Doucecroft School Services

Critical Incident Policy

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1. **Ethos**

We welcome individuality and provide a safe and positive learning environment, to enable our students to thrive and meet their full potential preparing them for their future.

**Our Mission:**

At Doucecroft School Services our mission is that our students are/have:

- Developing – Independence and life skills
- Opportunity – to experience and learn new things
- Understanding – to be understood and valued as an individual
- Creativity – to express myself as an individual
- Encouraged – to try new things and realise my potential
- Confidence – to achieve and develop my self esteem
- Respect – to feel accepted and accept others
- Openness – to share experience and feelings with others
- Fairness – to be recognised for achievement
- Tolerance – accept that everybody is different

Doucecroft School Services is part of Autism Anglia that provides services to support both children and adults with Autistic Spectrum Conditions. Within this policy, Doucecroft School Services relates to the school day and residential services.

2. **Introduction**

In responding to an incident the aim should always be to ensure:

- Rapid and appropriate action is taken
- Accurate information is provided
- Normal school routines are maintained as far as possible, giving continuity to students

3. **Definition of a Critical Incident**

3.1 An incident becomes a critical incident when it constitutes a serious disruption arising with little or no warning on a scale beyond the coping capacity of the school operating under normal conditions and requiring the assistance of the Emergency Services and LA placing authorities and Governors/Trustees.

Examples of such incidents impacting on schools could include:

- Death or serious injury as a result of violence, accident, self-harm and/or sudden/traumatic illness
- Major fire
- Building collapse
• Riot and/or civil disorder
• Terrorism or threats of terror attacks
• Missing person(s)/abductions

These incidents might occur:
• On the school site, during school hours
• On school transport
• Whilst the students are taking part in activities away from the school site
• On school premises as part of after-school activities
• Within the local community involving students from the school
• During residential hours

32 Using this definition as a basis for decision making, an incident is declared to be a critical incident following consultation between the person(s) managing the incident within the school (normally the Head Teacher, Care Manager, Assistant Head and/or the Senior Management Team), LA, Social Services and school governors/trustees. If there is doubt, it is always better to consult and err on the side of caution and declare an incident critical.

4 Administrative Practices

4.1 General
(a) The school and residential services will maintain a list of all students and staff with next of kin contact details held on computer and hard copy.
(b) The school and residential services will complete registers promptly at the beginning of each morning and afternoon session. Names of students who are late or leave school early will be recorded. Staff will document in students’ daybooks their activities and wellbeing throughout the day.
(c) The school and residential services will operate a signing in and out procedure for all visitors and volunteers in school.
(d) The school and residential services will display details of emergency evacuation procedures in all areas of the school site.
(e) The school and residential services maintains an Out of School Trips Register for the timed duration of all trips off site and a copy is posted at the school premises. A senior staff member has to have signed the form to give permission for each trip that takes place.
(f) The school and residential services have clear documented handovers at transition points throughout the setting.

4.2 Security
The school services employ effective security measures to prevent unwelcome visitors entering the School Services’ premises and out of hours...
security procedures to reduce the potential for damage and vandalism. The administration team will not allow any visitors onto the school site without a pre-arranged meeting that is booked into the school diary. Health and Safety procedures are observed in the school environment and those of any establishment or facilities that might be visited. During potential terror attacks, the gate is monitored to prevent access to the school site, whilst maintaining student and staff safety. All classes or residential provisions are informed to keep their radios on the emergency channel (number 8) to ensure clear communications are in place.

4.3 Planning for trips and visits
(a) DfE and ECC guidance is followed when planning and organising residential and educational trips.
(b) All supervisory adults will carry details of the members of the party and a list of contact numbers (including the other adults’ mobile phones and School Services contact number)

4.4 Health & Safety
(a) All relevant school service policies /Autism Anglia will include reference to health & safety procedures and how these relate to the teaching and organisation of the students and as relevant to individual subjects, e.g. physical education, technology
(b) Autism Anglia’s guidelines are followed on the testing and maintenance of equipment, fixtures and fittings. All electrical, PE and firefighting equipment will be inspected and tested annually.
(c) Regulations for the storage and security of potentially hazardous substances and chemicals are adhered to by the school.
(d) Regular health & safety checks are carried out on the buildings and sites with any potential dangers reported and dealt with.
(e) Risk assessments are carried out for all trips and activities prior to the event.

5 Support for Students

5.1 Pastoral Support
The school and residential services aim to develop an atmosphere of trust amongst students, parents and staff and to provide opportunities for them to talk and share their feelings, as appropriate.

5.2 Behaviour Management
(a) As a positive measure to ensure the safety of our students, individual behaviour management protocols and the Behaviour Management Policy apply off-site as well as on the school premises and we take a pro-active approach to risk assessment and risk management.
(b) Whilst carefully pre-planning and effective risk management will minimise our students’ exposure to dangerous situations, unforeseen hazards may well occur. In these situations we will immediately brief students about how to proceed and require their compliance with any rulings made.
Subsequent action will be informed by knowledge of individual management/communication and risk assessment documents.

(c) The school service has an Anti-bullying Policy in place, and staff members are trained to manage procedures relating to incidents of bullying. Safeguarding training and procedures for safeguarding also provide critical support in dealing with such concerns. The school’s 24 Hour Curriculum, with its emphasis on developing skills for life, and in particular communication and social interaction, aims to develop students’ awareness of issues such as behaviour management and bullying.

6 Dealing with an Incident

6.1 Responsibilities
(a) At the scene of the incident where the Emergency Services are needed, they should be contacted immediately by the senior member of staff with responsibility at the time.

(b) At this stage, it may be most appropriate to take whatever urgent action is needed to ensure the safety of others. This may include “Run, hide and tell”.

(c) As soon as possible, the Head Teacher/ Care Manager (or next most senior person) will start to keep a simple log of all events and actions (see appendix c).

(d) At Doucecroft School Services the Head Teacher/ Care Manager (or next most senior person) will deploy staff as necessary to manage the situation and ensure the safety of all concerned. This may involve the Senior Management Team being relieved of their duties, and their duties being covered by other colleagues.

(e) Parents will need to be contacted promptly, but the way in which this is done will depend on the nature and scale of the incident. Contact may be made in person, or by phone. In very serious circumstances, it may be appropriate for the police to make the initial contact.

7 Communications
During residential hours the on call person should be contacted unless the care manager/deputy care managers are on site.

7.1 Before making contact with parents
The Head Teacher/Care manager will confer with those who will be making contact about what to say, possibly rehearsing the message first. Comments will be limited to known facts and there will be no speculation on the causes or responsibility for the crisis.

7.2 Contacting parents
(a) The Business Manager or other colleagues will generally answer all calls from anxious parents. The school has a Critical incident Contact list which includes at least two contact details and the taxi company information. As parents/ taxis are contacted, the member of staff hand writes the outcome of the conversation.
The school will ascertain if there are any colleagues who might offer help with transport to the school, if required.

(c) The school will endeavour to delegate these calls to those not actually involved in managing the incident.

(d) The school will check that parents are not left alone in distress, perhaps offering suggestions for making contact with relatives or neighbours.

(d) The school will offer any important phone number, such as hospitals.

7.3 Relations with the media
An important task is to protect students, parents and staff from publicity, press and television. Media representatives will not be given permission to enter the school premises or to be given access to staff or students. The only persons to speak to the media would be the Head Teacher or Chief Executive/Chair of Governors.

7.4 Support for students
Students should be told simply and without fabrication what has happened, in the smallest group possible and usually within their class or residential group. Questions should be answered as straightforwardly as possible and with due regard to our students’ ability to understand events. As far as possible the School’s normal routine should be followed to maintain security and continuity for the students.

7.5 Curriculum
(a) Following a critical incident, the school will address sensitive issues such as death, bereavement and serious injury as appropriate to our students’ needs and their ability to understand. These issues may be covered through studies in Citizenship and PSHE and through the 24 hour curriculum.

(b) Where appropriate, advice might be taken from a Clinical Psychologist/therapist on ways in which the aftermath of a critical incident might be best understood and dealt with for our students.

(c) The PSHE curriculum will cover Run, Hide and Tell for students that it is appropriate to.

(d) Emergency evacuation procedures in the event of a fire are taught to the students through fire drills

7.6 Follow Up
(a) In the event of deaths or serious injuries, the Head Teacher/ Care Manager will maintain close contact with the families involved and make arrangements for the school’s representation at funerals, respecting the view, customs and wishes of parents.

(b) If an incident happens off-site, the Head Teacher/ Care Manager will arrange for all contact with the party to go via the school. Therefore, the
school will contact parents on behalf of the party leader. It is also highly probable that the best course of action will be for students to be reunited with their families as soon as possible. The Head Teacher/ Care Manager, with advice and help from the police will arrange to bring the students home. In some instances, it may be appropriate to arrange for parents to be taken to their children.

(c) The leader of an off-site party may need to act ‘in loco parentis’ to authorise emergency medical treatment. However, they may only do this if every reasonable effort has been made to contact parents.

(d) The whole school service will be affected by a tragedy. The Head Teacher/ Care Manager will arrange debriefing sessions for directly-affected staff, check that procedures are in place for monitoring staff and students and activate strategies for allowing all involved to express their feelings if they wish. In the case of prolonged absences anyone injured in an accident, the Head Teacher/ Care Manager will ensure that a member of staff makes contact with the student or colleague at home or in hospital and subsequently make sensitive arrangements for their return to school, and therefore check that monitoring procedures are in place. Consideration must also be given to arrangements for a special assembly or memorial service. In the longer term, the Head Teacher/ Care Manager may need to introduce strategies to continue to monitor vulnerable students and staff, consult and decide on whether, and how, to mark anniversaries and to ensure that new members of staff are aware of which students or staff was affected and in what way.

8. Missing Child Policy

Doucecroft School Services has a robust Missing Child Policy that identifies actions to be instigated in the event of a student missing or believed to have absconded from their care and protection.

9. Safeguarding

In accordance with Child Protection regulations, Doucecroft School Services is obliged to notify Ofsted, Safeguarding, Social Services, DfES, Local Education Authority and parents/carers of:

- The outbreak of a notifiable infectious disease, death, emotional or mental health, serious injury or illness of a student whilst under the care and jurisdiction of Doucecroft School Services.
- The inappropriate conduct of a staff member, likely to cause harm to students and resulting in dismissal from post.
- Any incident which necessitates police involvement and action

A written record will be made and kept of the event, actions taken and subsequent investigations. This will be saved on Behaviour Watch
Appendix 1
Summary of Action Plan
(Or key questions relating to a critical incident)

1. Has immediate information been obtained at the start of the crisis?
2. Do the Emergency Services need to be contacted?
3. What urgent action is needed to ensure the safety of others?
4. When will the senior management team and office staff meet to decide on key actions to be taken?
5. Have links been established with the LEA, Ofsted and Chair of Governors?
6. Have families been contacted?
7. When will a staff meeting be called?
8. When will students be informed, as appropriate to their level of understanding and preferred method of communication?
9. When will a de-briefing for students involved, as appropriate to their level of understanding and preferred method of communication be arranged?
10. When will a de-briefing for staff involved be arranged?
11. Have we identified high risk students and staff?
12. Have we identified the need for group or individual support?
13. Timing of necessary actions (points 1-12)

Responsibility – Head Teacher /Care Manager
1. Immediately
2. Immediately
3. Immediately
4. Within an hour
5. Within an hour
6. Continue until all informed – asap
7. As appropriate
8. Same day, if practical – asap
9. Asap
10. Asap
11. In following days and weeks
12. In following days and weeks
Appendix 2 - Run, Hide and Tell for Adults.

This is to be used in the event of a firearms or weapons attack.

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>RUN</th>
<th>HIDE</th>
<th>TELL</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Escape if you can.</td>
<td>If you can’t run, HIDE.</td>
<td>Call 999 when you are safe.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>If there is a safe route, RUN, if not hide.</td>
<td>Find cover from gunfire.</td>
<td>Location: where are the suspects?</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Insist others go with you.</td>
<td>Be aware of your exits.</td>
<td>Direction: Where did you last see the suspects?</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Don’t let them slow you down.</td>
<td>Try not to get trapped.</td>
<td>Descriptions – Numbers, features, weapons etc.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Leave belongings behind.</td>
<td>Be quiet, silence your phone.</td>
<td>Further information – Casualties, type of injury, building information, entrances, exits etc.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>Lock/barricade yourself in.</td>
<td>Can you safely stop others from entering the area?</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>Move away from the door.</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>
Appendix 3 – Run, Hide and Tell for Students

IN THE RARE EVENT OF a firearms or weapons attack

RUN to a place of safety. This is a far better option than to surrender or negotiate. If there’s nowhere to go, then...

HIDE It’s better to hide than to confront. Remember to turn your phone to silent and turn off vibrate. Barricade yourself in if you can. Then finally and only when it is safe to do so...

TELL the police by calling 999.
### Appendix 4 – critical incident form template

**Critical Incident:**

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Date:</th>
<th></th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Time:</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Description of critical incident</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

**Actions taken:**

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Time of action</th>
<th></th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Time and date</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

- Informed trustees
- Informed social services
- Informed governors
- Informed care manager/ head teacher

**Further actions.**