



# Critical Incident Plan & Lockdown Policy

## Critical Incident Plan & Lockdown Policy (Including EYFS)

**Policy Review Date:** October 2025

**Reviewed By:** J Callaway, SLT & Board of Governors

**Next Review:** October 2026 (or following incident, legislation or interim guidance)

October 2025 Reviewed & ratified by:

Headteacher: Mrs J Callaway

Chair of Governors: Dr Catherine Kidd :

## Distribution

This policy is made available on the school website and in request from the school office.

## Updates and Amendments to Policy

Date	Section Heading	Update Details	Page N°
Sept 2019	Lockdown Procedure	Signal for Whole school Lockdown	9
Oct 2020		Reviewed – no updates	
Sept 2021		Reviewed – no updates	
October 2022	Personal Emergency Evacuation Procedure	PEEP procedure Highlighted in yellow	8
October 2022	Conducting practises	Information regarding conducting regular practises.	11
October 2023		Reviewed – no updates	
October 2024		Reviewed – no updates	
October 2025		Reviewed – updates highlighted in yellow	

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# INTRODUCTION

Dealing with difficult 'incidents' is part of daily school life. However some incidents can be significantly more critical or overwhelming in character than others.

## **Critical Incident**

A critical incident is an unexpected occurrence which may suddenly have a major impact on the school. It overwhelms the normal coping mechanisms and would be markedly distressing to a significantly large number of adults and children. Failure to act properly can prolong stress and suffering, delay recovery, seriously affect academic progress and affect the general well-being of the entire School community.

Examples of a critical incident may include:

- death of a pupil or member of staff
- death or serious injury on a school trip
- epidemic in school or local community
- violent incident in school
- a pupil missing
- a hostage taking
- a transport accident involving school members
- arson attack or serious fire at school
- significant vandalism
- violent attack on a school member
- an armed intruder on the premises
- allegations or actual instances of abuse against pupils by staff and by pupils against staff or pupil against pupil or staff against staff.
- floods
- school use by community during an emergency

## **Minimising Risks for School Activities:**

- Ensure all risk assessments are in place and centrally located for ease of access
- Risk assessments should not only consider specific risks, and how they can be avoided or mitigated, but there must also be consideration of what is to be done in the case of emergency.
- Ensure insurance fully covers all school activities and staff actions
- Ensure staff are fully trained and aware of all school policies
- Ensure transport meets standards required
- All visits out of school to be risk assessed by staff and then checked by Headteacher / Deputy Headteacher
- These must be copied and held in school

- A full and accurate list of any child participating in an activity or out of school visit to be held in school as well as taken by each member of staff on the visit
- Relevant Information , e.g. medical, personal etc. is to be on the risk assessment and taken on the visit
- A list of contact numbers for each child to be held in school
- An emergency number circulated to be used only by staff on a visit, which is NOT the school number (Usually Headteacher / Deputy Headteacher contact number)

## **Aims**

The aim is to develop a practiced system that is:

- Well known
- Rehearsed
- Effective

A flexible structure needs to be in place that is NOT dependent on any particular person or persons:

1. all staff and pupils will be familiar with fire and emergency evacuation procedures – see Health & Safety Policy
2. If the meeting point on the school playground is not safe then staff will take children up to St. Bridget's School for safe evacuation.
3. all staff will be familiar with the school security systems and will challenge any unknown adult not wearing a visitor badge and will ensure that security doors and gates remain closed
4. all staff will be familiar with the use of lockdown procedure
5. all staff will be aware of the procedures involving a first aid incident
6. all staff should know how to write a risk assessment for a new trip or procedure in school and know where these are stored and who they are approved by
7. all staff should be aware of the emergency procedures involved when a critical incident occurs and the procedures involved (in this policy)

## **Key Priorities**

The priorities in any critical incident should always be thought of in the following order:

1. stay safe
2. save life
3. minimise injury
4. safeguard the interests of pupils and staff
5. minimise loss
6. return to normal school working operation as quickly as possible

## **SECTION 2:**

### **CRISIS TEAM: KEY PERSONNEL**

Full details of Key Personnel and contacts in the event of a Critical Incident are listed below. At the same time all staff should be mindful of this policy and their duties as it is entirely possible that Key Personnel may themselves be affected by a Critical Incident.

**Dr. C Kidd: Chair of Governors**

**Mrs J Callaway: Head teacher**

**Mr M Ashton - Deputy Head teacher & SENDCo**

**Mrs A Evans - School Business Manager &  
PA to the Headteacher**

**Mrs A Prandle – Nursery Manager**

**Mr W Spence – Site Manager**

### **CRISIS ACTION PLAN**

Once the Head or deputy has been informed of or the potential for a critical incident the following broad guide to action should come into operation:

- In the event of an emergency at school i.e. a major health and safety issue, the fire alarm will sound and all pupils, staff, visitors and parents on site will assemble as for the normal fire drill.
- The Head will work together with Crisis Team to draw up an action plan for the supervision and well-being of the children and the safety of all staff and pupils.
- The Head or senior staff will contact emergency services if necessary.

### **Immediate Action**

- 1) Obtain information about the incident.
- 2) Take immediate necessary action to contain the incident.
- 3) Assess the magnitude of the incident with reference to:
  - Extent and severity of the problem
  - Jeopardy of pupils and staff
  - Jeopardy of local population
  - Reputation of the school
  - Breach of law or regulations
  - Likely media involvement

- 4) The Headteacher or the Deputy headteacher should then, if appropriate, inform the relevant members of the Crisis team and call an immediate meeting.
- 5) Appoint a team leader who reports directly to the Head or deputy.
- 6) The team leader is responsible for ensuring that team members undertake the tasks allocated to them, and that they are able to communicate effectively.
- 7) The Head or deputy then briefs members of that team, including external members.
- 8) All team members should maintain a log throughout the crisis. This is particularly important should litigation follow.
- 9) Ensure lines of communication are adequate.
- 10) As part of the pre-incident preparation a global mailing list will be comprised – this will include – SLT, Avalon Staff and Governors. An alert email will be sent out immediately a critical incident is decided
- 11) . Ensure all party leaders and members of staff in charge of activities have an emergency number to use, which is not the school phone.
- 12) Prepare to give families accurate and immediate information. Consider bringing them into school and what you will need for them. Where parents are invited into school they will be accommodated and supported by members of staff
- 13) Bring in staff to man switch boards/handle enquiries. They must be clearly briefed and make a note of all calls
- 14) Contact ISI and ISA
- 15) Prepare statement for release to media

## **NEXT STEPS**

The Crisis team will need to consider the following:

1. contact insurance company to inform of incident and provision of any assistance
2. to liaise with Site Manager and emergency services to secure area and make safe
3. contact Local Authority to find advice on appropriate counsellors
4. media and parental announcements about re-opening or closing of school
5. oversee reunion of families
6. arrange how staff (including Crisis Team) will be counselled, check for any becoming overtired and ensure rest is given

## **MEDIUM TERM ACTION**

- Return to school for staff or pupils after long absence – reintegration will need to be planned carefully, and may involve home visits prior to return, part time attendance initially, reducing workloads, putting in place mentoring process etc.
- Consulting professionals – consideration should be given to consulting the Educational Psychology Service for support and guidance, especially to help those showing unusual or prolonged reaction to the incident.
- Keeping parents informed – it may be appropriate to produce a letter for parents giving guidance on the possible delayed reactions of pupils to an incident and making suggestions to help them deal with these.

- Support for staff – ongoing monitoring and support for staff is a major consideration. Crisis Team especially will not be immune to reaction from their ordeal.

## **LONG TERM ACTION**

- Monitoring the vulnerable – the effects of a crisis can reverberate for years, and it is especially important that new staff and pupils are briefed in the school's history to help them understand and deal with potential repercussions especially at anniversary times.
- Marking anniversaries – these difficult times need to be treated with sensitivity. Some suggestions for schools to mark anniversaries are by annual concerts, memorial services, memorial prize giving ceremonies, memorial gardens etc ...
- Legal processes – the length of time taken over some legal processes can prolong the recovery process following a critical incident. Crisis Team may need to plan for this especially where staff may be involved attending legal processes, and facing extended emotional trauma.
- Curriculum implications – it may be appropriate to schedule INSET training for staff in loss counselling, bereavement etc.

## **PERSONAL EMERGENCY EVACUATION PLAN (PEEP)**

Where a member of staff, pupil or visitor has a disability which may result in them needing help in evacuating the premises, a PEEP will be put in place.

The purpose of a PEEP is to enable the school to implement effective arrangements to ensure that everyone can evacuate the building in an emergency, should one arise.

These plans will ensure that no one is discriminated against, or treated less favourably, in the event of an emergency.

A PEEP will identify the following:

- Any specific needs of the individual
- Responsibilities of staff members
- Specific evacuation routes, where applicable
- Refuge areas
- Any specific evacuation procedure requirements

Where possible, pupils with PEEPs in place will exit the premises using the same route as the rest of their class, unless otherwise stated within their plan.

PEEPs will be reviewed on an annual basis in order to ensure that the most up-to-date information is available. When there is a change in the individual's health, a change of procedure, or an alteration made to the premises, their PEEP will be reviewed and amended to reflect these changes. The individual, for whom the plan is for, will be consulted at each review, alongside any specified staff members.

## SECTION3:

### LOCKDOWN PROCEDURE

A lockdown is implemented when there is a serious security risk of the premises due to, for example, nearby chemical spillage, proximity of dangerous dogs, serious weather conditions or attempted access by unauthorised person's intent in causing harm / damage.

#### Notification of Lockdown

Staff will be notified lockdown procedures are to immediately take place on hearing an intermittent blast of the Lockdown alarm throughout school.

LOCKDOWN PLAN	
<b>STAFF RESPONSIBILITIES</b>	
<b>Headteacher</b>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"><li>To contact emergency services.</li></ul>
<b>SBM &amp; Deputy Headteacher</b>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"><li>To communicate with Parents / Carers</li></ul>
<b>Teachers and support staff</b>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"><li>To stay with pupils and support them in keeping quiet and calm</li></ul>
<b>Site manager:</b>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"><li>To ensure all access points are secured</li></ul>
<b>SIGNALS</b>	
<b>Lockdown signal</b>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"><li>Dedicated 'lockdown' alarm tone will sound with a 5 /10-second intermittent burst of alarm</li></ul>
<b>All clear signal</b>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"><li>Internal message systems / Word of mouth</li></ul>
<b>Evacuation signal</b>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"><li>Continuous Evacuation Fire alarm</li></ul>
<b>LOCKDOWN</b>	
<b>Assembly points</b>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"><li>Nearest Classroom, School hall, or office.</li></ul>
<b>Entrance and exit points</b>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"><li>Close all doors and secure windows,</li><li>Close window blinds</li></ul>
<b>Bringing pupils inside</b>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"><li>On hearing Lockdown alarm, any pupils outside to proceed inside as quickly as possible with staff and go to nearest safe room/area. Secure the room / area as above.</li></ul>

<b>Steps to increase protection from danger</b>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Lock or block and screen doors</li> <li>• Position children away from sightlines from external doors and windows, for example under a desk</li> <li>• Turn off lights and monitors</li> <li>• Ensure mobiles phones and electronic devices are on silent, or turned off</li> <li>• Staff to support children in keeping calm and quiet</li> </ul>
<b>Internal communication</b>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Staff to remain in lockdown positions until informed by the Headteacher or Deputy Headteacher that it is '<b>ALL CLEAR</b>'.</li> <li>• Text Local message system: staff in a defined user group and can be used to communicate with staff in an emergency.</li> <li>• After lockdown has been cleared all staff and children to return to their base classroom and conduct a full register and inform HT / Emergency services immediately of any pupils not accounted for</li> </ul>
<b>Communication with parents</b>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• A combination of text (Text Local) and email, will be used to communicate with parents.</li> <li>• Parents will be alerted that the school is in Lockdown and NOT to call the school, as this will tie up lines that would be used to contact emergency services.</li> <li>• Parents will be told not to come to the school until an all clear message has been received from school.</li> <li>• If the end of the day is extended due to a lockdown, parents will be notified when and where to collect their children.</li> <li>• A letter will be released to parents from the school after the event, explaining the reason for the lockdown procedure, also asking parents to reinforce with their children the importance of following procedures in these very rare circumstances.</li> </ul>
<b>Additional notes</b>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Consideration will be given to any pupils or staff with additional needs who may need specific arrangements, as appropriate.</li> <li>• An evacuation will be communicated if needed, by use of the continuous Fire Alarm / Evacuation signal.</li> </ul>
<b>Lockdown drills</b>	<p>Lockdown practices will take place once a year to ensure everyone knows exactly what to do in such a situation. Monitoring of practices will take place and debriefed to staff so improvements can be made.</p>

<b>Review</b>	This policy and procedures will be reviewed annually
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## CONDUCTING PRACTISES

Practises of each emergency procedure will be conducted on a regular basis (termly for emergency evacuation and at least annually for Lockdown).

During a practise, all pupils and staff will be expected to follow the relevant procedure. Any issues or concerns that arise from the practise will be considered by the headteacher and health and safety committee and changes will be made to procedures if necessary.

## ACTIONS FOLLOWING INCIDENTS

The school's plans will be amended appropriately to consider the emotional and mental impact on pupils, parents and staff members following an incident. The school will also consider introducing a strategy that monitors pupils and staff who are primarily affected by the incident.

The school will conduct post-incident evaluations and hold a full debrief where feedback is obtained from all the key people involved. The school will use these post-incident actions to inform what measures need to be taken to support victims and learn from anything that could have been improved should such an incident occur again.

In time, the school will also hold debriefing sessions with neighbouring settings, business, the local community and the police, as appropriate.

Following an occurrence necessitating the implementation of an emergency procedure, the following actions will be taken:

- A follow-up talk with staff members and pupils will be delivered by the headteacher
- Support will be sought where necessary, for example, from counselling services
- Parents and other stakeholders will be informed via letter or email
- The response to the crisis will be evaluated and procedures amended where necessary
- The school's Business Continuity Plan will be activated to help restore normality following an incident in consultation with the school's Insurers.

A written record will be kept of all incidents, including lessons learned and any improvements made to procedures.

## **MONITORING AND REVIEW**

This policy will be reviewed on an annual basis, or sooner if statutory guidance is released before the review date.

This policy will also be reviewed and evaluated following any incidents which required it to be activated.

The review will be conducted by the health and safety committee, in collaboration with the headteacher and the governing board.

## **APPENDIX 1**

### **LOCKDOWN PROCEDURE**

**TO INITIATE A WHOLE SCHOOL LOCKDOWN:**

**PRESS YELLOW LOCKDOWN ALARM CALL BUTTON**

**Contact:**

- **POLICE – 999 Saying... “This is Avalon School, Caldby Road, West Kirby, CH48 2HE. We are in a lockdown situation.” – respond to police questioning**

- **Local Authority Emergency Planning - Merseyside: 0151 709 6010**

**Saying... “This is Avalon School. We have implemented a lockdown procedure, we have notified the Police.” If possible, give brief details of threat depending on the situation.**