



Critical Incident Management Plan

Next Review Due January 2026

Co-ordinator – Mr S Morehead

INTRODUCTION

This plan has been prepared and agreed by the staff and Governors of Pencombe CofE Primary School to assist in dealing with an emergency situation that affects the school community.

This plan relates to an event which may involve:

- the safety of children and/or staff
- the school premises
- a serious accident involving children and/or school personnel on or off the premises
- the death of a child, staff member or governor
- a violent intrusion onto school premises (e.g. an armed intruder or a bomb alert)
- extensive damage to school premises
- the release of hazardous substances near or on the school site
- a crisis which might affect the public reputation of the school

It also considers where the Executive Headteacher believes that the school will benefit from receiving additional support, or where the community in which the school is based is affected by an emergency.

The school emergency plan aims to:

- provide support to all children and staff affected by an incident
- maintain the normal running of any parts of the school not affected
- return the whole school to normal as soon as possible

The plan provides generic guides to actions that should be considered by the Headteacher, his/her nominated deputy, and the critical incident management team (CIMT) in case of an emergency in school or the local community, or on an educational visit.

The plan covers procedures for an incident occurring in school time and out of school hours, weekends and during school holidays.

ACTIVATION

Information about an incident may come from a staff member, pupil, parent, the emergency services or the local authority.

Whoever receives the alert should ask for, and record, as much information as possible:

Name of the person informing of the incident	
Details of the incident	
Who else has been informed (e.g. emergency services etc.)	
Exact location of the incident	
Details of any casualties	
Any action taken so far	
Name of contact at the scene	
Number of contact at the scene	
What assistance is needed	

Immediately inform the Headteacher or Deputy/nominee

Responsibilities/Checklist of Initial Action by Executive Head and/or Head of School or Nominee

RESPONSIBILITIES

- take charge of events
- draw up an action plan for the specific incident
- delegate responsibilities and give task sheets to the chosen person
- consult with the Police and the person responsible for liaison with the media about the release of information to students, staff, parents, general enquiries and the media
- establish a crisis team meeting place

Action to be taken	✓ when complete
Ascertain details of incident	
Take immediate action to safeguard pupils and staff where necessary	
Alert relevant emergency services (Police, Fire, Ambulance) via 999 system Be prepared to give the following information: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Emergency Service(s) required • Exact location of the incident • Number of casualties • Nature of injuries • Location and telephone number where call is being made from • Hazards which may be encountered by the Emergency Services at the site 	
Log all communications and actions	
Assemble a critical incident management team from pre-identified staff	
Refer to the list of emergency contact numbers in Appendix 1 for additional support if required	
Where possible, avoid closing the school and try to maintain normal routines	

Critical Incident Management Team (CIMT)

The CIMT will comprise:

- Executive Headteacher
- Head of School/Safeguarding Director
- Chair of Governors (where contactable/available)
- (Others as determined by school)

Base for Critical Incident Management Team

The base for the CIMT will be the Headteacher's office where it is still possible to use this.

IMPLEMENTATION

Headteacher or Nominee

Action to be taken	✓ when complete
Ensure that accurate, factual information is available for those arriving at the scene	
Liaise with the local authority, police, fire and ambulance services, and other agencies who may become involved	
Act as the main contact to co-ordinate the response	
Inform the chair of governors	
Inform all staff, and parents of injured pupils	
Decide how to inform other parents of injured pupils	
Ensure all staff maintain a log of actions and decisions	
Allocate tasks to members of the CIMT as appropriate	
Provide regular briefings for staff	
Continue to liaise with the local authority and the emergency services	
Try to maintain normal routines as far as possible	
Inform staff involved to prepare a written report of their involvement, noting events and times	
In the event of serious injuries or a fatality, the Health and Safety Executive should be informed within 24 hours	
Continue to allocate tasks to members of the CIMT as appropriate	

Welfare

Action to be taken	✓ when complete
Secure the immediate safety of pupils and staff	
Identify those pupils and/or staff who are badly affected, and who need extra support	
Make arrangements for reuniting pupils with their parents	
Take account of religious and cultural factors, and consider contact with leaders of local faith communities	

Communications

Action to be taken	✓ when complete
Consider emergency communications needs	
Dedicate lines for incoming and outgoing calls and arrange extra support for reception. Line to be used for incoming calls only: Line to be used for outgoing calls only:	
Arrange for the staffing of switchboard/telephone	
Inform pupils, in groups as small as practicable, considering the best way to impart tragic news (advice is available from the educational psychology service)	
Inform parents of children not directly involved in the incident, as decided by the Headteacher or nominee - use any existing arrangements for contacting parents quickly and efficiently	
Receive visitors to the school, ensuring they sign in and out and are issued with identification badges	
Ensure that staff are fully briefed on facts and are aware of what information can be released	

Media

Action to be taken	✓ when complete
Ensure that any media access to the site, staff and pupils is controlled In a major emergency, the police will deal with the press and prevent access to the school	
Liaise with and co-operate with the media and answer their queries, as appropriate	
Be aware of the potential problems caused by the spread of misinformation through pupil and/or staff use of mobile phones	
Provide basic information about the school (see Appendix 2)	
Be prepared to be interviewed by the press if necessary and agreed	
Liaise between the press, and those affected, about interviews - seeking permission from parents/guardians of any pupils involved in interviews. Any pupils involved in interviews should be supported	

Advice for Official Spokesperson(s)

- ✘ DO NOT speculate - your interpretation or understanding can and probably will be exaggerated or quoted as hard fact
- ✘ DO NOT give any fact unless you are certain it is correct
- ✘ DO NOT say "NO COMMENT" - it can be taken as a negative answer which could be inaccurate and lead to difficulties later
- ✘ DO NOT be afraid to say "I DO NOT KNOW"
- ✓ DO have the confidence in yourself and your command of the situation to take a positive attitude towards the media
- ✓ If you know that everyone is safe and well, or those parents of injured children have been told - say so as soon as possible - it stops others panicking.

NB: PUPILS SHOULD NOT TALK TO THE MEDIA UNLESS ARRANGED BY STAFF/PARENTS AND THEN ONLY WITH WRITTEN PERMISSION FROM PARENTS/GUARDIANS

Resources

Action to be taken	✓ when complete
Ensure access to site for emergency services	
Open/close parts of school as required, and turn off water, gas and electricity supplies if necessary	
Ensure the security of the school premises	
Establish a safe and secure base for the CIMT	
Check that all available communications and office equipment are working (phones, fax, copiers), in: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • School Office • CIMT Base • CIMT Alternative Base 	
Arrange a place to receive parents and children involved	
If necessary, evacuate the building in accordance with the School Fire Procedures	
Ensure that parents do not take pupils away, unless directed to do so	
Consider relocation to other premises	

All other teaching and non-teaching staff

Action to be taken	✓ when complete
Respond to instructions given by members of the Critical Incident Management Team	
Be ready to respond to any potential hazard in and about the site	
Maintain a calm atmosphere	
Do not speak directly to the media but refer all enquiries to the Headteacher or other person designated as being responsible for contact with the media	

EMERGENCIES DURING EDUCATIONAL VISITS

The Headteacher or his/her pre-agreed nominee should be immediately informed of any incident by the group leader.

Initial Action by Exec Headteacher/Head of School or Nominee

- Maintain a written record of your actions using this check list and attached log sheet
- Offer reassurance and support.
- Be aware that all involved in the incident, those at the school and you, may be suffering from shock or may panic.
- Find out what has happened. Obtain as clear a picture as you can - who informed you of the incident? (Usually the group leader)
- Remind the group leader to follow the checklist for group leaders on educational visits (see Appendix)
- Record the details of the off-site activity/visit during which incident occurred

Location and nature of activity/visit		
Name of person in charge of visit		
Telephone number(s)		
Number of people on the visit	Pupils	
	Teachers	
	Other adults	
Date and time of incident		
Location		

What has happened?			
People affected	Name	Injury	Where they are / will be taken
Emergency Services involved and advice they have given			
Names and locations of hospitals involved			
Arrangements for pupils not directly involved in the incident			
Name of person in charge of your group at the incident			
Telephone Number(s)			

- Depending on the scale of the incident, consider assembling a CIMT to assist with the response

Initial Action List for CIMT

- Inform school staff as appropriate, depending on the time and scale of the incident
- Consider emergency communications needs. Dedicate lines for incoming and outgoing calls and arrange extra support for reception.
- Immediately inform parents of any injured pupils of what has happened and where their son/daughter is, recording what their plans are, e.g. to travel to their son/daughter, any assistance they need and any means of communications with them (e.g. mobile phone number)
- In event of a major incident the police may give advice regarding naming badly injured people or fatalities. You may also need to inform next-of-kin of any staff who have been involved
- Inform parents of any other pupils on the visit but not directly involved in the incident.
- Parents should first hear of the incident from the school (or from the party leader), not from hearsay or from the media. Information given must be limited until the facts are clear and all involved parents/next of kin are informed
- Ensure that staff are fully briefed on facts and are aware of what information can be released
- Inform the chair of governors
- if necessary, introduce controls on school entrances and telephones
- at least initially, the school is advised to avoid responding to media enquiries
- arrange a quiet space to receive parents of the children involved as they arrive at the school

Medium term actions/considerations

- If the visit is abroad, and the incident results in substantial medical or other expense, the insurers used should be informed as soon as possible
- Inform pupils and staff at school and their parents. Decide what information you should give. Remember that information given must be limited until the facts are clear and all involved parents/next of kin are informed
- In the event of a tragic incident, consider seeking support from the educational psychology service about the best way to inform pupils and to support them afterwards
- Staff and pupils should be told to avoid talking to the media or spreading the story unnecessarily (particularly via use of mobile phones)

- In the event of serious injuries or a fatality, the Health and Safety Executive should be informed within 24 hours. Staff may wish to submit draft reports to trade union legal officers

POST-INCIDENT CARE AND SUPPORT

Post-incident care is aimed at helping individuals to understand their feelings following an emergency and to identify sources of future support. The overall aim of the support is to help people in a way that will reduce the possibility of them developing post-traumatic stress disorder.

It is worth giving some thought to how the topics of loss, bereavement, risks/safety and change are covered in the curriculum. Schools where these topics are discussed openly, and treated as normal life events, are likely to find it easier to cope when a difficult or tragic incident occurs.

Remember to consult with parents following an incident. It is important to communicate with parents of pupils who have been involved, and ensure that their needs and wishes are taken into account.

STAND-DOWN AND RECOVERY

Recovery Plan Checklist

As soon as possible after the emergency:

- Liaise with parents regarding plans for attendance at funerals
- Liaise with parents regarding plans for attendance/representation at memorial services
- Arrange debriefing meetings for staff and pupils
- Arrange debriefing meetings for the Headteacher and CIMT
- Identify and support high-risk pupils and staff
- Promote discussion of the emergency in class
- Consider the need for individual or group support
- Help affected pupils and staff to come back into school
- Initiate a review of the school emergency plan, evaluating the school's response and feeding in any lessons learnt

In the longer term:

- Consult and decide on whether and how to mark anniversaries
- The impact of some incidents can continue for years, so thought may need to be given to on-going identification and support measures for both pupils and staff who are affected
- Remember that legal processes, enquiries and news stories may bring back distressing memories and cause upset within the school
- Remember to make any new staff aware of which pupils were involved and how they were affected

APPENDIX 1 – CONTACTS – Kept separately
Trip Leaders must ensure they collect a copy of this sheet from Mrs
Near/Mrs Goodman

APPENDIX 2- COMMUNICATIONS

This section should include:

- how members of staff can be alerted in the first instance without alarming pupils unnecessarily
- ID for Headteacher/Senior Management Team - visitors to site may not be familiar with all senior staff or the layout of the building.
- phone numbers and locations of designated phone lines for incoming and outgoing calls
- location of first telephone point from the exchange (in the event of power failure this may provide a useable line when a powered switchboard system may not work)
- how school will communicate with parents when:
 - an emergency happens during the school day
 - an emergency happens before or after the school is open, at weekends or in school holidays

When parents hear of a problem, they will naturally come to the school for information. You may need to identify a space where parents/carers can be seen in groups or on an individual basis where tragic news can be shared in a considerate way. A staff member or trusted adult from the school community may need to be on hand to receive visitors and deal sensitively with their enquiries.

Other methods of informing parents could include:

- Emails or text messaging
- Notices on the school website
- Letters
- Notices on the school gate/fence
- Person at the entrance to the school to explain issues
- Telephone tree where each parent is contacted by telephone (more difficult in larger schools)
- Local radio
- how the school will communicate with companies affected by a school closure or emergency, both during the school day and outside school hours
- numbers of local radio stations and procedure:
BBC Hereford and Worcester Tel. Hereford: 01432 355255
- what communications procedures are in place between different parts of the school (in a large school or split-site school)
- instructions on how to set the school answer phone to answer only and set a pre-recorded message, both if you are at the school and remotely if the school cannot be accessed

Internal Communications

It is important to establish mechanisms for informing staff of developments. This could be through morning briefings. It is also important to debrief all staff involved at the end of each working day/shift. Ensure that information is recorded and shared.

APPENDIX 3 - BASIC INFORMATION ABOUT THE SCHOOL

Basic information	
Name:	Pencombe CofE Primary School
Address:	Pencombe Bromyard Herefordshire HR7 4SH
Telephone:	01885 400 255
Age Range:	4-11
Number of pupils:	
Map of surrounding area:	include in file
Photographs:	include in file
Plan of School:	include in file
Details of Senior Staff	
Executive Headteacher:	Mrs Liz Orton
Head of School:	Mrs Vic Goodman
<i>Include other senior staff as necessary</i>	Mrs Z Beecham (HMFA SEND Director) Mrs J McColl (HMFA Safeguarding Director)
Details of Governors	
Chair of Governors:	Mr Keith Lawton

APPENDIX 4 - EMERGENCY SCHOOL CLOSURE

Please remember that in any wide area emergency closing a school can have a knock on effect with other key services as parents would have to take time off to look after their children. Although the health and safety of pupils/students and staff is paramount, Headteachers should also take this into account.

APPENDIX 5 - SPECIFIC HAZARDS AFFECTING SCHOOL SITE AND HAZARD ASSESSMENT

This section should include:

- an up-to-date, detailed plan of the school, showing location of cut-off valves and switches for gas, water and electricity, and information on the drainage system
- details of how to reset the fire alarm system
- alternative access points in case of road closure, and emergency access to the school buildings
- school telephone number and details of any additional telephone numbers (including mobiles) that could be used
- any specific difficulties and procedures relating to the school site (e.g. split-site, communications difficulties)
- specific information relating to any hazards on the school site, including:
 - details of hazards such as asbestos in the fabric of the buildings, if known-See Asbestos file
- specific information and procedures relating to any external hazards that could affect the school, for example:
 - nearby industrial facilities or chemical sites
 - rivers or streams which pose a flooding risk to the school (look at the Environment Agency website for flooding information and guidance on preparing a flood plan for your school)

APPENDIX 6 - EVACUATION AND SHELTER PLAN

See Emergency Evacuation Plan

This section should include:

- an up-to-date, detailed plan of the school showing evacuation routes and assembly points (this should include at least one alternative in case the emergency affects the main route or assembly point)
- information on any different evacuation routes and assembly points to be used in case of a bomb alert (e.g. assembly points may need to be further away from the building)
- procedure for sheltering (stay indoors, close doors and windows) if this is advised instead of evacuation
- procedure for lockdown of the school (stay indoors, lock doors, close and cover windows) in case of an intruder
- information on warning signals for fire alarms, bomb alerts, sheltering and lockdown
- any identified 'place of safety' nearby where pupils and staff can be taken if unable to return to the school for some time - this could be a village hall, leisure centre, community centre or similar - and how this building is accessed (e.g. keyholders)
- information on how staff will ensure that all pupils and people visiting the site are accounted for - procedures for use of registers, visitors books etc.
- procedure for sending pupils home if the situation becomes prolonged, taking account of the need to track who has left/been collected

APPENDIX 7 - CHECKLIST FOR GROUP LEADERS ON EDUCATIONAL VISIT

- Ascertain details of incident
- Alert relevant emergency services (Police, Fire, Ambulance, Coastguard) via 999 system
- Call for assistance if available (staff, passers-by)
- Administer first aid where possible
- Account for all members of the party and ensure that all persons uninjured stay together
- Allocate staff member(s) to travel to hospital(s) with casualties
- Ascertain if there are any witnesses
- Allocate staff member(s) to stay at incident site to liaise with the emergency services
- Arrange for all non-casualties to return to base (accompanied by a member of staff) and that all members of the group are informed of the incident as soon as possible
- Inform Headteacher/member of senior management team (at school) as soon as possible. Give as much of the following information as possible:
 - date, time, location and nature of incident
 - names of those involved
 - details of any injuries.
 - actions taken.
 - contact point to be used
- Consider requesting additional assistance.
- Keep Headteacher/member of senior management team regularly updated.
- Consider whether activity should be abandoned. If so, arrange for non-casualties to return to school. Liaise with Headteacher/senior management team over transport arrangements.
- Do not discuss legal liability

APPENDIX 8 - BOMB THREATS AND SUSPECT PACKAGES

Bomb threat prompt card for reception staff

Action to be taken	✓ when complete
Stay calm	
Make a note of: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • the exact time of the call • the caller's sex and approximate age • any accent the person has, or any distinguishing feature about their voice e.g. speech impediment, state of drunkenness etc. • any distinguishable background noise 	
When they have finished the message, try to ask as many of the following questions as you can, being cautious to avoid provoking the caller: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Where is the bomb? • What time is it due to go off? • What kind of bomb is it? • What does it look like? • What will cause it to explode? • Why are you doing this? 	
Dial 1471 - you may get the details of where the phone call was made from, especially in the case of a hoax caller	
Report the call to the police and the Headteacher/nominated deputy immediately. In the extremely unlikely event that there was a code word with the message, and the location of the bomb was given as a location other than the school, follow the same procedure - report the call immediately to the police, and then notify the Headteacher	

Guidance on suspect packages

The likelihood of a school receiving a postal bomb or suspected biological/chemical package is very low, however, you should be aware of the immediate steps to be taken if you receive a suspect package or come into contact with a biological or chemical substance.

Postal bombs or biological/chemical packages may display any of the following signs:

- Grease marks or oily stains on the envelope or wrapping
- An unusual odour including but not restricted to almonds, ammonia or marzipan
- Discolouration, crystals on surface or any powder or powder-like residue on the envelope or wrapping (suspect biological/chemical threat)
- Visible wiring or tin foil
- The envelope or package may feel very heavy for its size
- The weight distribution may be uneven
- Delivery by hand from an unknown source or posted from an unusual place
- If a package, it may have excessive wrapping
- There may be poor hand writing, spelling or typing
- It may be wrongly addressed, or come from an unexpected source
- No return address or postmark that does not match return address
- There may be too many stamps for the weight of the package

If you suspect that a letter or a package may contain a bomb:

- Stay calm
- Put the letter or package down gently and walk away from it
- Do not put the letter or package into anything (including water) and do not put anything on top of it
- Ask everyone to leave the area (including classes if necessary)
- Notify the police and the Headteacher/nominated deputy immediately
- Do not use mobile phones or sound the alarm using the break glass call points

If you suspect that a letter or a package may contain a biological or chemical threat:

- Stay calm
- Do not touch the package further or move it to another location
- Shut windows and doors in the room and leave the room, but keep yourself separate from others and available for medical examination
- Notify the Headteacher/nominated deputy immediately

The Headteacher/nominated deputy should then:

- Notify the police immediately on 999
- Ensure that any air conditioning system in the building has been turned off, and that all doors (including internal fire doors) and windows have been closed
- Evacuate the building, keeping people away from the contaminated room as far as possible
- Keep all persons exposed to the material separate from others and available for medical attention
- If anyone is experiencing symptoms of chemical exposure (e.g. streaming eyes, coughs and irritated skin) seek medical attention immediately

If anyone believes they have been exposed to biological/chemical material, they should be encouraged to:

- remain calm
- do not touch eyes, nose or any other part of the body
- wash your hands in ordinary soap where facilities are provided

APPENDIX 11 - BUSINESS CONTINUITY

See Contingency Business Continuity Plan

Business continuity planning is the process involved in ensuring that a business or organisation can continue with its critical functions after a disaster or emergency. In the case of schools, one of these functions is to continue pupils' education. You therefore need to think about what is required in order to continue this function and what vital records or data you may need to duplicate or back up.

Statistically the emergency most likely to be experienced by a school is one that affects the school building, such as a fire or flood. Having an inventory of the contents of the school is invaluable in calculating losses for insurance claims. This section is split into three tables which should be completed for the school.

Equipment - this doesn't need to include every single item in the school, as numbers of desks and chairs are easy to calculate, but IT, electrical equipment and any other specialist, large, one-off or expensive items.

IT data and systems - all important data stored on school computers should be backed up either remotely, or using tapes which should be stored off site. The table allows the recording of essential data sets and IT systems and where they are backed up.

Paper based records - schools will have at least some essential paper based records, which could be easily damaged or destroyed in a fire or flood. These should be listed in the table along with the locations of back-up copies which should be stored off site - this should include your emergency plan.

It is also worth encouraging staff to think about where they keep lesson plans and pupils' coursework, as loss of these could have a large psychological impact on staff and pupils.