

BILLINGHAY CHURCH OF ENGLAND PRIMARY SCHOOL
CRITICAL INCIDENT POLICY
April 2026

1. Introduction and Purpose of this Policy

- This policy outlines the procedures which Billingham Church of England Primary School will follow when dealing with a Critical Incident.
- This policy must be read in conjunction with our Lockdown Policy and also Martyn's Law Incident Guidance for Education Providers as Appendix 12.

2. Rationale

- This policy is an important document and all staff should be aware of, and familiar with, its content. Naturally, no school wishes to be involved in a critical incident of any kind especially one that involves injury to adults or children. However, in the event that such a situation arises in school or on a trip or that damage to the building occurs staff need to be aware of the contingency plan for Billingham CE Primary School.
- A Critical Incident may be defined as any sudden and unexpected incident or sequence of events which causes trauma within the school community and which overwhelms the normal coping mechanisms of the school.

As such, critical incidents include:

- Sudden death of a pupil or member of staff;
- Disappearance of a pupil or member of staff;
- Death or serious injury on a school outing;
- Severe injury to a pupil or staff member as a result of a road traffic accident;
- Serious assault on a pupil or a member of staff;
- Violent/disturbed intruder on school premises during the day;
- Serious damage to the school building or property through fire, flood or vandalism;
- An incident which affects access/egress for the school;
- A civil disturbance or terrorism in the local community;
- A more widespread emergency in the community for example, the release of hazardous substances, severe weather etc;
- Pupil or member of staff with a contagious disease;
- Immediate evacuation of the school with no likelihood of return for a number of hours;
- Death or serious injury of someone within close proximity to school.

We recognise Incidents can occur: -

- On the school site during/or after school hours.
- On school transport.
- Whilst the pupils are taking part in activities away from the school site or on school premises.
- As part of after school activities.
- Within the local community involving pupils from the school.

Plans should consider the long term effects that arise following an incident. Children may suffer secondary losses which could also affect them such as losing their home, belongings.

- Using this definition as a basis for decision making, an incident is declared to be a Critical Incident following consultation between the person(s) managing the incident within the school, the Director of Children's Services or designated officer and, if required, the County Emergency Planning Manager or designated officer.
- In the event of such an incident the priorities of those adults in charge of the school or trip at the time must be able to:
 - Save life;
 - Minimise personal injury;
 - Safeguard the interests of pupils, students and staff;
 - Minimise loss and to return to normal working quickly.
- In drawing up these plans the school takes into consideration the fact that the Headteacher will not always be present. The Assistant Headteacher is the nominated person when the Headteacher is not present.

On school trips or out of school activities the visit leader will take charge in event of an incident and procedures are set out on Action Card 1 Visit Leader Emergency Action Card (See Appendix 3a).

3. Action Cards

The Action Cards give responsibilities for specified staff in the event of a critical incident:

- (a) away from the school;
- (b) in the school environs.

These should be used in the event of a major incident and be carried by staff on school visits.

Due to the nature of school life, which includes the absence of staff on courses, at meetings etc. the staff order to be followed is set out in the action cards.

Incidents in school (Action Card 3. Appendix 3c)

Teaching Assistants and class teachers to remain with classes.

On Trips (Action Card 1. Appendix 3a)

On all visits out of school each adult has a mobile telephone number of the other adults on the visit and a list of all the children on that visit.

See Action Card 2 (appendix 3b) for Senior Staff who hear of major incident out of school.

After School Kids Club and any School Clubs

Staff / adults/ contractors will follow procedures set out in the front of their folder. They will also carry out procedures in Lockdown Policy.

4. School Critical Incident Management Team (CIMT)

- In the event of an incident it will be necessary to name a planning team to guide operations and carry out specific tasks. At Billingham CEP School, in the immediate

aftermath of an incident, this team would consist of all/any of the following:

1. The Headteacher
 2. Assistant Headteacher
 3. Chair of Governors
 4. Vice Chair of Governors
 5. A member of the non teaching staff team
 6. Member of the police/fire service if appropriate
 7. Mrs C Farrow from Daisy Chain or in her absence her deputy or appointed person.
- The team leader will be the Headteacher or in his absence the Assistant Headteacher. This person will co-ordinate the school's response to any critical incident. The task of the team is to develop and maintain the CIMP and co-ordinate response during an incident.
 - The Critical Incident Management Plan (CIMP) must balance the needs of managing the incident and meeting the needs of the school community.
 - The plan will identify the key elements to be dealt with at the various stages of a critical incident.
 - If there is a critical incident at Daisy Chain Nursery then they are to communicate this to school immediately and the above will apply.

The school's reaction to a critical incident can be divided into the following categories:

5. IMMEDIATE ACTION

1. Obtain and collate information relating to the incident – as soon as the school becomes aware of any incident that might have an impact on it, the Headteacher or CIMT Leader will find out the factors and assess its significance for the school. The Headteacher's or Team Leader's decision will determine the response. The position can be reviewed as new information becomes available. The response to the risk or threat could involve evacuation or first aid etc.

Notify the emergency services / other relevant and agreed parties.

2. Inform key contacts and keep them updated. These may include the emergency services, the Board of Governors, LCC and other relevant agencies which may have role in providing support.
(See Appendix 1 – for Contact List)– establish clearly who is going to contact whom. Members of the CIMT should have a copy of this list at home as critical incidents can occur outside school hours and term time.
3. Mobilise and brief the CIMT (Critical Incident Management Team) – brief the team, allocate roles and responsibilities.

Follow the Decision Tree in Appendix 2

Devise a prepared statement which can be used by all staff.

4. Set up a central information point – a staffed information point in an easily accessible area to ensure timely, accurate and relevant communication during an incident. School will set up a cascade system of telephone contacts so more than one person can disseminate information quickly to parents and other

contacts. If possible this will be using staff mobile phones or at the Children's Centre so that the school phone line can be kept clear to receive important messages. Admin staff will log into Arbor and cascade parent/carer contact details to staff members who are available to contact parents.

Staff may be required to deal with distressed pupils and or parents by phone or in person.

A log of incoming and outgoing calls is to be maintained to ensure duplication is avoided. This is to be compiled by the person making or receiving the call.

5. Agreeing the school routine for that day
Schools should restore normal school routine as soon as practicable. Sustaining the normal routine, with timetable flexibility to allow pupils and staff to access support, will maintain a sense of continuity and stability for the school community.
6. Informing staff
A formal staff briefing should take place as soon as possible after the circumstances of the incident are known with a time set for a formal debriefing at the end of the school day(s). Absent staff members should be briefed about the situation. Staff must receive factual information on what has occurred, how the incident will be handled and how they can contribute to the school's response. This information is to be given by the Headteacher or member of the SLT. Staff are to be kept updated on developments during the course of the day. The briefing should:
 - Give a brief statement of factual information.
 - Outline the school's response and proposed plan of action.
 - Allow staff to ask questions and to get a response.
 - Outline staff responsibility for monitoring pupil and staff welfare.
 - Identify vulnerable staff and pupils who may be at risk.
 - Clarify specific responsibilities for staff.
 - Advise staff on procedure for dealing with media enquiries.
 - Advise staff on agreed procedure for informing pupils and parents.
 - Inform staff of the support services that are available.
 - Reassure staff and pupils that they will be supported.
 - Advise staff of time/place of next briefing and debriefing session.
7. Inform pupils – can be done in small or large groups depending on which is most appropriate. In some cases where emotions may be running high, it may be more appropriate to inform pupils in small groups for example classes. Care needs to be exercised to protect both children and adults closely involved in the incident. It is important that children receive a consistent account of the incident allowing for differences in their ability to understand and that announcements are made simultaneously. Staff should never speculate and must be truthful when questions cannot be answered. Pupils should be informed of a critical incident as soon as possible. Before making an announcement attention needs to be given to what pupils are told as well as how they are told. See Appendix 4 and 5. Teachers should be given a carefully worded announcement to be read in classrooms.

Where there has been a death it is important that the bereaved family's privacy is respected. In this instance the announcement made to pupils will usually

include a condolence. Staff should be aware that young people's understanding of death will depend on their cognitive and development stage. Appendix 6 provides information on the concept and common reactions to death. In the case of a suspected suicide see Appendix 7.

Children should be given sufficient time to begin to discuss their feelings. Pupils who are absent from school should also be informed.

8. Supporting Pupils and Provide opportunities for Spiritual care – Allowing pupils to discuss and share experiences helps with recovery. We will provide a designated area/areas for pupils should they wish to come out of class. Here they can talk to a member of staff and/or be given the opportunity for spiritual care. Although most pupils will benefit from remaining in school with their friends, consideration may need to be given for some pupils to go home. Arrangements will be made directly with parents/carers to ensure that the pupils are supported at home.

Support from LPFT CYP Mental Health Services

LPFT CYP Mental Health Services can support schools in working proactively to develop a plan in response to a critical incident and in supporting staff and pupils.

On receiving a request for support from a head teacher or Lincolnshire County Council, the team will respond promptly with a level of support which is judged to be appropriate to the nature, size and severity of the event.

It is possible that a critical incident may not fit the criteria for one particular level. In this case professional judgement will be used to respond appropriately.

Vulnerable Pupils

Pupils with special educational needs including pupils with learning and communication difficulties will require special consideration from staff. They may be at a different developmental level to their peers, which may affect their understanding of trauma and death. These pupils should be told the news separately, if possible, by using short simple sentences in language appropriate to their level of understanding. They may ask the same questions repeatedly and need extra patience and support. Non-verbal approaches such as pictures, drawings and photographs may help them to explore and express their feelings and concerns. The school's Special Educational Needs Co-ordinator (SENCO) should be asked about the best approach for pupils with special needs. Consideration should also be given to those pupils who have previously experienced significant trauma in their lives. The school's Designated Teacher and/or Designated Safeguarding lead should be asked about the best approach.

9. Contact families affected – Parents of pupils directly involved should be telephoned or visited. It must be done quickly and with sensitivity. Consistency of information is vital. It may be appropriate for families to come to school and immediate emotional support could be a possibility. If the death of a pupil has occurred the Headteacher or another school representative will make contact with the parents as soon as possible to express sympathy and liaise over messages of condolence from staff/pupils.
10. Make arrangements to inform other parents – may need to take advice from the Police and County Council especially if there is the possibility of legal

liability. School would normally inform other parents via a letter. See Appendix 8 for a model letter informing parents of a sudden death and See Appendix 9 for information to parents about their child's reactions and how they as parents can help. The letter will contain facts of the critical incident and ensure only accurate information is shared.

If all parents have to be informed as a matter of urgency those making calls will be provided with a script so all parents receive the same information.

11. Deal with the media – co-operation with the media can make the difference between accurate and inaccurate reporting. A structured approach to media management must be developed. LCC can provide support.
Before making a statement:
 - Ensure a check is carried out with the police, ambulance and fire and rescue service.
 - LCC communications officer for schools is contacted for advice on a statement.
 - A decision is to be taken whether all media enquiries and follow up enquiries will be handled by the Headteacher or another designated member of the CIMT.
 - An accurate and factual report is prepared.
 - No other staff should make comment or provide comment on the incident.
 - News media are not permitted on school property without the prior approval of the Headteacher.
 - Pupils should be encouraged to use discretion when commenting about the incident on social networking sites.
 - See Appendix 11.
12. Devise a plan for handling the reactions and feelings of people affected – the most common reactions will include denial, distress, guilt, anger and helplessness. CIMT need to consider outside professionals to support and debrief staff and pupils affected by the incident. Those providing support also need support. At this point the CIMT will need to plan their short term reaction to the incident.
13. Depending on the nature of the critical incident and its impact on the school it may be necessary to suspend the normal timetable for a period of time to permit an appropriate response. In very exceptional circumstances, such as a death on school premises, it may be necessary to close the school. Further information can be found in LCC School's Handbook (Section B05 Emergency Closure or Part Closure of Schools).
14. We are aware that a critical incident could occur during a weekend or school holiday. If this is the case then the CIMT will be contacted and as far as possible as many members will meet to discuss the issue.
15. Certain critical incidents, such as death or major injury as a result of an accident, will require immediate reporting to the Health and Safety Executive (0845 3000923). The Health and Safety Team are able to carry out this reporting on the school's behalf. Additionally the Team can assist with investigations to determine causes of incidents and make recommendations to prevent recurrence.

Out of normal office hours the Health and Safety Team can be contacted through the Emergency Planning Unit. (See Appendix 1 for contact numbers).

6. After the Incident

Support for Pupils

Arrangements may include:

- Arranging a home visit to discuss plans for returning to school, even on a phased basis.
- Helping arrange a rota of support from school friends.
- Arrange for school work to be sent home where appropriate.
- Briefing staff and pupils on how best to support individuals returning to school.
- Arranging support for temporary or permanent mobility difficulties or disfigurement.
- Planning support for emotional needs.

Pupils who continue to show signs of distress after a number of weeks may require a referral for specialist support. Support plans may need to be written.

The classroom provides opportunities to deal with issues that arise from a critical incident in a more extensive way. Issues arising from an event should not be avoided.

Support for bereaved families

The family of a pupil who has died will require support for a long time after the tragic event. Parents may wish to have mementos of their child's involvement in the life of the school.

Support for Staff

Some staff may need support in the longer term. The CIMT should be aware of the fact that staff can often underestimate the impact on them and may not recognise that they are experiencing difficulty. Staff must then be directed to sources of support.

Sources of help may include accessing the Employee Support and Counselling Service at Lincolnshire County Council, the local community mental health support, Amparo (commissioned in Lincolnshire to provide support following a suicide), the Chair of Governors and relevant clergy/faith workers.

During a crisis, consideration needs to be given to the provision of opportunities for staff, as individuals or in groups, to discuss their own reaction to what has happened, to assess the climate of the school and to share their observations on the monitoring of vulnerable pupils.

7. CONCLUSION

The prime objective, shared between the school and LA, is to serve the best interests of pupils and staff in coping with an incident, collectively and individually. Schools that have made contingency plans for responding to a critical incident are likely to cope better and recover more fully.

This policy has been compiled to provide guidance, in the hope that it will never be necessary to refer to it in the context in which it has been written. It is impossible to plan for every eventuality and by their nature, critical incidents will disorientate and overwhelm those involved. A format for a whole school response to such an incident will provide focus for those with whom the responsibility will rest.

8. Procedures at Billingham Church of England Primary School:

1. In the event that the school buildings cannot be used and evacuation is necessary, staff will escort pupils to the Children's Centre. If there is not enough room then the older pupils will be escorted to St Michael's Church.
 2. A clear and concise record of actions taken **MUST** be kept by those involved (See Appendix 10).
 3. A school mobile phone will be taken by party leaders on all off-site activities. All school staff going on the visit will have mobile phones and the visit leader is responsible for mobile phone communication using his/her mobile to contact school. Although mobile phones can be a good method of communication in some situations they are **NOT** secure and should **NOT** be used to relay specific information about casualties.
 4. An up to date list of adult contact information is kept on Arbor. Pupil contact information is kept at school both on file and in paper copy.
 5. Media requests for information should be directed to the Communication Team at LCC. Any statements should first be checked with Lincolnshire County Council Communication Team and with the emergency staff at the scene. See 5 Immediate Action Dealing with the media.
- In the event of a fire or incident involving evacuation the same routine should be followed as that during standard fire practices. Pupils should exit and go to the nearest safe assembly point. In most cases:
 1. All classes would assemble on the school field behind the Foundation Stage Outdoor area adjacent to the fence separating the school site from the old Lafford site. The children and staff in the Nursery as part of Daisy Chain will assemble on the Carr Dyke side of the playground – furthest away from the building, by the brick planters.
 2. All windows and doors should be left shut.
 3. Roll call must be taken and pupils counted. This includes children in the Nursery as part of Daisy Chain. A list of visitors taken from Sign In App and a mobile phone will also be taken (this includes Daisy Chain where a visitors book will be kept and taken if necessary).
 4. Staff should ensure pupils do not have to pass obvious danger points to reach a safe area.
 5. Classes will wait to be directed following evacuation.

9. Monitoring Incidents and Evaluating Response

Internal monitoring and evaluation

After managing an incident it is good practice to review the procedures and update or amend the Incident Management Plan in the light of experience and lessons

learned. However, it is always worth remembering that no two incidents are the same and that only general conclusions can be drawn. There must be a formal review of the Critical Incident Management Plan annually.

Appendix 1 Useful Contacts

As part of the emergency plan, this list of contacts should be obtained as a matter of course. Telephone numbers can be added to this page and the whole list **MUST** be updated regularly and frequently.

As a matter of urgency there will be a need for emergency telephone lines. Contact the Emergency Planning Officer for Lincolnshire who is able to make these arrangements with British Telecom.

See the scanned list. Additional numbers are below:

[illegible]

APPENDIX 1 – USEFUL CONTACTS

This information should be regularly checked and updated accordingly. – last updated Dec 2018

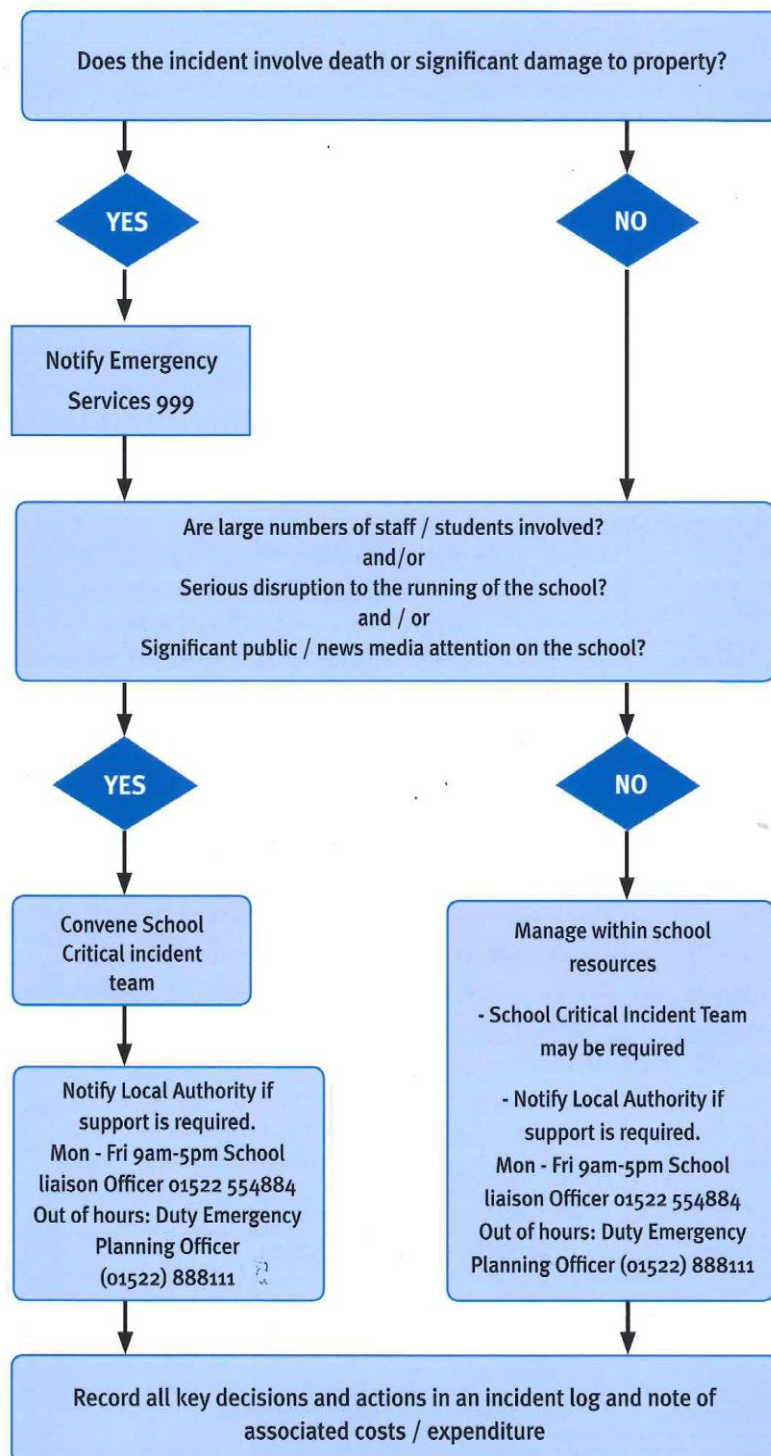
LINCOLNSHIRE COUNTY COUNCIL	
Head of Education Support (Matthew Clayton)	07824 837006 (Office hours) Email: matthew.clayton@lincolnshire.gov.uk
Director's Office	01522 550628 (Office hours)
Education Team	01522 554590 (Office hours) Email: educationteam@lincolnshire.gov.uk
Emergency Planning and Business Continuity Service	01522 843402 (Office hours) 0141 397 9363 (Outside office hours, request a call back from the Emergency Planning Duty Officer)
Communications Team	07920 889 243 (Office hours)
Educational Psychology Service	01522 553473 Email: EP_admin@lincolnshire.gov.uk
Health and Safety Helpline Advice for schools may be found on:	CorporateHealthAndSafety@lincolnshire.gov.uk https://www.lincolnshire.gov.uk/school-pupil-support/assurance-lincolnshire/2
School Services Transport Team	01522 782020
LCC Insurance Manager	insurance@lincolnshire.gov.uk (LCC or buy-back only)
Educational Visits	EVOLVE system https://evolve.edufocus.co.uk/evco10/unknown.asp
VINCI-Mouchel Property Service Centre 24hour helpdesk	01522 555555 (LCC or buy-back only)
EMTET (Ethnic Minority & Traveler Education Team)	01427 787190
Pupil Reintegration Team (PRT)	prt@lincolnshire.gov.uk 01522 555798 (North Lincolnshire) 01522 555816 (South Lincolnshire)
School Admission Team	schooladmissions@lincolnshire.gov.uk
The Specialist Teaching Team (STT)	STTenquiries@lincolnshire.gov.uk
Dyslexia Outreach Team	DyslexiaOutreach@lincolnshire.gov.uk North: 07778 534478

	South: 07717 226448
Enhanced Communication & Language Impairment provision for Students (ECLIPS)	ECLIPS@lincolnshire.gov.uk
Sensory Education and Support Team (SEST)	SEST_Team@lincolnshire.gov.uk 01522 553332
Liaise (A parent support service, to signpost parents for support e.g. for appeals for exclusion, EHCP process etc.)	liaise@lincolnshire.gov.uk 0800 195 1635
TEACHER ASSOCIATIONS	
National Association for Primary Education	01604 647 646
NUT	020 7388 6191
NASUWT	0121 453 6150 – Headquarters 03330 145550 – Support & Advice
Association of Teachers and Lecturers	0207 930 6441 – London Office
National Association of Headteachers	0300 30 30 333
Association of School and College Leaders	0116 299 1122
UNISON	0800 171 2193 – Join 0800 0857 857 – Contact Us
RELIGIOUS ORGANISATIONS	
Diocesan Education Trust	01522 504010
Lincoln County Hospital Duty Chaplain	01522 573080 – Non-urgent
Roman Catholic - Nottinghamshire Diocesan Board of Education	01332 293833
Islamic Association of Lincoln	01522 528743
Lincoln Jewish Minyan	info@lincolnjewishminyan.org.uk
LOCAL SERVICES AND ORGANISATIONS	
Lincolnshire Here4You Advice Line – Healthy Minds Lincolnshire and CAMHS	0800 234 6342 Grief and loss support packs are available to schools via LPFT's professionals hub (this is not a public facing resource page so please do not share the link outside of your setting) www.lpft.nhs.uk/young-people/lincolnshire/professionals/service-offer-and-referrals/healthy-minds-lincolnshire/healthy-minds-and-mental-health-support-teams-resources

	In addition self-help information is also publicly available to young people and parents/carers at www.lpft.nhs.uk/young-people/lincolnshire/young-people/helping-you-help-yourself
Lincolnshire Centre for Grief & Loss	19 Carlton Mews, The Carlton Centre, Lincoln, LN2 4FJ 01522 546168 email@lcgl.org.uk
Working Together Team (WTT)	01775 840250 (school office) outreach@gosberton-house.lincs.sch.uk https://www.wtt.org.uk/
Behaviour Outreach Support Service (BOSS)	https://www.family-action.org.uk/what-we-do/children-families/lincs-boss/ 01507 308908
SEND Advice Line Lincolnshire (SALL)	https://www.lincolnshire.gov.uk/support-education/ask-sall 01522 553199
NATIONAL ORGANISATIONS	
CRUSE Bereavement Care 0808 808 1677 – Free helpline Website: www.cruse.org.uk www.hopeagain.org.uk (a site for young people) Telephone counselling service for those who are bereaved and those who care for bereaved people. Can offer referrals to local Cruse branches and other bereavement and counselling services throughout the UK	
The Compassionate Friends 0345 123 2304 - Helpline Website: www.tcf.org.uk Support for bereaved parents who have lost a child of any age from any circumstances	
Winston's Wish Family Line 08088 020 021 – Free helpline Website: www.winstonswish.org.uk Information and guidance for families of bereaved children. Can provide contact details for local groups which support bereaved children	
The Samaritans 0116 123 / 08457 90 90 90 Website: www.samaritans.org Confidential emotional support for anyone in a crisis	

Survivors of Bereavement by Suicide 0300 111 5065 – Helpline 0115 944 1117 – National Office Website: www.uksobs.org Can provide details of local self-help groups for those bereaved by suicide	
Childline	0800 1111 (free phone) National help line for children
British Red Cross National Office Advice on memorials and donations 44 Moorfields, London, EC2Y 9AL	0344 871 11 11 - Helpline
National Society for Prevention of Cruelty to Children (NSPCC)	0808 800 5000

Appendix 2 – Decision Tree



Visit Leader Emergency Action Card

This card should be carried by all staff accompanying a visit.

Emergency Procedure

In the event of an incident overwhelming your team's coping mechanisms, use the following to guide your actions:

1. REMAIN CALM - Assess the situation.
2. Safeguard yourself and then any other uninjured members of the group. Make sure all other members of the party are:
 - ✓ accounted for
 - ✓ safe
 - ✓ adequately supervised
 - ✓ briefed to ensure that they understand what to do to remain safe.
3. Delegate Assistant Leaders if possible so you can keep an overview of events and to allow 'concurrent' activity.
4. Call emergency services as appropriate.
5. Carry out first aid to the best of your abilities. Remember the aims of first aid are to
 - a. Preserve life
 - b. Prevent the condition worsening
 - c. Promote recovery

Essential First aid:

1. Casualties need to be able to breathe – if they are unconscious this means being put into a safe airway position.
2. You need to try to find and stop any serious external bleeding.
3. You need to protect the casualty from the environment - keep them warm.
4. Monitor their condition, talk to them, reassure them, hold their hand and provide emotional support.

Once the immediate situation is contained:

- Inform the school/Establishment Emergency Contact or, if unavailable, your Employer (e.g. the Local Authority) Emergency Contact. They will need the following information:
 - Who you are, which Establishment you are from and what your role is within the group
 - What number can you be called back on?
 - What is the nature of the emergency?
 - How many casualties there are and their status
 - The total number of people in your party
 - Your current location
 - Whether you are staying where you are or moving – if you are moving where to?
 - What time did the accident/incident happen?
- Liaise with, and take advice from, emergency services if they have attended the scene.
- Consider the physical needs of the group and casualties in terms of shelter, refreshments, transport/repatriation.
- Consider the emotional needs of the group such as removing them from the scene, providing emotional support (they can often do this for each other), giving them useful things to do.
- Control communications - prevent group members from using phones or going online unsupervised or until approval is given.
- Keep a written log of all actions taken, conversations held and a timescale.
- Refer all media, parental or other enquiries to your employer's press office.
- Inform the Foreign Office Consular Assistance Team if abroad.

Emergency Numbers

Name	Telephone	Mobile
My telephone number		
School/Establishment	01526 860786	
Nominated base contact (Mrs Sedlan Tues, Wed, Thurs)		07854260524
Nominated base contact other times J Smithson		07955961986
Headteacher (Mr Allen)	01526 860786	07368239380
Chair of Govs (Mr Atkinson)	01526 861600	07808239380
Employer (e.g. LA) (office hours)		
Head Educ Support	07824 837006	
Director Chn Services	01522 550628	
Duty Emergency Planning Officer	01522 843402	
Employer (out of hours)	01522 888111	
Emergency Services (if travelling abroad)		
Foreign Office Consular Assistance	+44 20 7008 1500	

GUIDANCE FOR SENIOR STAFF ON HEARING OF A MAJOR INCIDENT AFFECTING AN OUT-OF-SCHOOL ACTIVITY

THERE HAS BEEN A MAJOR INCIDENT

INSTRUCT ALL COLLEAGUES TO RECORD THEIR ACTIONS AS SOON AS POSSIBLE

ALLOCATE KEY RESPONSIBILITIES – as outlined by the emergency action cards

INFORM OBTAIN FACTS AND INFORMATION ENSURE EMERGENCY ASSISTANCE HAS BEEN CALLED CONFIRM WHO IS IN CHARGE CONTACT HEADTEACHER/SENIOR STAFF CONTACT EMERGENCY PLANNING OFFICER CONTACT CHAIR OF GOVERNORS CONTACT LA REPRESENTATIVES CONTACT OTHER STAFF PREPARE TO DEAL WITH THE MEDIA SEE USEFUL CONTACT LIST APP 1 FOR CONTACT NOS	ADULT 1 - INFORMS • Headteacher • Assistant Headteacher • FS + KS1 Lead • SEND CO School Administrator may also play role in C.I.
---	--

CARE DECIDE WHO AND HOW TO TELL PARENT OF CHILDREN ON THE VISIT ESTABLISH INCIDENT ROOM ESTABLISH ROOM FOR RELATIVES REMAIN AVAILABLE TO SUPERVISING COLLEAGUES	ADULT 2 - CARES • Assistant Headteacher • FS+KS1 Lead • SEND CO
---	--

MAINTAIN VITAL COMMUNICATIONS WITH COLLEAGUES AT ALL TIMES

GUIDANCE FOR SCHOOL STAFF IN EVENT OF A MAJOR INCIDENT IN SCHOOL ENVIRONS**THERE HAS BEEN A MAJOR INCIDENT****INSTRUCT ALL COLLEAGUES TO RECORD THEIR ACTIONS AS SOON AS POSSIBLE***ALLOCATE KEY RESPONSIBILITIES – as outlined by the emergency action cards*

INFORM OBTAIN FACTS AND INFORMATION CALL THE EMERGENCY SERVICES USING 999 RETAIN ANY RELEVANT EQUIPMENT INFORM REST OF SCHOOL STAFF AND CHILDREN AS APPROPRIATE CONTACT CHILDREN'S SERVICES OFFICE CONTACT CHAIR OF GOVERNORS CONTACT HEALTH AND SAFETY REPS PREPARE TO DEAL WITH THE MEDIA	ADULT 1 - INFORMS • Headteacher • Assistant Headteacher • FS + KS1 Lead • SENDCO
SAVE ADMINISTER FIRST AID WHERE POSSIBLE ESTABLISH A CONTACT POINT WITH THE EMERGENCY SERVICES TRAVEL WITH CASUALTIES TO HOSPITAL COMPLETE ACCIDENT FORMS	ADULT 2 - SAVES • First aiders
CARE KEEP A RECORD OF WITNESSES KEEP OTHERS INFORMED OF SITUATION ARRANGE FOR NON-CASUALTIES TO EVACUATE SCHOOL CARE FOR RELATIVES ARRIVING AT SCHOOL CONSIDER RELOCATION TO OTHER PREMISES REMAIN AVAILABLE TO EMERGENCY	ADULT 3 - CARES • Assistant Headteacher • FS + KS1 Lead • SENDCO • Nominated CI backup adult
ASSIST KEEP OTHERS INFORMED OF SITUATION ENSURE ALTERNATIVE ACCOMMODATION IS AVAILABLE IF NEEDED KEEP SWITCHBOARD STAFF AWARE OF KNOWN FACTS HELP TO ESTABLISH INCIDENT ROOM	ADULT 4 - ASSISTS • FS + KS1 Lead • SENDCO • Nominated CI backup adult

MAINTAIN VITAL COMMUNICATIONS WITH COLLEAGUES AT ALL TIMES
DO NOT ALLOW PUPILS TO TALK TO THE MEDIA UNLESS STAFF OR PARENTS HAVE GIVEN PERMISSION

Appendix 4 - Announcements to pupils

Advice for teachers

Where announcements are made to pupils, they should be simple, straightforward and sincere. The following examples provide a suggested structure and are not intended to be followed as script. After the announcement, information should be made available to what support is in place to come to terms with the incident.

Fatality after a road traffic collision

We are taking this time to think about _____, a Year 10 pupil who died last night in a road traffic collision. _____ was travelling with her family to _____ when the collision occurred. We do not know any further details at this time except that the rest of her family is safe.

_____’s funeral is being held at _____ on _____. A funeral is a special time to remember a person who has died. The school will let your families know about the funeral arrangements in a letter which will be sent home tomorrow.

Let’s take a moment of silence to think of _____, to remember all the good things about her and to say goodbye. In our silence, we will express our loving thoughts.

After a sudden death

Sadly a tragedy has happened in our school community. _____, a Year 12 pupil has died suddenly. We want to respect the family’s need for privacy at this time but you will be given information about funeral arrangements as soon as possible.

This kind of tragic news is hard to accept. You may experience many feelings within the next few days. Everyone deals with loss differently and it is important to respect the way others grieve. We want to listen to your feelings and concerns so support staff are available in _____. Feel free to arrange to go there and talk to someone.

Appendix 5 - Breaking the News to pupils Advice for teachers

Before telling the pupils about an incident consideration needs to be given to issuing the "Information for Pupils" (Appendix 10) or the leaflet 'Helping You Cope With Grief and Loss' (available from the LCC Educational Psychology Team) and allowing time for discussion.

If the incident involves the disappearance or sudden death of a pupil or member of staff it is important to consider the wishes of "their relatives" and remember their right to privacy.

Teachers should relay the information, agreed at the staff briefing, to pupils at schools - preferably at the same time. Relaying the information to vulnerable pupils and pupils absent from school also needs to be considered. Any "news" should contain appropriate language and factual information only with clear, concise, "bite size" explanations delivered in a calm manner.

Remember

Be patient - you may have to repeat the information many times. Be honest, specific and straightforward - it is acceptable to say you do not have all the answers. Be available for the pupil. Monitor initial reactions.

Allow time for pupils to discuss their feelings. Provide reassurance and information about the school support which is available. Inform pupils of a designated area should they be unable to stay in class. Monitor ongoing and developing reactions. Refer on for additional support if in doubt.

Share your own feelings, if appropriate; acknowledge the pupil's feelings: if necessary, use pictures and social stories to aid understanding.

Be prepared for a pupil to come back and ask more questions.

Be proactive: if you can, have information ready for possible questions. Assure pupils they will be kept updated.

Appendix 6 - Children and young people's understanding of death information for staff

Children and young people's understanding of death will depend on their cognitive and developmental stage. They will revisit the loss as they mature, reach significant milestones and become more able to talk about their experiences and questions in relation to death. Children and young people with learning difficulties will progress through the developmental stages at a slower pace or indeed may remain at an early stage in their understanding of death.

Children and young people do experience similar feelings to adults following a death but often express their feelings differently depending on their development age.

Age	Concept of Death	Possible Reactions
Under 5	Death seen as reversible and may expect the dead person to reappear May feel they are responsible for the death Magical thinking - make up fantasies to fill gaps in knowledge	Fears abandonment and separation Loud protest Despair Indignant at changes in patterns or routine Sleep problems May revert to what appears to be "babyish" behaviours
5 to 8 years	Gradual understanding of death as something irreversible and where life has ended By 7, understands death is inevitable and can happen to anyone at any time May feel guilty and responsible	Withdrawal, sadness, loneliness, depression Anger, guilt, temper tantrums, nightmares Behaviour, learning or school problems Perfect child, brave and in control May become preoccupied with death May experience separation anxiety when leaving parents in case something happens May not show true feelings, and appear unaffected as a result
8 to 12 years	Understanding that death is irreversible Develop knowledge that death is something that will happen to everyone and is permanent Realisation that death will also happen to them one day	May become fearful of death and begin to avoid experiences as a result May feel confused or stressed
Over 12 years	Broadly the same concepts as adults Experience of death may impact thoughts and feelings about the future	May engage with risk taking behaviour to defy mortality Questioning of beliefs and own purpose in life May find it difficult to discuss true feelings with friends and family

There is no right or wrong way to grieve. It is important to allow children and young people to grieve in their own way and their own time. They may fluctuate in and out of grief, needing time to play and have fun as well as to cry. It is important for adults to give children permission to do this.

Appendix 7 - Death by suspected suicide information for staff

The term suicide should not be used by a school until it is determined by the Coroner's Office. Where an inquest is required it may be a considerable period of time after the death.

When providing support for vulnerable pupils, it would be prudent to make a working assumption of suicide, if all reasonable indicators suggest that this might be the case. Pupils and members of the community may be inclined to describe a death as a suicide before this has been established. Phrases such as 'tragic event' or 'sudden death' should be used by the school when talking to pupils. However, if and when suicide is confirmed then this term should be used.

In the aftermath of a sudden death within the school community pupils' vulnerability may increase. Teachers should realise that some pupils may develop suicidal thoughts and/or self-harm. Staff need to be proactive in identifying and monitoring these pupils. Pupils considered to be 'at risk' should be immediately referred to the Designated Teacher for Safeguarding who will then notify parents and advise them of the referral pathway to obtain support for their child. This will include the child's GP.

Schools should maintain contact with parents to ensure that appropriate action has been taken to protect and support the pupil at risk. Careful records should be kept and securely stored as set out in the school's data protection guidelines. Action must also be taken to identify other at risk groups in the school, including close friends and relatives and to direct them to appropriate support. Information for parents can be found in Appendix 12.

Where there appears to be an emerging cluster of perceived suicides in a school or a number of schools in close proximity, liaison may be required with the relevant Health and Social Care Teams. This coordinated response will ensure an appropriate community response to the situation while minimising sensationalism and avoiding the glamorising of suicidal behaviour.

As with any death, schools will wish to remember the person who has died and to pay tribute to their memory. When an apparent suicide has occurred, schools should be careful to remember the person without condoning the means of death. It is important that events are reported in a sensitive and measured way so that other vulnerable young people are not put at risk. The language used is very important.

Schools should remember to be vigilant around the time of the inquest, court cases and the anniversary of a death and access any support services as may be required.

Guidelines for staff if you suspect a pupil has suicidal thoughts

Note that suicidal thoughts may also be referred to in some circles as 'suicide ideation'.

Your Responsibilities

You have two major responsibilities:

1. To respond with empathy and in a non-judgemental way to the pupil in need.
2. To follow the usual safeguarding procedures with an appropriate referral to ensure the pupil's safety.

Responding to a distressed pupil

Listen. It can be very difficult for a young person to disclose distress so it is essential that he/she is given time and attention. Privacy is also important.

Take it seriously. Disclosures of distress should never be minimised. The young person should be taken seriously but the adult should not express alarm. The young person needs to feel safe and have confidence in adults.

Accept the possibility of suicidal thoughts. These feelings are real and should not be dismissed.

Do NOT promise confidentiality. Ensure that the young person knows that the information will be handled sensitively but that it must be shared with others to safeguard them.

Show a caring attitude. It is acceptable to express care for the young person and a commitment to their well-being.

Be open. If suicidal intent is suspected it is appropriate to ask the young person whether they are thinking of harming themselves and have any plans.

Supervise closely. Keep the pupil with you until you can deliver them to the care of the Designated Teacher for Safeguarding (or appropriate alternative). Sometimes it is more helpful for the teacher to whom the pupil expressed their distress to be the one who stays with him or her while the designated teacher makes safeguarding arrangements.

Response to disclosure of suicidal thoughts

The Designated Teacher for Child Protection (or appropriate alternative) should ensure that the pupil is safeguarded by doing the following:

- Continue to supervise closely. The pupil should not be left unsupervised at this stage
- Contact parents. Parents should be advised of the content of the disclosure, the school's concern and asked to take the child or young person to the doctor for an 'emergency mental state assessment' and potential referral to Child and Adolescent Mental Health Services
- Safely hand over the young person into the care of parents. Parents should be advised to supervise very closely
- Contact the young person's doctor. It may be helpful if schools also contact the doctor directly to inform him/her of the concerns

If the above is not possible

If the school cannot safely deliver the young person into the care of parents, or has concerns that appropriate support will not be sought / provided, it is possible for school staff to take a child or young person directly to an Accident and Emergency Department acting in loco parentis.

Follow-up

The Designated Teacher (or other member of staff) should remain in contact with parents and plan to support the young person upon return to school. In planning to support the young person the school should consider seeking medical / psychiatric advice.

Appendix 11 - Informing Parents of a Sudden Death – Letter to Parents

Date:

Dear Parent

It is with great sadness that I have to tell you of the sudden death of _____ (use caution if naming a pupil) a pupil in Year/a Year ____ Teacher. The pupils were told this morning by their Headteacher/class/form teacher.

_____ died of (an asthma attack, meningitis etc) and the pupils have been reassured this is something that does not happen very often. Your child may or may not want to talk about it but it is likely that he/she will need extra love and support from you in the days ahead. This does not mean that anything is wrong with him/her. It only means that this traumatic event has been too powerful for him/her to deal with on his/her own. He/she may be feeling anxious. Take time to listen to your child and try to provide a predictable routine for him/her at home.

We have enclosed an information leaflet for you which may be useful at this time. Trained staff are helping to support us through this difficult time. It is sometimes necessary for a member of the team to speak to a class or to individual pupils who may be distressed. He/she will be guided by the Headteacher/class teacher in this. If you do not wish your child to receive such support from the team please contact us immediately.

We are deeply saddened by this great loss, but we know, at these times, it's best to keep the school environment as normal as possible. Our thoughts are with _____'s family at this tragic time and the school community sends them sincerest sympathy and support.

_____ 's funeral is on _____ at ____am/pm at _____. We are in touch with the family regarding their wishes for the school's representation at the Service.

If you require further clarification or have any concerns please do not hesitate to contact me.

Yours sincerely

Appendix 12 - Understanding your child's reactions and how you can help - Information for parents

When a child or young person experiences a traumatic incident it can be very upsetting for them and for you. Even though the event is over your child may still be experiencing reactions to it. It is normal for children and young people to be upset after such a happening. It is unlikely that they have experienced such an event before and so their reaction may be challenging for you.

Their reaction may last a few days, a few weeks or longer. Reassurance, understanding and support from you, along with their teachers and their friends can help them to cope.

Here are some common reactions to a traumatic incident. You might have noticed some of these.

THINKING	FEELINGS
• Confused • Nightmares/bad dreams • Poor concentration • Restless • Not interested in what is going on • Spending a lot of time thinking about what happened • Thinking that they cannot cope	• Worried • Guilty • Anxious • Fearful • Easily upset • Cross • Panicky • Overwhelmed
BEHAVIOURS	PHYSICAL COMPLAINTS
• Loss of appetite • Being very quiet • Nervous • Being quarrelsome/arguing	• Feeling tired all the time • Unable to rest or settle • Feeling sick/knot in tummy • Cold and shivery

Remember

- These are normal reactions
- The reactions should lessen in time normally over the next few weeks
- If you continue to have concerns some more specialist help may be needed. Talk to your doctor about this

Helping your child

It is important that you are strong enough to bear whatever your child wants to talk about and to answer their questions.

DO	DO NOTS
• Take time to listen and answer questions • Be honest in your explanations and in showing your own sadness or grief • Let them know their feelings are important • Give plenty of reassurance and affection. Let them know you love them and will be there for them • Keep to routines and patterns as much as possible • Be aware that changes such as clinging or aggressive behaviour or physical problems may be an expression of grief • Take things one day at a time	• Try to hide your own sadness or grief but try not to overwhelm them with such • Tell your child not to worry or be sad. They cannot control their feelings • Feel like you have to have all the answers or get it right all the time • Be surprised at your child's ability to set grief aside and alternate between sadness and happiness. Time with friends and playmates enables them to release anxiety about incidents over which they have no control



Appendix 10

Incident Log

Location:

Nature of Incident:

FOR RECORDING VITAL INFORMATION IN THE EVENT OF A MAJOR INCIDENT

Name: Page: of

Date	Time	Name and nature of contact	Agreed Actions(s)

Appendix 11 - Media interviews

Information for staff

It can be difficult to manage media interviews especially when a school is dealing with a critical incident.

But it might be in the best interests of the school to get their message across. A school should think carefully and consider what is best before deciding on the best course of action. Before any interview takes place, it's important to decide on the key messages – for example, is it about clarifying public misunderstanding?

Schools should have a 'one spokesperson' practice. The spokesperson should be well briefed on the details and expectations of the interviewer. Briefing should include the most likely questions that may be asked. Negative lines of questioning and difficult questions should be anticipated and appropriate responses prepared. If media deadlines cannot be met it is essential to say so and to keep to new deadlines if agreed.

Before making a media statement. The school's spokesperson should:

- liaise with the Chair of Governors and external agencies involved in order to identify two or three key messages to be highlighted
- write these down before the interview and refine for accuracy, clarity, simplicity and impact
- keep spoken comments simple, factual and short so that key points such as what has been done so far, are not edited out
- be aware that interviews, if not live, may be edited and comments taken out of context if you are not careful with what you say
- take time to respond to questions and seek clarification if necessary
- be aware of legal issues, particularly the language/terminology used
- avoid making comments which imply blame or fault for any part of the incident, as there could be significant legal implications
- remember that official enquiries are likely to follow serious incidents. Media comments on the public record may have a bearing on such proceedings
- avoid 'off the record' comments at all times
- express concern and the school's grief, restricting answers to facts and accentuating the positive developments following the event
- look confident in front of the camera and in control by planning and preparing what you want to say – use empathy and emotion to convey care and concern
- be aware of your surroundings and background images/text which may be unhelpful in a TV interview

Appendix 12 LSCP's Critical Incident Guidance for Educational Settings

What is Martyn's Law?

- Officially the Terrorism (Protection of Premises) Act 2025, Martyn's Law aims to improve security and preparedness, requiring those responsible for certain premises and events to consider and plan for the risk of terrorist attacks.
- The law received Royal Assent in 2025, but has allowed for a 24-month implementation period before the act comes into force.
- The law introduces a tiered approach:
 - Small premises (under 200 people present at any one time) are not legally required to comply but it is best practice for the education premise to be assured of their security plans.
 - Standard tier (where 200-799 people may be present at any one time)
 - Enhanced tier (where 800 or more people may be present at any one time).
- **However, there are special considerations for Early Years, Primary, Secondary and Further Education settings as they will be considered as being within the standard tier even if 800 or more individuals are expected to be present.**
- Settings that can reasonably expect below 200 individuals to be present do not fall within the scope of the act but we encourage all settings to consider their plans for the safety of the children and practitioners.

Compliance Checklist:

The official compliance checklist is yet to be announced but the following are likely to be included for standard tier.

- There must be a named person responsible for ensuring Martyn's Law compliance.
- The education premise must be registered with the Security Industry Authority (SIA). How to register has not yet been announced by the Home Office.
- Conduct a Risk and Vulnerability Assessment. This will record site vulnerabilities and situations where different cohorts may be on site (open evenings, parents evening, outside bookings etc).
- Written procedures to include evacuations, invacuations, lockdowns and communicating a security event.
- All staff to access counter-terrorism training.
- Run regular drills for evacuation, invacuation and lockdown. Outcomes should be recorded and inform reviews for these procedures. These do not need to be 'live' - could be a table-top activity.
- Keep a record log of SIA registration, training logs, written procedures and drill logs.

Top Tips:

- Policies focusing on critical incidents such as evacuation and emergency plans should be for internal use only and not published on websites.
- Some provisions may identify a 'secret evacuation spot' which will be known by staff but not publicised. Consider the implications of staff remembering the 'secret evacuation spot' if using elsewhere during drills.
- Promote positive safety aspects of the school via social media or on websites such as being Martyn's Law compliant, having CCTV, staff training etc.
- Consider the potential risk of having daily routines and school layouts such as 'virtual tours' or 'classroom pictures' published online.
- Ensure vulnerable children and children with SEND are considered in evacuation plans.

- Consider the impact on children's emotional wellbeing by including them in any drills.
- The effectiveness of the below communication methods vary depending on the age and group of the learners. No form of communication is right over another. The detail of the communication is what is key.
 - Public announcements are a preferred method for alerting individuals about a threat.
 - Pre-recorded messages are not effective as they lack tone and urgency, and individuals have to wait for instructions.
 - Text messages are not suitable due to the periodic nature of checking phones. Texts do not grab attention effectively and can be distracting, though they are better than nothing.
 - Radio can be effective but has limited reach compared to a PA system.
 - Use of Teams can be a discrete but effective method of communication. Settings may wish to consider the creation of a channel for these situations.
 - **In the event of a suspicious package being on-site, staff should consider the radius of technology use.**
- Recognise that drills and effective procedures will not remove the high emotions for staff and children in a real incident and acknowledge this in your planning.
- Current guidance states that there is no expectation for additional costs but to consider what is already in place for the setting and what is practical to manage.

Training:

- Action Counters Terrorism (ACT) for Education e-learning is bespoke training aimed all staff working in education settings and will teach learners how to identify security vulnerabilities, suspicious activity and how to respond when there is an incident and can be accessed via Enable: [How to use Enable](#).
- This SCaN For All Staff module is designed for all members of staff across an organisation venue or event, to increase their awareness of hostile reconnaissance and how they can help to counter it: [SCaN for All Staff | Hostile Reconnaissance | NPSA](#)

Guidance and Resources:

- [Protective Security and Preparedness for Education Settings](#)
- [DfE Protective Security and Preparedness Self-Assessment](#)- main landing page
- ACT in a BOX is an immersive digital tool enabling organisations to rehearse and explore their responses to a fictional terrorist incident: [ACT in a BOX Exercises | ProtectUK](#)
- The PSHE Association, in collaboration with the Department for Education and the National Counter Terrorism Security Office (NaCTSO), have improved and relaunched the Action Counters Terrorism (ACT) for Youth lesson plans to help young people protect themselves and keep safe in the event of a knife or gun attack: [Act for Youth: RUN HIDE TELL | ProtectUK](#)
- [citizenAID's School Education Zone for Teachers](#) has a range of resources for education settings from primary school to secondary school. The wider website aims to build public resilience with a range of resources.
- <https://www.gov.uk/government/publications/martyns-law-for-education-settings>
- [Terrorism \(Protection of Premises\) Bill 2024: factsheets - GOV.UK](#)
- [School and college security - GOV.UK](#)

Please note: As this is an area of development, it is advised that you check this document regularly to ensure you stay aware of any additions to guidance and resources.

