



KNIGHTSBRIDGE
SCHOOL

**CRITICAL INCIDENT
POLICY & EMERGENCY
PROCEDURES**

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PART A

Critical Incident Policy

The Knightsbridge School considers a critical incident to be:

“Any sudden event or emergency involving Knightsbridge School (in or out of hours) where the effectiveness of the school response is likely to have a significant impact on the local community and stakeholders”.

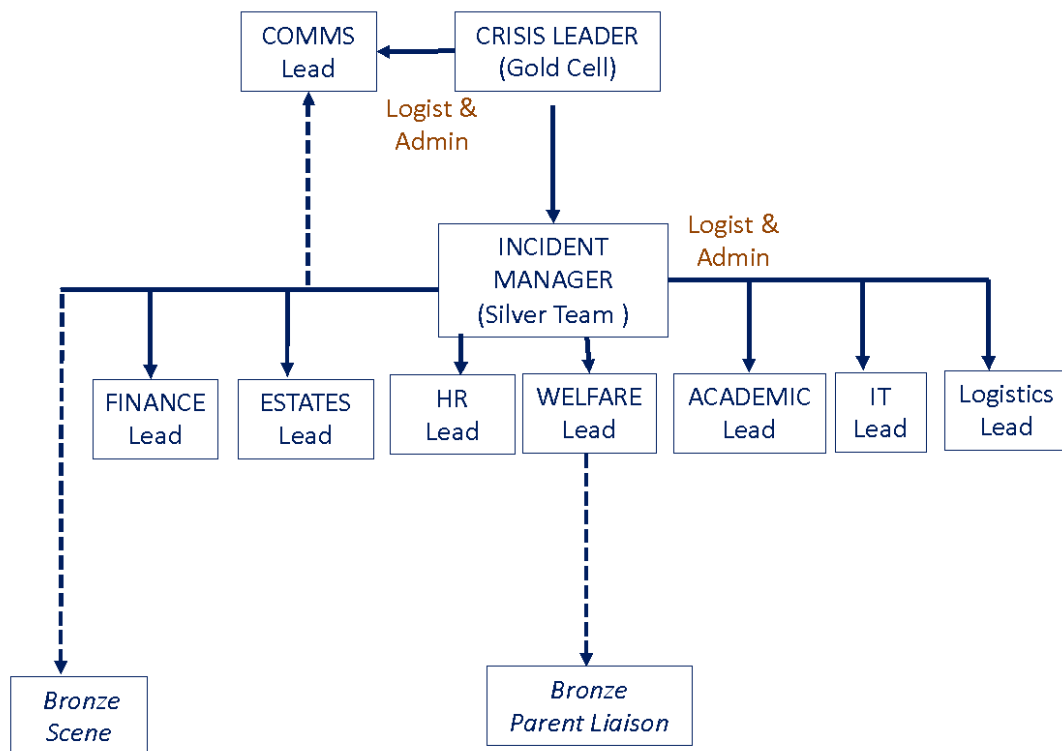
The Critical Incident Plan (Part B) is designed to help the school staff manage these incidents when they occur. In the event of a critical incident occurring, the Board of Governors has established the following priorities to be addressed by a school’s incident management team:

- Minimise or eliminate any danger or risks to individuals
- Contain the incident and work effectively with emergency services
- Assist in any investigation and ensure the school acts in a lawful manner
- Look after the emotional wellbeing of the school community and communicate with the wider community, parents, and key stakeholders
- Restore normality as soon as possible

The Board of Governors is aware of the emotional needs, as well as the practical needs, of each individual within the school’s community at a time when a critical incident occurs and will ensure that appropriate support is put in place for as long as it is needed.

Decision Making structure

To ensure a coherent and co-ordinated response to any critical incident, a decision-making structure that is distinct and separate to the normal management structure will be used.



The Incident Management structure set out above, outlines the minimum of roles that are required for **an initial activation**. Additional roles may be required as the incident progresses.

Training & Testing

The Board of Governors are committed to ensuring that all members of the School's Senior Leadership Team, and staff who are members of the School's Incident Management, receive appropriate professional development training and participate in an annual exercise to rehearse implementing the procedures set out in Part B.

Crisis Leader (GOLD) – Role and Responsibilities

A member of SLT will be responsible for overseeing the School's response by determining resourcing levels, appointing a person to be the Incident Manager, and undertaking strategic stakeholder engagement.

In the initial stages of an incident, or until notified otherwise, the strategic priorities will be:

1. Preserve Life.
2. Minimise damage / loss to buildings.

3. Ensure welfare of staff and pupils.
4. Resume designated critical activity.
5. Return academic activity to normal, within allocated resourcing levels.
6. Protect the local reputation and standing of the Trust.

Resolution and Debrief

The response required to return the school to normal activity, in the aftermath of a critical incident, may require activity to extend over a considerable time. Once the Crisis Leader is satisfied that any on-going action required can best be accomplished through the school's day-to-day managerial structure, the critical incident should be declared finished, and the Incident Management Team stood down.

If appropriate and prior to formal notification of being stood down, the Crisis Team should attend a "hot" debrief session and should be held no later than 3 days after the initial incident. The Crisis Leader will then organise facilitated debriefing sessions for all staff members and students, to discuss the incident and to give them the opportunity to emotionally process their experiences. This also provides an opportunity to assess whether follow support or counselling is appropriate.

A written report of the lessons learnt from the response to the Critical Incident should be made and any recommendations incorporated into changes to the Critical Incident Plan.

Part B

Critical Incident Procedures

1. Incident classification and escalation criteria

Any incident or suspected incident should be notified to the school reception desk (in school hours) or to any member of the School Leadership Team (out of school hours) as soon as practicable.

The receptionist or member of SLT notified will immediately ascertain and record the following:

- Exact location and address of the incident.
- Time incident occurred.
- Number of pupils and staff directly impacted.
- Number and extent of injuries / fatalities.
- Presence of Emergency services.
- Nature of incident.

An incident should be classified using the following criteria:

Category	Criteria
Critical Incident	Fatality
(Contact any member of the Senior Leadership Team)	Serious injury
	Violent trespass / Threat of
	Loss of building
	Loss of access to campus
	Data breach
	Community Disturbance
	High profile / adverse Media story out of school hours
Priority Incident (Contact Estates Manager)	Loss of utility
	Loss of IT
	Disruption to transportation
	Food poisoning
	Minor injury
	Severe weather
	Bomb threat / Suspicious package
Routine	Minor or temporary disruption not expected to exceed 4 hours

The receptionist or initial point of contact should identify and contact any **immediately available** member of the Senior Leadership Team for a CRITICAL INCIDENT.

During school hours, once a member of the Senior Leadership Team has been contacted and briefed on the incident, they in turn **must immediately assume** the role of **Incident Manager (Silver)**.

For an out-of-school hours incident, the on-call member of the Senior Leadership Team will assess whether immediate activation of the **Critical Incident Management Team (CIMT)** is required. This is mandatory for an incident assessed as CRITICAL.

Critical Incident Management Team

The CIMT will comprise the following roles and on activation should meet initially in the Head's office or join a school-initiated Video Conference.

FUNCTION	Name	Alternate
1. Crisis Leader	SLT member	SLT member
2. Incident Manager	SLT member	SLT member
3. Welfare Lead	SMT member	SMT member
4. Academic Lead	SMT member	SMT member
5. Finance & Ops Lead	Bursar	Finance Admin
6. Estates	Facilities Manager	Head Caretaker
7. Comms & Media	Registrar	Marketing manager
8. First Aid Response	Facilities Manager	SMT Member
9. HR	HR Manager	SMT Member
10.IT	IT Manager	Network Manager
11.Admin	Secretary	Receptionist
12.Logistics	Facilities Manager	Bursar

2. Incident Manager (Silver) – Role & Responsibilities

The Incident Manager is responsible for developing a plan that will resolve the initial incident and restore normal activity in accordance with the priorities and resourcing levels set out by the Crisis Leader (GOLD).

Any member of the Senior Leadership Team is to assume the role of Incident Manager upon an initial request by a receptionist or at the request of the Crisis Leader. Once the Incident Manager is satisfied, they are fully aware of the current situation and on-going activity they should:

1. Commence a policy log – see appendix D
2. Convene the CIMT (see above) and confirm / appoint individuals to be the functional leads.
3. The role of the functional leads in the CIMT is to organise the implementation of any tasks allocated to their function, under a plan developed by the Incident Manager. This may require the identification and instruction of others to undertake specific tasks (Bronze).
4. Ensure a First Aid Response Team has been deployed for any on-site incident and an individual identified to be in charge of the initial management of the scene (Bronze scene).
5. Identify an Emergency Response Lead (ERL) for any off-site incident.
6. Activate / establish a telephone hotline / web briefing portal.

3. Scene Management (Bronze Scene)

It is vital that a responsible person is tasked to attend the immediate vicinity of an incident occurring within the school campus to:

- Assess and confirm the nature of the incident
- Organise the provision of first aid to injured parties
- Establish a cordon to prevent further endangering of staff and pupils

An initial assessment of the incident must be passed to the Incident Manager as soon as practicable with a recommendation on whether to invoke a predetermined “**Evacuation**” or “**Shelter-In**” plan to prevent further injury or damage.

Where it is not safe to undertake a physical investigation, a remote investigation by CCTV or other means should be considered.

4. Emergency Response Lead - Off-site

The Emergency Response Lead should be the most senior member of staff on a school trip or event away from the school premises.

The role of the Emergency Response Lead is to attend the immediate vicinity of an incident to initiate / confirm the attendance of emergency services who can provide first aid to injured parties and to then ensure that all remaining students are located and moved to a nearby place of safety as soon as possible. Once this has been achieved, they must contact the Incident Manager and give the names of pupils who have been injured, the nature of their injury and their current location.

5. Lockdown PROCEDURES

5.1 Lockdown

Signal:

The signal for Lockdown is a tannoy message broadcast over the school phones.

Activation:

The School Receptionist will initiate the signal if made aware of an armed or potentially violent intruder in the locality or upon request from an individual acting in the capacity of an Incident Manager under the Critical Incident Plan.

Action on instigation – All staff & pupils

On hearing the lockdown signal, all staff and pupils must:

1. Make your way immediately to the building
2. Go to your classroom, lock or prop the door closed, pull down all blinds
3. Remain in the classroom until further notice.

Action of Teachers & Staff

Please follow the **CLOSE** procedure:

1. Close - all doors and windows -draw curtains / blinds if present.
2. Lock up - lock classroom doors shut.
3. Out of sight - minimise movement & move away from doors / windows.
4. Stay - calm and be as quiet as possible / turn phones to vibrate
5. Endure
 - a. Access your school email (Outlook)
 - b. Take a roll call and record the names of all persons present in the room.
 - c. Send a roll call to the Reception.
 - d. Follow the guidance / instruction given via email.

Release:

Normal activity and movement from any classroom or office, may only occur when a notification of “ALL CLEAR” has been advised in person by a member of the SLT or has been posted on computer screens.

6. Fire Evacuation Procedures

6.1 Fire

Signal: The signal for Evacuation is the sounding of the Fire Bell.

Action on instigation – All staff & pupils

On hearing the fire alarm all staff and pupils must:

1. Make their way immediately to the nearest fire exit.
2. Make their way calmly to their designated Muster Point.

Muster Points:

There is currently one designated muster point as follows:

- Lennox Gardens road

Action of Teacher:

Class teachers must:

1. Make a visual check on exiting a classroom that no pupil remains in the room.
2. Take all pupils in their class directly to their designated muster point.
3. Take a roll call of pupils present from their class / form.
4. Provide the names of any pupil un-accounted for to a Fire Marshall.
5. Remain with the class until released.

Action of Marshalls

Fire Marshals will be allocated to individual buildings and must:

1. Make a physical check of all classrooms that no pupil remains in the room.
2. Make a physical check of communal areas, changing rooms & toilets.
3. Report to **the Fire Warden (Facilities Manager)** when satisfied that the building is CLEAR.

The off-site evacuation points are

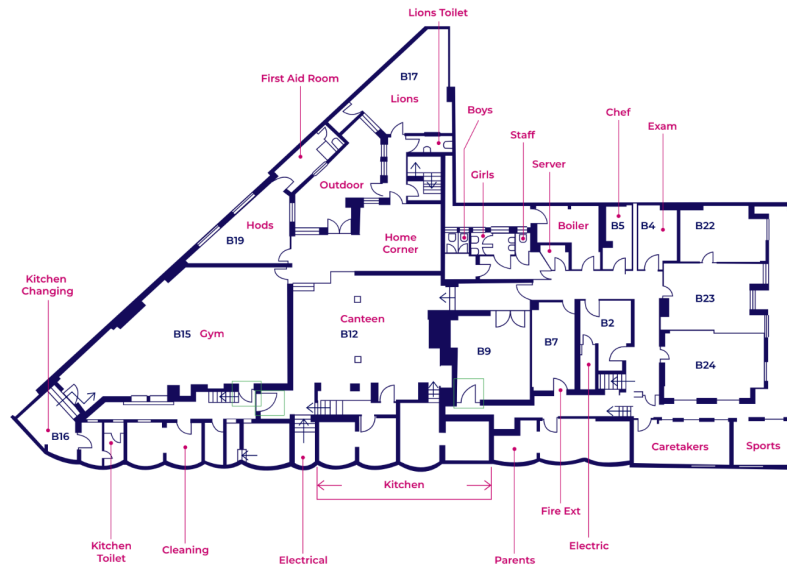
- St Columba's Church

Release:

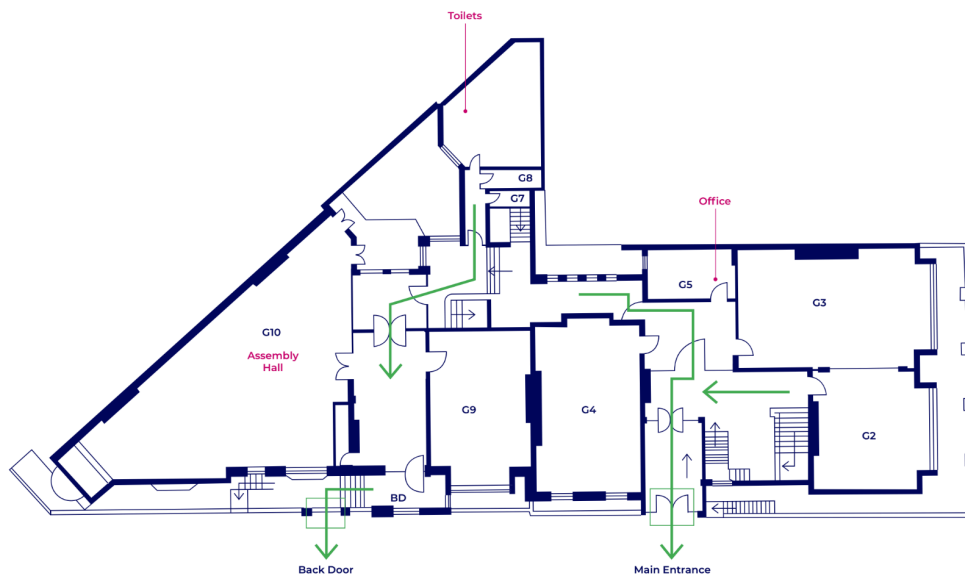
Normal activity and movement back to any classroom or office, may only occur when a member of the Senior Management Team declares "All Clear"

7. Site Plan

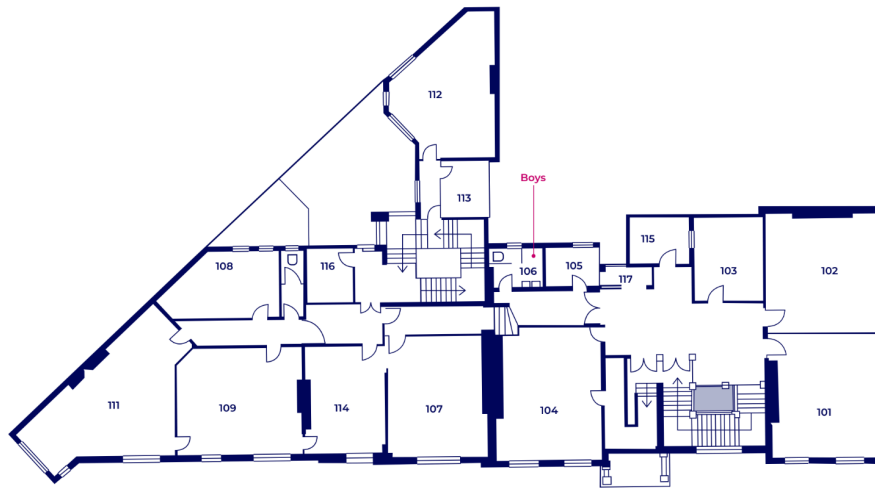
BASEMENT FLOOR



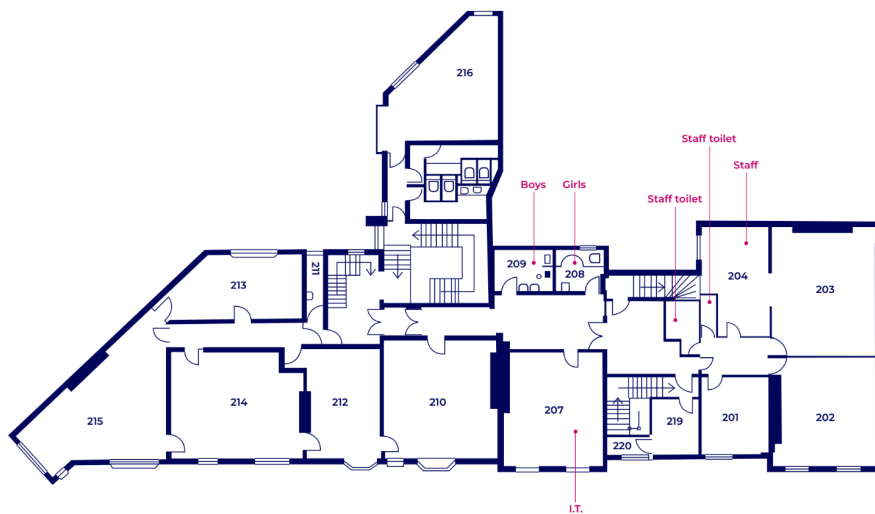
GROUND FLOOR



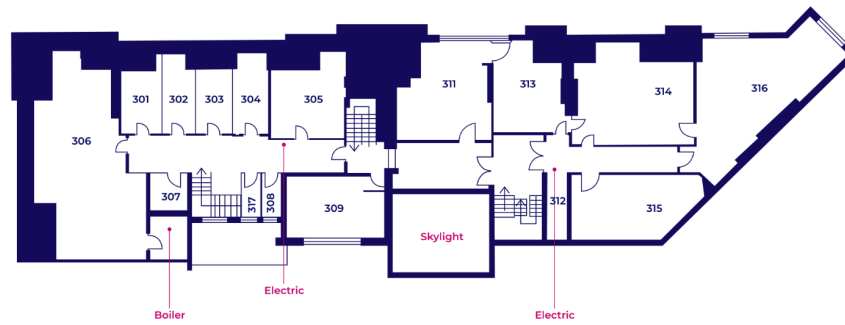
FIRST FLOOR



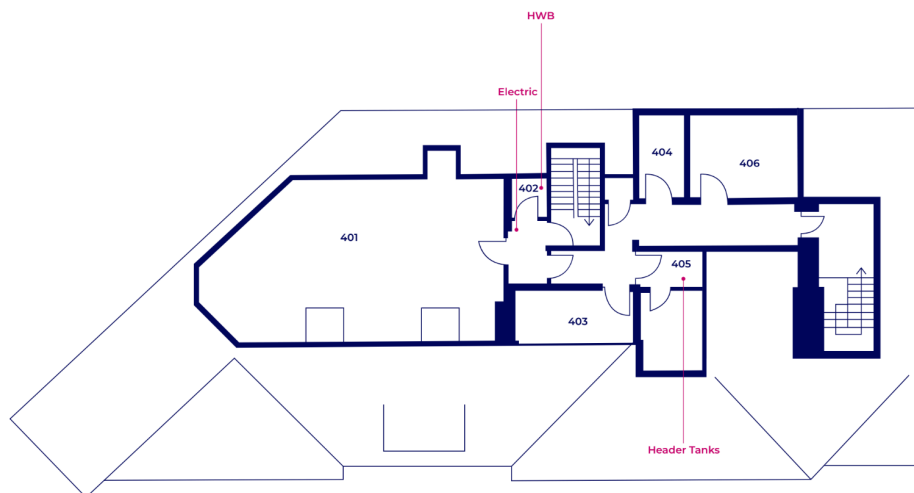
SECOND FLOOR



THIRD FLOOR



FOURTH FLOOR



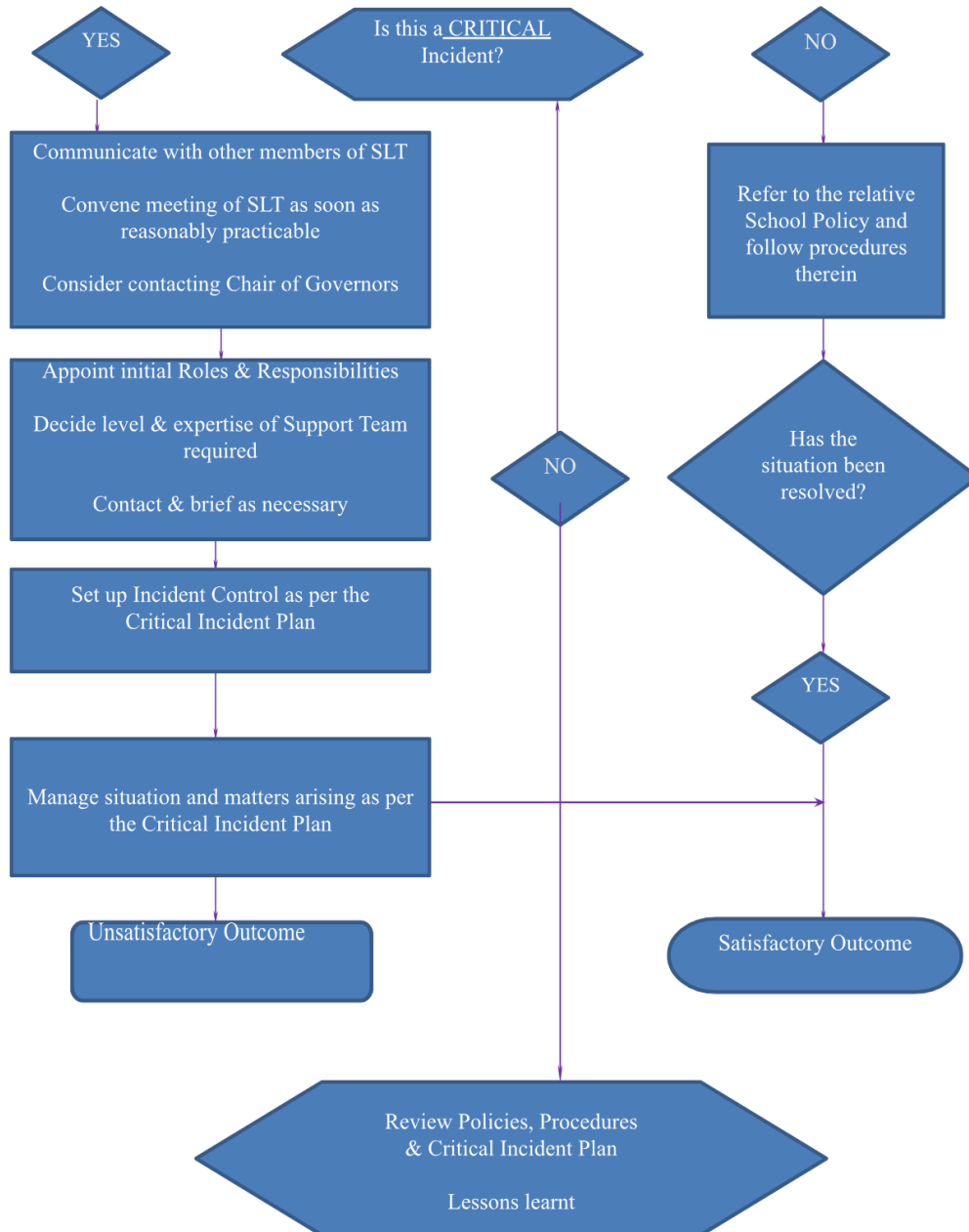
Appendices

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A. Critical Incident Plan Flowchart

Our definition

“Any incident or situation that impacts or has the potential to impact the day to day operation of the School”



B. School Contacts

Position	Name	Number
Principal	Magoo Giles	07931 517763
Head	Shona Colaco	07980 267487
Bursar	Rob Starkings	07867415095
Facilities Manager	Richard Shannon	07502562504
Chairman	Aatif Hassan	07956 665988
Managing Director	Mark Bailey	07713259457
Safeguarding Lead	Gill Conlon	07931 670757
HR / PA to SLT	Rosie Hill	07840 037046
School Secretary	Olivia March	07398597881
Head Caretaker	John Keenan	07793 747124
Registrar	Helen McKell	07778 357259
IT Manager	Kane Davies	07894553801
Network Manager	David Hicks	07879 470798
School Counsellor	Place to Be	020 7923 5500
EVC	Fran Hall	07739 579032
School Mobile 1		07961 814598
School Mobile 2		07961 814611
School Mobile 3		07961 814613
School Mobile 4		07961 814593
School Mobile 5		07729 327312

C. Emergency Contacts

Agency	Name	Number
Electric	National Grid Emergency Service	0800 111 999
Water	Thames Emergency	0800 316 9800
Gas Emergency	National Grid Emergency Service	0800 111 999
Insurance - Public / Products (Policy no 02/ISS/0356988)	Ecclesiastical	0345 777 3322
HSE	Duty Officer	0151 922 9235
District Council	Duty Officer	020 73613000
Emergency Children Services	Duty Officer	07973124006
Royal Borough of Kensington & Chelsea	Office Hours: Ask for Contingency Planning Team Out of Hours: Option 4 and ask for a Borough Duty Officer.	020 7361 3000

D. Grab Box (suggested contents)

1.	Stationery Pad	x 5
2.	Flip Charts	x 3
3.	Marker Pens	
4.	Pens and Pencils	
5.	Blu Tack	
6.	Policy Logs	X 5
7.	Critical Incident Plan (printed copy)	
8.	List of Staff (+ contact numbers)	
9.	List of Pupils (current year)	
10.	Wi-Fi Access and Codes	
11.	Portable Handheld Radio (if any)	x 2
12.	High-Vis Jacket	x 4
13.	Torch	x 4
14.	Barrier Tape	x 4

E. Critical Incident Management Team Agenda

CIMT Agenda (Template)														
Section 1 – Introduction This is the Knightsbridge School Critical Incident Management Team. I am I will start by taking a roll call by function, then give an outline of the incident and then detail the priority actions needed to be taken. Please put your phones to silent and if you are on the conference bridge, please put yourself on mute. At the end of this meeting, I will invite contributions from non-functional leads.														
Section 2 – Roll Call <table border="0"> <tr> <td>Crisis Leader</td> <td>Academic Lead</td> <td>Facilities</td> </tr> <tr> <td>Incident Manager</td> <td>Welfare Lead</td> <td>Logistics</td> </tr> <tr> <td>Comms Lead</td> <td>Finance & Ops</td> <td>Admin</td> </tr> <tr> <td>HR Lead</td> <td>IT Lead</td> <td></td> </tr> </table>			Crisis Leader	Academic Lead	Facilities	Incident Manager	Welfare Lead	Logistics	Comms Lead	Finance & Ops	Admin	HR Lead	IT Lead	
Crisis Leader	Academic Lead	Facilities												
Incident Manager	Welfare Lead	Logistics												
Comms Lead	Finance & Ops	Admin												
HR Lead	IT Lead													
Section 3 – Current Situation Outline / Describe current picture/ assessment of key issues. Question: “Does anyone have a different understanding of the issues or a more accurate assessment?”														
Section 4 – Priorities <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ● Outline strategic goals set by GOLD ● Review priority of strategic aims. 														
Section 5 – Plan of action <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ● Outline key features of plan. ● Allocate actions / scope of authority to functional leads. ● Request up-dates on allocated Bronze tasks & actions Admin to record action / owner / timescale														
Section 6 – Recap <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ● Confirm strategic priorities, key elements of plan and priority actions to be undertaken. ● Comments - Invite input from non-functional leads. 														
Section 7 – Next Meeting Set date, time and venue for next session.														

F. Initial Communications / Holding statements

1.	<p>Generic Incident The School is currently dealing with an on-going incident and has, as a precaution, activated its Incident Management Team.</p> <p>Emergency services have been contacted and we are currently liaising with them to assess the impact on the School and confirm any immediate action needed.</p> <p>An up-date will be provided in 60 mins via our website / parent portal.</p>
2.	<p>Generic Incident – Emergency Services on site The School is currently dealing with an on-going incident and has, as a precaution, activated its Incident Management Team.</p> <p>Emergency services are in attendance, and we are currently working with them to account for all our pupils and staff.</p> <p>(Parents of impacted children will be contacted directly)</p> <p>We would ask you not to try to contact or come to the school at this time and an up-date will be provided in 60 mins via our website / parent portal.</p>
3.	<p>Lockdown In response to the report of.....(<i>insert outline</i>) the School has initiated its Lockdown procedure and we are currently in the process of accounting / have accounted for all pupils and staff.</p> <p>While the emergency services deal with this please do not contact or come to the School.</p> <p>(Parents of impacted children will be contacted directly).</p> <p>An up-date will be provided in 60 mins via our website / parent portal.</p>
4.	<p>Serious Injury Today's events, which have resulted in the serious / minor injury of a member of the school, have been a difficult / traumatic experience for all our pupils, their parents and our staff.</p> <p>While the emergency services continue to investigate these events, you will understand that we are unable to provide further details at this time.</p> <p>Our focus is on supporting those directly impacted and that we, as a community, support each other in the days ahead, as we seek to return to as normal an academic life as is feasibly possible.</p>

G. Critical Incident Log

Time	Issue / Information	Decision / Action	Allocated Owner

H. Relatives Enquiries Guidelines

The Aims of the Relatives Enquiry Team

- To draw calls away from other locations.
- To give assurance to callers.
- To ensure that external callers are dealt with in a professional and caring manner.
- To control the release of factual and approved information. The school must speak with one voice and be seen to speak with one voice.
- To gather information from relatives.
- To provide welfare assistance if required.

General Guidelines in Replying to Phone calls

Be considerate and caring:

- Be calm and controlled.
- Be prepared to listen to concern and do not interrupt.
- Ensure that your tone of voice is comforting, not patronising.
- Treat them as individual important people.

Do not offer to call people back. Ask them to ring you in an hour, explain that you are very busy and that there are a number of relatives who will be waiting to call the team. **BUT, if you promise to ring back, keep your promise.**

- Avoid direct expressions of sympathy.
- Avoid attempts at reassurance (if you don't have confirmed information).
- Be patient and methodical.
- Reassure them that the school and the emergency services are doing all they can to respond to the emergency.
- Keep a record of all calls, and what was said on the calls.
- Ask them to stay on the number that they are on, or suggest that they move to a friend or relatives house for support (if they do, ask them to call in and let you know the new telephone number).

I. School Trip - Actions in the event of an Emergency

Guidance on Emergency Procedures

A copy of the following guidelines must be taken by all party leaders and their deputies.

- Establish nature and extent of the emergency
- Make sure that all other members of the party are accounted for and safe.
- If there are injuries, establish their extent and administer first aid (if you have been trained or feel capable - but be aware of consequences that might follow were you to give incorrect treatment).
- Establish names of the injured and call relevant emergency services
- Advise other party staff of the incident and that emergency procedures are in operation.
- Ensure that an adult from the party accompanies casualties to hospital. The accompanying adult/adults should remain with the children.
- Ensure that the remainder of the party are adequately supervised throughout and arrange for their early return to base.
- Arrange for one adult to remain at the incident site to liaise with emergency services until the incident is over and all children are accounted for.
- Control access to telephones until contact is made with the Head, Deputy Head or Facilities Manager and until they have had time to contact those directly involved. Pass full details of the incident (name, nature, date and time of incident, location of incident, details of injuries, names and telephone numbers of those involved, action taken so far).
- Telephone numbers for future communication; identify alternate telephone numbers in case telephone lines become jammed).
- The school will arrange to contact the parents of those involved. In serious incidents the parents of all party members should be informed.

Media:

- A designated person should act as the point of contact with the media to whom all involved should direct questions.
- Under no circumstances should the name of any casualty be divulged to the media.
- The Party Leader should write down as soon as practicable all relevant details. A record should be made of any witnesses. Any associated equipment should be kept in its original condition.
- Legal liability should not be discussed or admitted.
- All accident forms should be completed and insurers and HSE or Local Authority inspectors should be contacted.
- Inform parents of any delays that will be necessitated.

J. Media

Media Planning

- The media strategy will be set by: IMT
- Statements will be authorised by: SLT / Chair of Directors
- The School spokesperson will be; Head / Proprietor
- The Deputy Spokesperson will be: Bursar
- The Media Response Team (MRT) will be in: Principals Room
- Interviews will be held in: The Meeting room
- Press Conferences will be held in: Assembly Hall

Media Strategy

1. Does the media already know about the incident? YES / NO
2. Has the school been connected with the incident? YES / NO
3. Is the school likely to be connected with the incident? YES / NO
 - *If the answer to any of these questions is no, then we should prepare a statement but only use it if we are contacted in relation to the incident.*
 - *Centralise all media enquiries and make sure that only one or two people reply to them.*
 - *Prepare background material to reply to difficult questions and be sure to cover the areas where we may be criticised.*
4. If the media know about the incident and have connected it with us, is there likely to be any negative publicity?
 - *If the answer is YES, then prepare a short statement and use it to reply to any questions.*

- *Centralise all media enquiries and make sure that only one or two people reply to them.*
 - *Prepare background material to reply to difficult questions and be sure to cover the areas where we may be criticised.*
5. The media knows about the incident and about our involvement. Is the whole school unlikely to be criticised and do we emerge from the incident quite well?
- *If the answer is YES, prepare a short initial statement. It should tactfully and with restraint say what the school has done well (e.g. "The intruder was restrained by the Games Master and police were called").*
 - *Should this statement be released proactively?*
 - *Can we still be criticised? (e.g. Why was it only the Games Master that stood between Year 7 and oblivion?).*
6. Agree three or four positive points.
- *Our good record so far*
 - *The care we have taken to try to prevent incidents such as this from occurring*
 - *The speed and quality of our response to the incident*
 - *The care that we are offering to children and parents (e.g. counselling)*

BRIEF EVERYONE ON THE POSITIVE POINTS. MAKE THE POSITIVE POINTS WHENEVER POSSIBLE. SPEAKING TO THE MEDIA IS LARGELY A MATTER OF REPETITION. THERE IS NO GUARANTEE THAT THE MEDIA WILL REPORT WHAT WE SAY: SO LET'S MAKE SURE WE SAY IT OFTEN ENOUGH.

7. What are we going to do about pupils and parents who may speak to the media?
- *We have no right to 'gag' pupils or members of staff; any attempt to do so may be counter-productive. it is better to shelter them from the media attention, at least for the first few hours of the incident when they may be shocked and distressed. The Police and health services may help with this. We can offer to let them stay on at school to keep them away from media intrusion, but we cannot keep them in school nor can we stop them using the 'phones. If the media can't find them then they can't talk to them.*
 - *The media may track down and hound individuals. If so, a dignified appeal to the editors may help. Or we may be able to arrange protection e.g. by asking the Police for help or by sheltering the individuals on the school premises until*

the media go away. We can only do this if the individual asks us for help otherwise we may look as if we have something to hide. It may be worth persuading people at this stage to make a short statement or in writing through the school.

- *Some parents or pupils may be interviewed in a state of shock shortly after the incident has occurred. They may say anything in such a condition. There is little that we can do about this, except possibly imply **that “whilst we fully understand and even to some extent share their sense of anger and grief, they may take a different view when they have heard the full story”***
- *Some parents may set out to be critical of us. There is nothing that can be done about this except prepare our answer and take every opportunity to make it, try at all times to be sympathetic and understanding.*

(NB. Many people think that they can make a lot of money by selling their story to the newspapers. This has the advantage of taking the other media off our back as they will not want to build interest in a rival's story. However, there are two disadvantages:

- You do not get paid as much as you might think
- The buying newspaper wants value for its cash - i.e. a sensational story - and there is no control over what they print. Often it is not what might have been said to them.

If parents do sell stories in this way, we should take specialist advice.

There may be a lot of sympathy for our school if the public view is that the incident was not our fault and we can show that we took reasonable steps to prevent it. In some cases an incident may even be a PR advantage to us, if we can demonstrate that we have taken sensible precautions and reacted quickly. We should take every opportunity in such cases discreetly to point out the advantages of the School. However, the tone we adopt is crucial. We could rapidly lose sympathy by seeming arrogant or uncaring or elitist.

Spokespersons must make sure that what is said is backed up by facts, respects the feelings of others, and does not seem to dismiss the gravity of the situation.

During an Incident - Initial Statement

1. Express regret. (*"I regret to confirm that"*)
2. **Briefly** describe the incident (*"two pupils from Knightsbridge School were killed today in a climbing incident in Austria."*)

[Note: do not imply cause or blame. use neutral words like 'incident' or 'accident' wherever possible.]

3. Include whatever good news we can, providing we are certain that it is accurate. (*The remaining 14 pupils in the party are unhurt and are being looked after by school staff in Austria"*)

[Again, don't be too specific in an initial statement.]

4. Say what the school is doing (*"We are notifying the parents of the children concerned. Two additional members of staff are flying to Austria to be with the group."*)
5. If we haven't done so already, say whether the parents have been notified. At this stage we may wish to appeal to the media, if they have the names, not to publish them until the parents have been informed. This may work but we have no guarantee that it will. It is best reserved for special cases - e.g. if we can't contact a parent because they are on holiday, but expect to do so within a few hours.
6. Say why we can't say anymore at the moment. (*"Until we have more information ourselves I cannot tell you any more. We are busy here trying to make arrangements for the pupils"*)
7. Tell the media where they can reach us. Give names and telephone numbers.

During an Incident - Answers to difficult questions

These answers cannot be prepared in advance and should be completed on the computer and then issued to the MRT and Spokespersons:

1. What is the school policy on security?

- What measures do we have in place?
- Have we taken police / professional advice?
- When did we last assess our security measures?
- Have we ever had a security incident before?
- Are parents aware of our policy and do they agree with it?

2. What is the school policy on safety?

- What measures do we have in place?
- Have we ever taken professional advice?
- When did we last assess our safety measures?
- Have we ever had a safety-related incident before?
- Are parents aware of our policy and do they agree with it?

3. What is the school policy on drugs?

- What do we do to prevent drug abuse in Knightsbridge School?
- Have we had any examples of drug abuse (and what did we do about them)
- Do we keep in touch with the Police? (How often and at what level?)
- Are parents aware of our policy and do they agree with it?

4. What is the school policy on bullying / violence?

- What do we do about bullying / violence?

- Have we had any recent cases? What did we do about them?
- Do we keep in touch with the Police? (How often and at what level?)
- Are parents aware of our policy and do they agree with it?

5. What is the school policy on adventure training / outdoor activities?

- How often do we do this sort of activity and where?
- What national guidelines do we follow?
- What steps do we take to check out the activity provider?
- What training do accompanying staff have?
- Have we ever had problems like this before?
- Are parents aware of our policy and do they agree with it?

6. What is the school policy on overseas travel?

- Do we do this sort of activity? How often and to where?
- What national guidelines do we follow?
- What steps do we take to check out the activity provider?
- What training do accompanying staff have?
- What rules do we have (e.g. about the staff / pupil ratio)
- Have we ever had problems like this before?
- Are parents aware of our policy and do they agree with it?

7. What is the school policy on using minibuses?

- Do school staff drive them?
- Do the drivers have any special training?
- If we use outside companies, what steps do we take to vet them?
- Are parents aware of our policy and do they agree with it?

8. What are the school's arrangements for contacting parents in an emergency?

- Do we keep all their names and details centrally?
- How do we ensure that our records are up to date?
- How many people are available to ring around parents?
- Do we have a plan to bring people in out of hours?
- Are there any special problems (e.g. a large number of parents working overseas?)

Any other difficult questions?

WHEN THE INCIDENT HAPPENS - ANSWERS TO DIFFICULT QUESTIONS

We cannot prepare these in advance. Remember these as guidelines:

DO NOT

- Say anything that could be seen as libellous, that seems to imply blame of anyone else, or that might be held to prejudice a trial or inquiry.
- Admit any liability - this may invalidate our insurance.
- Say anything which identifies individuals, at least until their parents or next of kin have been informed; this applies to staff as well as pupils.
- Appear to speak on behalf of other individuals or organisations, unless you have agreed what to say with them first. *(To say that "I'm sure that Mrs Bloggins feels very upset but she understands that" or "The Fire Brigade said this couldn't possibly have been an accident..." is simply inviting journalists to play your comments back, and Mrs Bloggins and the Fire Brigade to contradict you.)*
- Answer hypothetical questions

DO

- Say that full details are not yet available, so you cannot yet say exactly what happened. *(This is usually the case.)* But give details which you are sure of - e.g. the time you were contacted, the actions the school has taken.)
- Monitor the questions you are asked and identify what 'angles' the media are covering *(e.g. who are they criticising/ us or someone else? What are they criticising us for? Try to prepare answers to these 'angles'.)*

- Avoid controversy, especially anything which may seem to criticise others. *(e.g. if asked when you rang the Fire Brigade, bear in mind that this may be an attempt to criticise the Fire Brigade for slow response. Try to stay out of that sort of media argument: time enough to look at that once the incident is over).*
- Provide factual details to back up our 'positive points'. *(Rather than simply saying "we have a good safety record" it is much better to say "we haven't had any injuries in school for 10 years"; but be sure you are accurate. Similarly, rather than saying "our staff are experienced at leading this sort of trip" it is better to say "the member of staff in charge speaks fluent German and has led three previous trips to this area in Austria....).*
- Provide factual details to counter allegations against us. *("The school had its last fire inspection in We were only required to undertake limited work, which we did.")*
- Remember our positive points. Update or improve them as the situation develops.

Should we agree to an interview on TV or Radio?

- Depends if we have something we want to say; what is in it for us?
- Who will do the interview? Have they had training? Will they come over well?
- Make sure the interviewee has been properly briefed. Think through the difficult questions in advance that he/she may be asked, and prepare the answers.
- For a TV interview, try to resist having a dramatic background. If the school has just burnt down, the TV crew will want to film the interviewee in front of it. Is this image we want people to remember? (Maybe it is, if it wasn't our fault and we are appealing for help to rebuild it. Maybe it isn't, if we forgot to have the fire extinguishers refilled.)

Should we give a press conference?

- This is not usually necessary unless the story is very big. Then it gives us the opportunity to get our message across to a lot of media at once; but remember to ask ourselves: what's in it for us? Why are we doing this? What message do we want to get over?
- If we give a conference, or take part in one organised by the Police, prepare thoroughly. Anticipate awkward questions and work out the answers.
- If it is our own press conference, field a team of people. One should chair and control it: his job is not to answer questions but to introduce the speakers and give them time to think and some protection. He may also allocate questions amongst our team. Others on the team should be a senior person (Head) and one or two people with special experience of the incident or problems that it raises.
- Only let in genuine media (ask to see their press cards or ID). Pressure groups can hijack the conference and make it a public debate (which TV will love but we won't).
- Agree ground rules with TV cameras beforehand. If we don't want them coming on the platform, make this clear.
- Ensure the room is tidy and clean, and the background is suitable. Think about our overall image. Dress suitably.
- Let the journalists in by one entrance and have another exit for your own team to leave by. The chairperson should be firm and ensure that the team get away as soon as the conference ends. No 'off the record' private words.

IF THERE IS A TV CAMERA OR MICROPHONE IN THE ROOM ASSUME IT IS ON AT ALL TIMES!

Do's and Don'ts

DO NOT

- Do not lose your temper
- Do not speculate
- Do not give out unofficial information
- Do not promise to ring back unless you absolutely have to
- Do not withhold any publicly available information

DO'S

Only give approved confirmed information

- If in any doubt about any caller or your response, consult the Team Leader
- Always try to be helpful
- Be considerate
- Keep calm
- Give your name if asked
- Say that you are an authorised spokesperson if asked.
- Assume everything you say will become public knowledge
- Defend the School at all times
- Ensure calls are returned if you have promised to.
- Take a break if you are feeling over-stressed
- Refer the calls from the media to the Media Team

Reviewed by: Rob Starkings (Bursar)

Date: March 2025

Approved by: Aatif Hassan

Signed:



Date:



*This policy will be reviewed annually.
(Last reviewed September 2024)*