



# Emergency and Critical Incident Policy

Policy issue date: November 2020

Policy review date: November 2021

## **Purpose and Scope**

Emergencies and critical incidents can affect people physically and psychologically, and affect program continuity at 4 Strides equestrian.

The purpose of this policy is to ensure 4 Strides Equestrian prepares for and effectively responds to emergencies and critical incidents through the appropriate use of resources. The prevention and effective management of emergencies and critical incidents can assist to minimise the negative impact of an unexpected event.

## **Policy Aim**

This policy applies to all staff, visitors, volunteers and students.

The aim of this policy is to encourage and support pre-planning to help reduce the impact of an incident, and provide a pre-planned course of basic actions. It is not intended to be prescriptive or to attempt to cover all possible events.

In a crisis, the central objective is to safeguard students and staff, ensure the establishment manager establishes early control in partnership with appropriate other agencies, minimise disruption, and to recover a full educational programme as quickly as possible.

## **Definitions**

**An emergency** is an unplanned or imminent event that affects or threatens the health, safety or welfare of people, property and infrastructure, and which requires a significant and coordinated response. The defining characteristic of an emergency event or situation is that usual resources are overwhelmed or have the potential to be overwhelmed.

Emergencies may be a specific event with a clear beginning, end and recovery process, or a situation that develops over time and where the implications are gradual rather than immediate.

**Emergency management** is the coordination of an emergency response and management of recovery. The aim of emergency management is to minimise physical and psychological impacts on all parties and to minimise damage to assets, operations, reputation and staff productivity.

**A critical incident** is an unexpected traumatic event, involving personal or professional threat, which evokes extreme stress, fear or injury. Providing appropriate supports following a critical incident is part of emergency management.

**A traumatic event** is one in which a person experiences, witnesses or is confronted by experiences that involve actual, threatened or perceived death or serious injury and/ or threat to own or others physical and emotional integrity. The person's response may then include intense fear, feelings of helplessness and horror, which impact on their sense of 'self'.

**Complex trauma** refers to a condition resulting from multiple exposures to one or more traumas. When repeatedly exposed to traumatic stress, disruptions can occur in brain structure and function, central and autonomic nervous system arousal, endocrinological and immunological function. These biological disruptions interact with psychological, emotional, cognitive and spiritual processes

**Critical Incident Debriefing (CID)** is a preventative health measure to minimise the impact of traumatic events and the development of major psychological health problems such as Post Traumatic Stress (PTS) Disorder.

**Principles**

Emergency management planning is being prepared for events or incidents that stretch our ability to cope beyond normal day-to-day capacity.

4 Strides equestrian is committed to the protection of staff, volunteers, board members, students and visitors during emergencies.

4 Strides Equestrian swiftly and effectively responds to emergency situations, with the foremost goals of preserving life, protecting the organisation’s property, and restoring operations as quickly as possible.

Critical incidents can be a threatening experience and appropriate supports are required to minimise long term effects arising from exposure to the trauma.

**Outcomes**

Emergency situations are prevented as far as practical.

The negative impacts of emergency situations and critical incidents are minimised through effective management.

**Functions and Delegations**

Position	Delegation/Task
Health & Safety Advisor, and establishment/centre manager	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Develop and Review Emergency and Critical Incident Policy</li> <li>• Compliance with Emergency and Critical Incident Policy</li> </ul>
Management: establishment/centre manager	<p>Compliance with Emergency and Critical Incident Policy</p> <p>Governors and Health &amp; Safety Advisor</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Ensures development and implementation of Emergency and Critical Incident Policy</li> <li>• Ensures potential disaster and emergency situations are identified, and appropriate emergency management plans are in place.</li> </ul> <p>Centre Manager</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Lead responsibility for implementation of emergency and critical incident procedures, including:</li> <li>• identification of potential situations</li> <li>• developing, documenting and communicating response plans</li> <li>• reporting on actual situations, and reviewing policy and procedures following a disaster or emergency situation.</li> </ul>

	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Consider the need to alert external agencies.</li> <li>• Collate all relevant information relating to the emergency.</li> <li>• Coordinate the emergency response strategy, liaising with relevant agencies, e.g. the emergency services, LA, Governors as appropriate.</li> <li>• Monitor the emergency response.</li> <li>• Provide regular staff/ team briefings and coordinate staff training in emergency and critical incident, such as fire response, building evacuation, etc.</li> <li>• Authorise any additional expenditure.</li> </ul>
Staff and volunteers	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Compliance with Emergency and Critical Incident Policy.</li> <li>• Contribute to the development of Emergency and Critical Incident Policy.</li> <li>• Maintain supervision.</li> <li>• Ensure the safety and security of learners.</li> <li>• Provide information and offer reassurance.</li> </ul>

The following Staff are identified as the Incident Management Team:

Role	Name	Contact Details
Head of Governors	Nikki Cade	07719913905
Establishment Manager	Sally Heron	07771882822
Health & Safety Advisor	Nikki Cade	07719913905

The Incident Management Team may request/allocate other members of staff to assist them, should they deem it necessary.

**Incident Management Team assemble in the club house, if and when appropriate.**

### **Risk Management**

Emergency evacuation drills are undertaken under the instruction of the establishment manager

Disaster and emergency management plans are reviewed annually and/or following the event of a disaster or emergency situation.

As far as possible, traumatic events are prevented, and the impacts of trauma are minimised following traumatic events.

### **Policy Implementation**

All staff have access to and are familiar with policies and procedures relating to disaster emergency management.

All staff have information, which outlines actions to follow for various disaster and emergency situations, and are supported to undertake training for specific roles in emergency and critical incident.

## **Policy Detail**

4 Strides Equestrian identifies, prevents and manages disaster and emergency situations within its sphere of responsibility and influence, until the arrival of appropriate emergency services.

A range of emergency situations may occur on the premises with the potential to impact on the safety of staff, governors, volunteers, students, visitors and consumers, including:

- fire
- water leak
- gas leak
- vehicle and other accidents
- chemical spill
- Adverse weather conditions i.e. storm, snow etc
- earthquake
- bomb threat
- civil disorder or illegal occupancy
- hostage or terrorist situation
- death
- robbery
- physical (including sexual) assaults.
- collapse of building

## **Risk Assessment**

4 Strides Equestrian uses risk assessment processes to identify and control barriers to effective emergency management.

Staff, board members, students and volunteers are expected to behave in a way which minimises the risk of emergencies occurring.

## **Preparedness**

The Emergency Situation Checklist supports the organisation to prepare for potential disaster and emergency situations, and is reviewed on a regular basis.

Disaster and emergency management plans are reviewed on an annual basis unless following a critical incident whereby a review will take place. All staff, governors, students and volunteers are provided with training to ensure they are familiar with implementation of disaster and emergency management plans.

All staff, governors, students and volunteers familiarise themselves with emergency evacuation procedures, including their responsibilities and the emergency evacuation assembly point.

All fire safety activities undertaken by the organisation are recorded and reviewed to identify gaps in training, knowledge, equipment or processes. Fire activities include, but are not limited to, fire safety training, drills and exercises, records of maintenance and inventories of equipment kept.

## **Critical Incident Response**

When a disaster or emergency situation arises, the primary aim of the response is to ensure the safety of all people on the premises, preserve life and protect property.

The availability of critical incident debriefing is an essential component of 4 Strides Equestrian's approach to emergency management.

When required, supportive counselling is provided to consumers, staff, volunteers, students and board members who are affected by an emergency or critical incident within two hours of the event (for defusing and mobilisation) and then within 48 to 72 hours (for critical incident debriefing).

There is no rigid formula to responding to incidents – this depends on the nature and scale of the incident.

Accurate records must be maintained of all decisions, actions and expenditure to assist cost recovery and to inform post-incident debriefs. Once convened the Critical Incident Team will meet regularly to review their actions and provide ongoing support for those directly and indirectly involved in the incident.

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

- a) Immediate action
- b) Short term action
- c) Medium term action
- d) Longer term action

### **IMMEDIATE ACTION:**

- Assess the situation
- Remove people from danger
- Make sure other people are safe and looked after
- Arrange first aid for casualties
- Call the emergency services as required and provide the following information:
  - Precise location (including postcode)
  - Description of the incident
  - Time of the incident
  - Number of casualties
  - Report missing persons
  - Nature of injuries
  - Total number in the party (if an offsite visit)
  - Your name and telephone number
  - The name of the establishment
- Relay information to outside organisations impacted by the event
- Co-ordinated support will be available from the Local Authority and it is practical to contact them immediately
- If the incident involves the police, they will take control of certain management issues
- Management to refer to response checklist – Appendix 1
- Allocate responsibility (within Critical Incident Team) for dealing with media

**SHORT TERM ACTION:**

- Reunite site users with their families
- Manage/support staff
- Identify strategies for helping site users cope with the situation
- Debrief – staff, site users, parents as appropriate to clarify, share information, mobilise resources/agencies for support
- Formal and informal recognition of rituals – hospital visits, special assemblies, memorial services, etc.
- Re-establish routines

**MEDIUM TERM ACTION:**

- Reintegration especially where staff or students have had long absences following an incident
- Consultation with professionals for support – e.g. Educational Psychologist
- Communication – keeping students/staff/parents informed
- Ongoing support for those involved both directly and indirectly

**LONGER TERM ACTION:**

- Monitor the vulnerable
- Mark anniversaries
- Consider curriculum implications
- Legal processes – can often prolong the recovery process

**Emergency and Critical Incident Procedures  
(Procedures Checklist in Appendix 1)**

1. Staff, governors, volunteers and students who experience a critical incident related to their involvement with 4 Stride, should immediately inform where possible a member of the Critical Incident Team. If this is not possible, they should immediately inform the emergency services.
2. The Critical Incident Team Lead (in most cases the Centre Manager) will instruct the administrator or another member of staff to contact the emergency services using 999 if and where required.
3. A Critical Incident Report will be opened

A Critical Incident Report:

- is to be completed by the staff member involved in the incident or notification of the incident.
- is to contain as much information as possible and indicate the people directly involved in the incident.

The staff member who receives the report will ensure that the person(s) identified in the critical incident receives all appropriate support. They are to contact emergency services where required and must contact any other members of the Critical Incident Team immediately.

## **Managed response**

The order of the actions to be determined by the specific needs of the situation. Not all actions will be appropriate.

Plan the ongoing management of the incident

- Incident Management Team to continue to meet
- Avoid overcrowding/manage space
- Review plans, clarify tasks, assign roles, consider timescales
- Liaise with outside agencies (police, fire etc.) and agree when they will withdraw
- Access further advice from external agencies
- Continue to maintain written records / take written statements.

## **On site – during working hours**

- Securing the affected area will be a key task. Site staff to cordon off the area as quickly as possible.
- Deploy staff to keep the affected area safe prevent others from entering it.
- Lead staff to wear high visibility vests.
- Manage a safe route through for emergency vehicles.
- Man all entrances.
- Establish a holding space (eg communal area club house or racers rest),
- Account for all site users via register
- Appoint staff to act as ‘runners’.
- Consider cancelling planned events at the establishment that day

## **Arrange to deal with enquiries / ongoing communication**

Never release names of those involved to the press until the police have confirmed identity and that permission has been obtained from the next of kin

- Liaise with Lincolnshire County Council for help from their press offices
- Provide regular updated written statements to staff answering the phones / meeting with parents
- Continue to brief staff/students/parents
- Designate areas of the establishment for staff/students/parents/community/media/outside agencies/first aid
- Designate staff to deal with visitors.

## **Arrange support**

- Identify those most in need
- Arrange for individuals/agencies able to offer support
- Set aside areas of the establishment for distressed staff/ students /parents
- Communicate what support is available
- Be aware of wider issues – witnesses, siblings, vulnerable pupils, apportioning blame
- Arrange transport, collection, safe waiting areas
- Make arrangements for personal effects
- Consider food and drink needs
- Consider money needs
- Schedule breaks for staff.

### **Arrange remedial work – affected areas of establishment**

- Arrange sealing off of immediate areas
- Get specialist contractors / electricians / builders etc.
- Cleaning needs / Waste disposal.

### **Re-opening of the Establishment**

- Plan how this will be carried out
- Communication to staff / pupils / community
- Repairs undertaken / in hand and areas all safe
- Special assemblies
- Ongoing assistance from Insurance Company, Health and Safety Executive, Human Resources, Consultants and other local agencies (e.g. Doctors).

### **Expressions of sympathy**

- Plan how best to support those involved
- Home visits/letters to those involved
- On-going communication and support
- Attendance at funeral.

### **Return to Establishment of those involved**

- Organise support for emotional and physical needs
- Brief staff and pupils on the arrangements
- Organise time off/phased returns
- Organise temporary staff from agencies if required
- Organise support with work (staff) and missed lessons/coursework/exams (pupils)
- Long term needs – support from counselling services/Human Resources etc.
- Where required, a meeting will be organised to determine issues and responsibilities relating to:
  - Assessing risks and response actions
  - Liaison with emergency and other services
  - Contact with the affected person's relatives and other supports
  - Liaison with other organisations where necessary
  - Counselling and supporting staff, board members, volunteers, students and consumers not directly involved in, but affected by, the incident.
  - Media management (if required)
  - Where appropriate 4 Strides Equestrian may be required to provide support to the family in the form of:
    - hiring interpreters
    - making arrangements for hospital/funeral/memorial service/repatriation
    - obtaining a death certificate
    - assisting with personal items and affairs including insurance issues

4 Strides Equestrian will conduct a review of actions arising from the above meeting to ensure:

- Follow up such as de-briefing, counselling and prevention strategies have been completed.
- Relevant people have been informed of all outcomes from the incident
- A recommendation as to the response to the critical incident is documented and included in the quality improvement cycle
- Further follow up required is documented and responsibilities allocated to appropriate staff.

## Evacuation

In the event of an alert to evacuate - either verbal, automatic alarm or manual alarm – and the threat is not immediate, all students, staff, governors, students, volunteers and visitors:

- Proceed along designated routes to the designated assembly area(s)
- Ensure assistance is provided to people with disabilities and/or special needs
- Establishment Manager to collect visitor sign-in and staff attendance registers and direct people to assembly point
- Check attendance at assembly area against the attendance registers.
- Remain at the assembly area until advised by the establishment manager and/or emergency personnel that it is safe to return to premises.

In the event of an alert to evacuate - either verbal, automatic alarm or manual alarm – and the threat is immediate, all students, staff, board members, students, volunteers and visitors:

- Proceed along designated routes to the designated assembly area(s)
- Ensure assistance is provided to people with disabilities and/or special needs
- The Administrator to collect visitor sign-in and staff attendance registers and direct people to the assembly point.
- The Administrator to check attendance at assembly area against the attendance registers.
- Remain at the assembly area until advised by the Centre Manager (or the Critical Management Team Lead) and/or emergency personnel that it is safe to return to premises.

## Fire

In the event of a fire:

- Trigger the fire alarm
- Contact fire emergency services.
- Alert the nominated fire warden and/or a senior staff member
- Evacuate people from the immediate area of the fire
- Fight the fire with existing equipment if safe to do so

## Bomb Threat

In the event of a bomb threat via phone call:

- Remain calm
- Record as much information as possible from the caller using questions and observations including:
  - *What type of bomb is it?*
  - *How will it go off?*
  - *What does it look like?*
  - *When it set to go off?*
  - *Where is it?*
  - *When was it put there?*
  - *Who put it there?*
  - *Why was it put there?*
  - *Will it explode or will something be released?*
  - *If a substance is released, what is it? How much is there? How will it be released?*
  - *Observations about the caller: gender, age, accent?*
  - *Any background noise?*
- Contact police who can assist in determining if evacuation is required
- If instructed, evacuate consumers, staff, governors,

- Notify CEO/Manager and/or other staff

In the event of a letter bomb (threat via postal mail):

- Do not disturb, move or touch the package if possible
- Contact police who can assist in determining if evacuation is required
- If instructed, evacuate consumers, staff, governors, students, volunteers and visitors as for the above evacuation procedures
- Notify CEO/Manager and/or other staff

### **Suspicious Mail**

In the event of a suspicious item of postal mail arriving to the premises:

- Do not disturb, move or touch the package if possible
- If you have touched the article wash your hands if it is possible, within the work area
- Contact police who can assist in determining if evacuation is required
- Inform others present of what has occurred and advise them to stay in their work area
- Prevent others from entering the work area
- Do not attempt to clean up spilt material or brush it off your clothing
- If instructed, evacuate consumers, staff, governors, students, volunteers and visitors as for the above evacuation procedures
- Notify CEO/Manager and/or other staff

### **Hold-up**

In the event of a hold-up situation:

- Assume the offender is armed and that any firearms are loaded
- Comply with instructions given by the offender, doing no more or less than what you are told to do, and answer all questions asked
- Do not attempt to disarm or apprehend the offender
- Take mental notes of details about the offender and any items that are touched by the offender
- Immediately after the incident:
  - Secure the area and prevent people from approaching
  - Notify the police immediately
  - Notify CEO/Manager and/or other staff
- Attend to the post-incident needs of consumers, staff, governors, volunteers, students and visitors affected by the incident.

### **Earthquake**

In the event of an earthquake:

If you are indoors:

- Remain indoors and seek shelter under strongly constructed tables, desks or door frames
- Keep away from windows, fixtures, furniture, and items that may become unstable
- Evacuate the premises if it is safe to do so.

If you are outdoors:

- Move quickly away from buildings, electrical structures and flammable products
- Proceed to designated assembly area if safe to do so.

After the earthquake:

- Check attendance at assembly area against the attendance registers
- Respond to injured people
- Check for gas leaks, power failure and any other hazard
- Turn off electricity, gas and water if it is safe to do so
- Prevent entry to premises if unsafe
- Contact and liaise with emergency services if required
- Notify CEO/Manager and/or other staff.

## **Flood**

In the event of a flood:

- Do not enter the flood waters
- Eliminate potential electrical hazards
- Place high value equipment and records away from impending floodwaters if it is safe to do so
- Stay in a safe location while it continues to offer protection
- Evacuate consumers, staff, governors,, students, volunteers and visitors as for the above evacuation procedures
- Contact and liaise with emergency services if required
- Notify CEO/Manager and/or other staff.

## **Closure of the Establishment**

Whilst it is rare for Establishment to close, the usual reason is bad weather. The Local Education Authority must be advised of such decisions. The county council's website [www.lincolnshire.gov.uk](http://www.lincolnshire.gov.uk) carries information on emergency School closures.

If the establishment is to close, an obligation is placed on the Centre Manager to ensure that all pupils will be able to arrive home safely.

Pupils must remain in centre until arrangements can be made for their collection to permission to send pupils home.

Contact strategies with parents would need to be put in place – consider using local radio stations for blanket announcements. Consider allowing pupils to use mobile phones to contact parents.

Where possible, messages will be placed on the Establishment's web page:

[www.4stridesequestrian.co.uk](http://www.4stridesequestrian.co.uk)

If pupils have to remain at the establishment beyond normal establishment hours, the Local Authority should be kept informed.

Consider food and drink requirements for pupils and staff if the waiting time at the establishment is prolonged.

All staff must remain at the centre to care for pupils as directed by the establishment manager. Consideration should be given to allowing staff to leave the site if required – for example if the reason for closure was bad weather and if staff were required to collect their own children. If staff travel a distance to work, consideration should be given for allowing them to leave early if possible.

## Critical Incident Debriefing (CID)

Critical Incident Debriefing (CID) will occur within 48 - 72 hours after the incident.

Debriefing may include individual and group counselling, where the aim is to:

- Decrease feelings of isolation
- Provide people affected by the incident with a facilitated session to assist them to normalise their thoughts and feelings. Groups assist people to explore their differing perspectives of the incident and share their similar thoughts and feelings.

There will usually be an initial counselling session, followed up with one or more debriefing sessions.

Initial counselling will occur as soon as possible after the incident, preferably immediately or within a few hours. Depending on the type or severity of the critical incident, initial defusing may include:

- A short factual statement about what is known about the incident, the possible effects on those involved, what is being done for them and what is going to happen in the future, eg.; planned debriefing sessions.
- Information on acute stress response (what is happening to people now) and how people can care for themselves.
- An arrangement for a structured debriefing session within 48-72 hours.
- The provision of different levels of service for those differently affected
- Referrals to various resources including counsellors

4 Strides Equestrian will maintain confidentiality to ensure that:

- Only a record of when and where a debriefing took place will be kept; and
- No information will be released without the agreement of the individual or group.

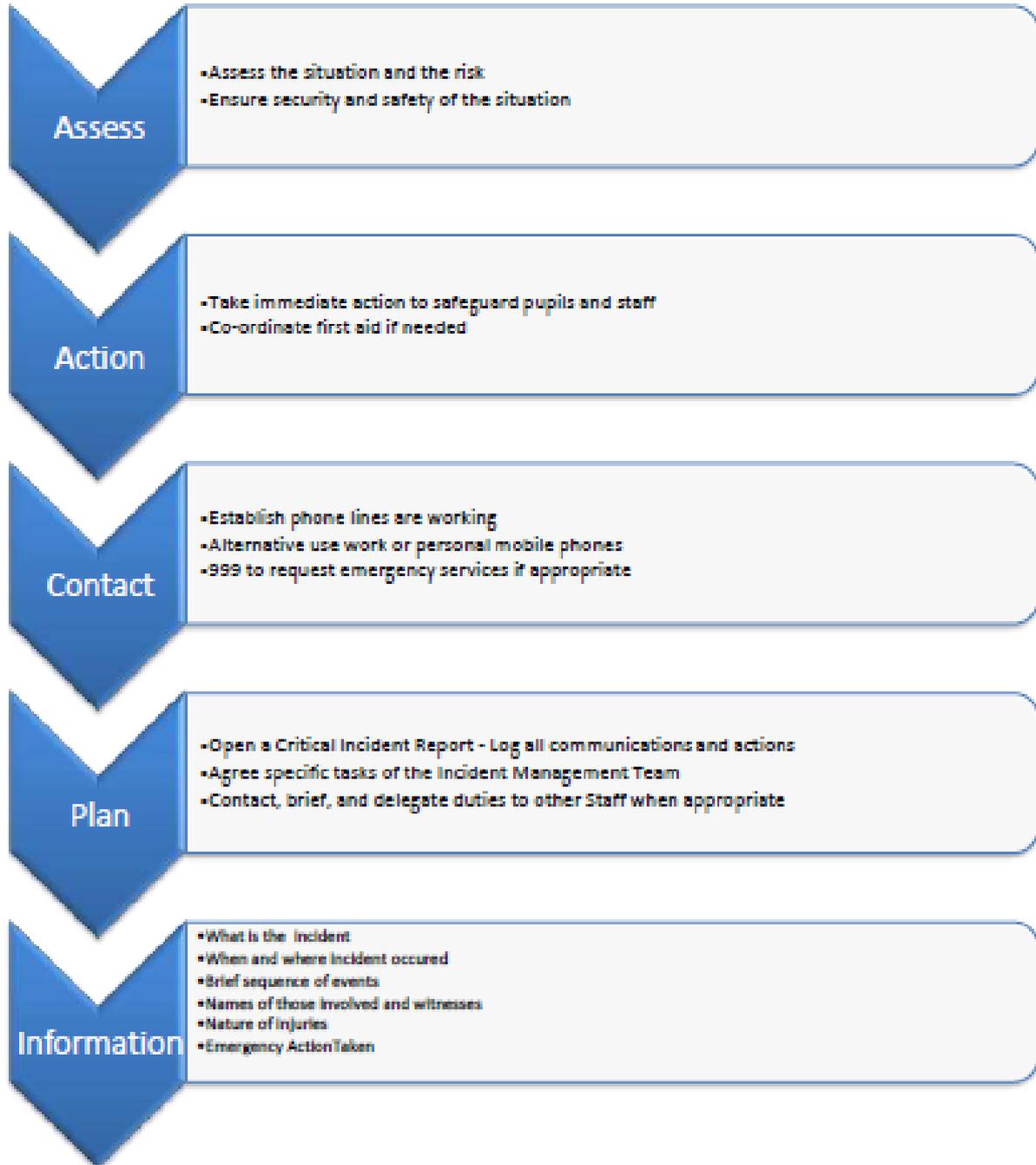
Approved by

Signed: ..... Name: ..... Date: .....

Director

## Appendix One

### Checklist of initial action by Critical Incident Team



Critical Incident Report

Name of CIT Lead:	Date:
Time Incident started:	Location:

Time	Event	Agreed Actions (what,when,who,where,how)

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