



Barrow C E Primary School

Critical Incident Plan

Updated: March, 2026

Next Review Date February 2027

Statement of intent

Whilst the safety of pupils, staff members and visitors to the school is always paramount, safety can be temporarily compromised due to the immediacy of a critical incident out of the control of the school. In such an emergency, staff members will endeavour to:

- take all reasonable actions in order to ensure the safety of pupils and members of the school community
- minimise disruption to Barrow CE Primary School
- respond to any critical incident as quickly and efficiently as possible.

Aims of this plan

- To ensure that swift and appropriate action is taken the moment that the school is made aware of a critical incident
- As far as is possible, to maintain the normal routine of school life to provide continuity to pupils and staff

Definition of a critical incident

A critical incident is an emergency that requires immediate responsive action beyond that which can be reasonably expected from the school's own leadership and management.

An incident may be designated as 'critical' where there is likely to be serious disruption to the running of the school, or where there will be a major impact on pupils and staff, or where there is likely to be significant public and / or media attention on the school.

For example:

- A serious accident to a pupil or adult within school or on a school trip
- The death of a pupil or member of staff
- Injury or death on a school journey or visit
- An act of violence on or near school premises
- A school fire or explosion
- An event in the local community that has serious implications for pupil wellbeing

A common feature of any critical incident is where the effectiveness of the school's response is likely to have a significant and lasting impact on the wider school community.

Critical Incident Team (CIT)

The role of the CIT is to direct the handling of a critical incident and the response and recovery process and will include:

- Headteacher
- Senior teacher(s) (as applicable)
- Chair of Governors and vice-chair (together with other governors as applicable)

Main roles & responsibilities

Head teacher	Information gathering, overall coordination, communication with CWAC, written log of events
Senior teacher / Bursar	Deal with pupils and staff on site, keeping disruption to a minimum Initial coordination of Emergency Service response
Bursar	Logistics and administration
Chair of Governors	Ongoing liaison with emergency services & CWAC Media communication and communications with the wider school community

Procedures and key actions

- The Headteacher (or in event of absence, a senior teacher) will gather all factual information on an emerging critical incident as soon as possible – what has happened, where and when it happened, who is involved, and what help or support is needed.
- The Chair of Governors and appropriate CWAC officers will be informed.
- The CIT will meet to confirm strategies and procedures.
- The rest of the staff will be informed as soon as possible, preferably at a specially convened staff meeting.
- Pupils will be told of incident in small group situations.
- Parents notified as required.
- The school will try, as far as possible, to keep to the normal routine.
- Should the need arise, the premises will be evacuated, and pupils walked to **Barrow Village Hall or, if not accessible, St. Bartholomew's Church** in a safe and orderly manner.

Key actions – within 1 hour

- Obtain factual information
- Convene CIT & advise CWAC
- Communicate with any families directly affected

Key actions – same day if possible

- Staff meeting and briefing

- Inform pupils in classes or smaller groups
- Make arrangements for informing parents
- De-briefing of any staff or pupils directly involved

Key actions – following day or as soon as practicable thereafter

- Commence return to normality
- Commence class-based discussions
- Identify need for individual or group discussions
- Identify need for specialist support or counselling

Recovery Management

As far as is possible, the school will quickly seek to return to its normal routines to restore a sense of security to the school, staff and pupils. Support systems will be set up for children and staff who wish to share their feelings and thoughts. The school will approach counselling services and specialist treatment for those at the heart of the incident or most affected by it.

Managing communications and the media

Good, clear communication is of paramount importance to mitigate against mis-informed rumour and speculation. The Chair of Governors or other governor or member of the CIT assigned to the media will need to protect pupils, parents, staff and the headteacher from unwarranted and unhelpful publicity. The CWAC Media Relations Officer will be contacted prior to preparing any formal media statement.

When communicating with members of the school community or with the media:

- DO – provide a concise, factual account
- DO – respond to *what* and *when* questions
- DO – consider the needs of the audience
- DO – prepare and rehearse so that you give a consistent message
- DO – choose your own time to speak to the media

- DO NOT – answer *how* and *why* questions
- DO NOT - speculate or bluff
- DO NOT - make 'off the record' comments
- DO NOT – make excuses or seek to lay blame
- DO NOT – respond to blind quotes
- DO NOT – say no comment but DO explain why you cannot comment
- DO NOT – allow words to be put in your mouth

CHESHIRE WEST AND CHESTER COUNCIL CONTACT LIST: (as at March 2024)

A CRITICAL INCIDENT INVOLVING A PUPIL OR STAFF MEMBER SHOULD BE REPORTED TO:		
Office Hours	Customer Services	01244 977818
Out of Hours Officers <i>NB. When calling the out of hours number, you will need to state key words "School Incident" as this is how Message Pad will be able to identify the query</i>	Customer Services	0300 123 7035
Other selective contacts:		
Role	Name & contact	
Strategic Lead Serious Incident Support Team	Kerry Gray 07789 484743 0151 356 6549 kerry.gray@cheshirewestandchester.gov.uk	
School Closures / Incidents	Anne Wood 01244 972398 07500 227869 anne.wood@cheshirewestandchester.gov.uk IncidentReporting@cheshirewestandchester.gov.uk	
Safeguarding Children in Education (SCiE)	Head of Service: Kerry Gray Chester and Rural Locality Officer: Susie Sheasby 07554773926 susie.sheasby@cheshirewestandchester.gov.uk	
Director of Children and Families	Helen Brackenbury 01244 973417 Helen.brackenbury@cheshirewestandchester.gov.uk	
Acting Head of Education and Inclusion	Debbie Murphy debbie.murphy@cheshirewestandchester.gov.uk	
School HR	Rosemary Hodgson 07717 483580 01244 976796 rosemary.hodgson@cheshirewestandchester.gov.uk	
Media relations	01244 972965 PressOffice@cheshirewestandchester.gov.uk	

FOR A PROPERTY RELATED INCIDENT CONTACT: CWAC helpdesk: 0300 123 7043

Local Police Contact: 111

Local Hospital Contact: Countess of Chester Hospital - 01244 365000