

St James Church Preschool CIO

Critical Incident Policy



Summary

A 'critical incident' may be defined as any event which threatens to severely disrupt, in whole or in part, the functioning of the preschool or a traumatic incident that could result in the death, or near death of a child or staff member. A critical incident would normally have the following features:

- there are substantial threats to the safety of individuals or the fabric or reputation of the preschool; and
- the incident is likely to lead to the suspension of normal operations

Links to Early Years Foundation Stage: Safeguarding and Welfare Requirements: Safety and suitability of premises, environment and equipment: Safety 3.53, 3.56-3.65

Immediate action

1. Identify the 'critical incident' which may be:

- Serious accidents in school
- Accidents during school trips/visits
- Death of a member of staff or a child
- Abduction or threatened abduction of a child
- Assault on a member of staff or a child
- Infectious illness e.g., meningitis outbreak
- Widespread emergency affecting the area e.g., adverse weather conditions such as flood or snow
- Serious damage to the school building e.g., fire/burst water pipes/heating system failure
- Fire/bomb threat/explosion/terrorist attack
- Burglary
- A pandemic – worldwide spread of a new disease
- An epidemic - An outbreak of disease that attacks many people at about the same time and may spread through one or several communities
- Any other incident that may affect the care of the children in the nursery.

2. Obtain and collate accurate information about the incident

It is important that accurate information is passed on when alerting people to an incident. Start the incident log and record-keeping procedures. This is important in the management of an evolving incident and vital in any subsequent review of how the incident was handled. Later enquiries or court cases can depend on the accurate recording and availability of information. It is essential to have an up-to-date record of:

- what action has been taken
- what has been said
- the people who have been informed
- which people have attended (as visitors, helpers etc.)

3. Contact relevant people. This may include:

a) Outside agencies

Inform OFSTED (0300 1231231) if appropriate and decide which other outside agencies should be involved.

b) Committee Chairperson

Contact the committee Chairperson and advise them of the situation as soon as possible.

c) The families of children involved

It is important to keep a log of which families have been contacted and by whom so that no family is omitted or contacted twice by different persons.

Arrange to inform other parents who although not directly involved may be concerned. A brief pre-prepared note may be useful. More detailed information can be provided later if appropriate.

d) Support staff

Support staff, because of their close contact with pupils, will need to be given full and accurate information. They will need to be briefed about what can be appropriately discussed with pupils. Staff should be advised that enquiries from the media must be directed to the pre-school leader and Chair.

e) Media

The press and other media can have a considerable impact on an incident. A good working relationship with the media can be very helpful in providing accurate information to the public.

f) Associated schools

Contact any schools which could be directly affected by the incident, where known, as they may have on their roll siblings of pupils involved.

Short term action (within hours or days)

1. Keep to a normal routine, if possible, to minimise the anxiety in the lives of the children and ensure some security.
2. Arrange a debriefing for staff and pupils involved in the incident. This will
 - a) clarify what has happened
 - b) allow for a sharing of reactions
 - c) reassure the participants that such reactions are normal

Medium term action

Continue to provide updates on facts for staff, parents, and the media for as long as necessary.

Monitor the effects on pupils and adults and organise support for those needing it.

Longer term action

Continue to be aware of the state of mind of the people involved as things return to normal and be aware of those who are vulnerable and watch out for continuing or emerging symptoms. New staff and staff unfamiliar to vulnerable pupils will need briefing about the situation.

Be aware of the effects of legal procedures.

As enquiries, court cases etc can be protracted, the trustees will need to be aware of these proceedings and the possible effects on those involved.

Provide support as the facts progressively emerge and change.

The understanding of an event can change as information emerges. Strong feelings of guilt may develop, and support may be needed for these people.

Review procedures in the light of experience

Procedure action list

- Staff inform Manager/Deputy Manager of incident
- Manager/Deputy Manager and Staff start Critical Incident log for the incident
- Manager/Deputy Manager debrief all staff present
- Manager/Deputy Manager inform Chair of incident
- Manager/Deputy Manager/Chair inform families involved
- Chair informs relevant agencies
- Manager/Deputy Manager inform Support Staff
- Manager/Deputy Manager/Chair provide ongoing updates to staff/parents/agencies as appropriate

Legal framework

- Early years foundation stage (EYFS) statutory framework

Further guidance

- DofE guidance - Emergency planning and response for education, childcare, and children’s social care settings

This policy was adopted by	St James Church Preschool	<i>(name of provider)</i>
On	<u>21st January 2021</u>	<i>(date)</i>
Date last updated	<u>11th February 2026</u>	<i>(date)</i>
Date last reviewed	<u>11th February 2026</u>	<i>(date)</i>
Date to be reviewed	<u>11th February 2027</u>	<i>(date)</i>

Signed on behalf of the provider	<i>J. Chandler</i>
Name of signatory	_____ Jamie Chandler
Role of signatory	_____ Chair
