

# Canonium Learning Trust



## Critical Incident Policy

Adopted: 2022/2023

Next review: 2023/2024

### PURPOSE OF THE POLICY

This Policy sets out the procedures to be followed in the event of a critical incident to ensure safety, information sharing and the well-being of the whole academy community. This Policy will be reviewed annually or when needed.

A copy of this policy should be held by each member of the **Critical Incident Team** and **Academy Key Contacts** at all times.

### What is as a Critical Incident?

- A major incident involving a large number of children/adults *e.g. bus/train crash, major violence*
- A pupil or member of staff has died or suffered a serious injury
- An incident has taken place which involves emergency services
- A natural disaster or severe damage to the academy building has occurred
- An incident which has generated high media interest, or increase in absence *e.g. infectious disease*
- A serious safeguarding incident relating to a pupil *e.g. abuse, abduction*

### The member of staff who receives news of a critical incident should:

1. Write down all the information.
2. Inform their Headteacher (in their absence the Deputy Headteacher or member of staff in charge of the academy) who will inform the CEO who in turn will inform all members of the Critical Incident Team:

| CRITICAL INCIDENT TEAM:   |       |                               |                 |
|---|-------|-------------------------------|-----------------|
|   | Name: | Role:                         | Contact Number: |
|  |       | CEO                           |                 |
|   |       | Chair of Directors            |                 |
|   |       | Safeguarding Director         |                 |
|   |       | Business Manager              |                 |
|   |       | Business Manager              |                 |
|   |       | Operational Director          |                 |
| ACADEMY KEY CONTACTS:   |       |                               |                 |
|  |       | Headteacher                   |                 |
|   |       | Deputy Headteacher            |                 |
|   |       | (Acting) Chair of T+L Council |                 |
|  |       | Headteacher                   |                 |
|   |       | Deputy Headteacher            |                 |
|   |       | Chair of T+L Council          |                 |
|  |       | Executive Headteacher         |                 |
|   |       | Head of School                |                 |
|   |       | Chair of T+L Council          |                 |
|  |       | Headteacher                   |                 |
|   |       | Deputy Headteacher            |                 |
|   |       | Chair of T+L Council          |                 |

Sept 2022

3. Assess that all children and staff are safe.
4. Check, to establish whether any individual or group needs immediate attention *e.g. ring 999 (ensure an adult accompanies any casualties to hospital).*
5. **DO NOT MAKE ANY STATEMENTS TO THE PRESS!**

**The CEO who is informed of a critical incident (in their absence their \*deputy)**

1. Write down all the information.
2. Inform the LA Teams and Diocese by phone:

|  |                               |  |
|--|-------------------------------|--|
| Schools Communication team                   | 0333 013 9880<br>07894 963922 | Office hours (Mon-Fri 8am-4pm)   |
| Diocese of Chelmsford                        | 01245 294400                  | Ask for a Responsible Officer.   |
| Children's and Families Hub Child Protection | 0345 603 7627                 | Child Protection (Safeguarding)  |
|  | 0345 606 1212                 | Out of hours   |
| Critical Incidents                           | email                         | <a href="mailto:schools.communication@essex.gov.uk">schools.communication@essex.gov.uk</a> |
| Press Office Team                            | 03330 132800                  | Out of hours (07717 867525)  |
| <i>(September 2022 contacts)</i>             |                               |  |

3. **Communication**

- Issue an **agreed factual statement** to be used by anyone receiving an in-coming call to the academy
- Use an academy mobile phone for out-going calls.

4. **Contacting Families Directly Affected**

- Inform families quickly and sensitively using the agreed factual statement  
*If parents/carers cannot be contacted, leave a message with a relative, friend or neighbour identified in their personal information sheet*  
*If parents/carers are to be invited to a venue to meet academy or LA staff, the venue should be secure and the location not made known to the media.*

5. **Responding to Calls from Relatives**

- Decide which members of staff will be delegated/permitted to talk to relatives.

These members of staff should:

- Use language and tone that alleviates anxiety
- Anticipate questions relevant to the incident, *eg 'Did my child witness the incident?'* and be prepared to answer them.

6. **Information for Teaching and Support Staff**

- Organise a schedule for up-dating staff *eg breaks, at the end of the academy day or first thing in the morning. This ensures that knowledge is common and questions are answered*
- Caution staff against talking to the media or responding to questions from reporters.

## 7. Informing Pupils about the Incident

- Tell staff what advice and guidance pupils should be told and how  
*Pupils must be given all the time they need to ask questions or talk about the incident to have their worries allayed*  
*Families should be informed about the amount of information their children have been given as they will not be able to relay this information themselves.*

## 8. Contacting Families and Others not Directly Affected

- Decide how to inform others not directly affected  
*This may be by letter or an early meeting at the academy*
- Prepare a verbal or written statement providing the necessary facts, expressions of sympathy and concern.  
*It is essential to remember that a letter can be passed on to the media (seek guidance from the LA before issuing any form of written statements).*

## 9. The Media

*Once an incident has been reported to the LA the team will contact the academy as a matter of high priority. However, the media may make contact before they arrive and contingency plan support systems are in place.*

- Ensure that if the media contact a member of the academy staff before a member of the LA team has arrived, staff should: **Inform them that the CEO or Headteacher is not available but will call back.**

*CEO or Headteacher's Guidance:*

- *Let everyone know who is and is not permitted to speak to the media on behalf of the academy*
- *When talking to the press have a colleague present to take notes and record what is said*
- *Provide nothing but the facts*
- *Give a prepared statement rather than an interview*
- *Immediately correct any incorrect or misleading information*
- *Be sensitive about personal information*
- *Do not apportion blame or liability to anyone even in 'off the record' conversations*
- *Praise and thank any person or service that have helped during the incident.*

## 10. After the critical incident:

- Offer pupils support from appropriate professionals within or outside the academy
- Staff should be offered opportunities for debriefing and counselling, informally or through a more formal structure
- Make arrangements to express sympathy to the families directly affected
- Visit injured children in hospital and encourage pupils to send cards and letters
- Closure of the academy is an option to allow staff and pupils to attend funerals
- Hold special assemblies and in-academy memorial services
- Ensure that staff receives training in areas such as loss, change or bereavement
- Provide relevant fiction and non-fiction books in the academy's Library
- In PSHE, discuss with pupils about what are normal reactions to bereavement, stress or crisis.