
- Check procedures are in place for monitoring pupils and staff for post-trauma stress/counselling needs.
- Activate strategies for allowing pupils to express their feelings if they wish (i.e. choose a room and person for emotional respite).
- Contact families of those hurt or bereaved to express sympathy.
- Involve outside agencies where appropriate (press agency, recovery agency) **Consider the use of a professional PR company, such as Travel PR, to manage communication between the media and the school.**
- Arrange security of damaged site.
- Arrange storage of salvageable equipment.
- Agree a **press statement**, and give copies to all who answer the telephones. Ensure there is one person available for the press statement.
- Ensure that one of the school's telephone lines is staffed to deal with incoming calls
- Ensure accident forms are completed.

Medium Term action

- Ensure a member of staff makes contact with those children at home or in hospital.
- Make sensitive arrangements for their return to school.
- Arrange alternative teaching (buildings or staffing) if possible.
- Arrange consultation so staff can better support children.
- Clarify procedures for referring children for individual help.
- Liaise with parents eg bulletins.
- Decide attendance at funerals.
- Share the planning of a special assembly or memorial service.
- Check the monitoring procedures.
- Contact suppliers regarding services and equipment.

Longer term planning

- Consult and decide on whether or how to mark anniversaries.
- Ensure new staff are aware of which pupils were affected and in what way, and that they know where to find out more information.
- Introduce strategies to continue monitoring vulnerable staff and pupils.
- Remember that legal processes, enquiries and even news stores may bring back distressing memories and cause upset within the school.
- Review actions and events
- Check curriculum does tackle issues of death, injury and life in subjects such as RE, PSHE, drama and Circle Time.
- Set up strategies to support teachers when working with painful emotions and sensitive subjects.

ROLES AND RESPONSIBILITIES

Crisis management team

- Head, deputy(s), Marketing director, Head's PA, a Governor
- Where necessary
 - Estates and Facilities manager (& Key Holders)
 - Heads of Year
 - ICT/network manager(s)

Head/designated leader

- Gather factual information
- Contact Deputy Head who will start telephone network (list of who to contact)
- Establish the crisis management team
- With colleagues, set up an incident management room
- Keep Chair of Governors informed
- Keep a log of all actions/ decisions
- Agree an official spokesperson (someone to deal with the press calmly, efficiently and positively)

Deputy Head

- Record, possibly on a whiteboard/chart, all factual information to date and keep updating
- Organise transport issues
- Organise lists of students & their involvement

Chair of Governors

- Contact other governors using home telephone

Administration

- Make sure there is a dedicated phone line for incoming calls and a separate line for outgoing calls (mobile phone)
- All calls, incoming and outgoing, to be logged and a record kept of the name of caller, time of call and clear notes of the conversation.
- In the event of the school office being unavailable, one of the other school sites would be made available to us.

Health and Safety Officer

- Check all areas of policy are covered
- Check health and safety issues are met

Parents of children involved in the incident (- nb relations of staff involved)

- need full and accurate information
- may need to be brought to school to receive information
- Administration staff to carefully note who has been contacted, offer help (transport etc.) and make sure of support of relatives/neighbours.

Parent of children not directly involved

- clear warning that the school has suffered a crisis
- rehearsed message