



Critical Incident Policy

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1. Introduction

The Diocese of Bristol Academies Trust (DBAT) is a multi-academy trust with a faith designation and a Christian religious ethos that is both distinctive and inclusive. Distinctive in the sense that all decisions about the nature and purpose of the Academy are taken through the lens of Christian values, inclusive in the sense that all students and staff are equally valued for their uniqueness in the eyes of God and their belonging to the school community.

2. Ethos statement

Vision

The Diocese of Bristol Academies Trust (DBAT) shares the Church of England’s Vision for Education 2016, “Deeply Christian, Serving the Common Good”, which includes four basic elements wisdom, hope, community and dignity. We aim to deliver values-led education with the very best outcomes for children and young people.

Purpose

To provide high quality education enabling young people to flourish and grow: spiritually, in love and in understanding.

3. Scope/ aims

3.1 This Policy sets out:

3.1.1 The requirements of the Trust in a response to a critical incident, to ensure that the affected part of the Trust, including specific individuals, receives timely and effective support throughout. Also, that the wider community and relevant authority needs are met.

3.1.2 The requirements of the individual school in the event of a critical incident.

3.2 Each academy will hold a local Level 2 Critical Incident Policy. This will include the critical incident response plan specific to that school and which sets out:

- Immediate actions including the appointment of an incident manager
- How it will manage an incident
- How it will restore normality after an incident

3.3 This L1 Policy provides the framework for the response to, and management, of a critical incident. The specific actions will be determined by the nature and severity of the critical incident.

4. Definitions

4.1 **Critical Incident.** A critical incident is any disruptive incident with an impact significant enough to overwhelm the established coping strategies and is an occurrence, event or situation that is outside of the routine or the norm. Examples might include:

- A deliberate act of violence, such as the use of a knife or firearm within or close to the school
- Fire, flood, terrorism, or explosion
- Public health threats
- Death or serious injury – on or off site
- A hazard in the local area such as a local disturbance, extreme weather, or release of a hazardous substance

4.2 **The Trust Emergency Contact.** During holiday periods, the SLT will designate an emergency contact rota from the Trust leadership team. All schools will be informed of the rota ahead of holiday periods. The emergency contact is responsible for:

- Ensuring that they are contactable for the entire duration of their duty
- To receive the emergency call and provide immediate support. If necessary, basing at the site/academy involved.
- Receiving and providing updates for the Trust leadership, stakeholders, and authorities as necessary
- To set in train any necessary actions
- To provide support and leadership in the immediate term, and until any necessary wider support and on-going management is in place

4.3 **The Trust Critical Incident Team.** To provide ongoing support and management of a critical incident, the Trust leadership may establish a Critical Incident Team. The team will consist of relevant expertise and leadership, wholly dependent on the nature of the incident and subsequent requirements. It will include appropriate SLT members. It will be chaired by the CEO or a delegated officer. The membership, frequency of meetings, and lifespan of the team will adapt as the situation and criticality adjusts.

5. Requirements

5.1 **Communication Plan.** The communication plan will ensure that communications are timely and effective. The plan must be established at the earliest opportunity by the Emergency Contact or the Critical Incident Team. It will be managed and delivered in collaboration with the impacted school(s). Communication stakeholders might include:

- School and the wider community
- Parents, carers, and families
- Board of Trustees
- DfE, RSC, Diocese
- Local authority
- Press

A communications plan template is provided at **Appendix 1**.

5.2 **The Critical Incident Record.** Because critical incidents may lead afterwards to an investigation and possible legal proceedings, it is vital that a clear record is kept. This record should detail timings, activities and actions, individuals involved, and any decisions made and the rationale for them. The Critical Incident Record will be created by the Emergency Contact and handed over to the Critical Incident Team, once in place. The record will be maintained throughout the duration of the incident and aftermath. The contents should be treated as disclosable, including at public enquiry. A template is provided at **Appendix 2**.

5.3 **Review, evaluation, and debriefing.** Within one month of the incident, the SLT will review the handling of the critical incident to identify key points of learning to develop and improve its practices. Following the review and evaluation, a post incident report will be provided to the Board of Trustees. Debriefs to individuals and to the Critical Incident Team must be completed - broadly - within the same timeframe. Information given during a debrief may be disclosable in a public enquiry.

6. Local Authority Support

Local authorities retain a responsibility to support academies in their area, through a critical incident. Details of the specific support and emergency contacts are provided in the [Trust contacts page](#) in the Trust SharePoint site.

7. DfE Guidance

Further guidance [Emergency planning and response for education, childcare, and children’s social care settings - GOV.UK \(www.gov.uk\)](https://www.gov.uk/government/guidance/emergency-planning-and-response-for-education-childcare-and-childrens-social-care-settings)

8. Trust-Wide Responsibilities

Function	Responsibilities
Board of Trustees	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Nominates a single point of contact for communication purposes • Advises and supports Critical Incident Team activity • Provides direction and guidance following the post incident report
CEO	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Ensures that the Trust has an up-to-date L1 Critical Incident Policy and team competencies to manage a Critical Incident Team • Ensures an Emergency Contact rota is in place • Authorises the standing up/down of a DBAT Critical Incident Team when required • Delegates the management and retains oversight of DBAT Critical Incident Team activity • Maintains a line of communication with the Board of Trustees • Ensures legal obligations are met including enquiries • Ensures that lessons and improvements are embedded into policy and practice
SLT	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Establishes the DBAT Critical Incident Team • Nominates the SLT lead of the Critical Incident Team • Supports the Critical Incident Team to create an Incident Plan to support the impacted academy • Provides appropriate support to the academy and the Critical Incident Team • Conducts post incident review, evaluation and individual/team debriefs (as necessary) • Submits a post incident report to the Board of Trustees
Academy Council	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Ensures that their Academy has in place an up-to-date L2 Critical Incident Policy and a regularly reviewed response plan • Provides support to their Academy if a critical incident occurs
Headteacher	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Ensures that members of the Critical Incident Team are clear about their roles and have had any training required to enable them to fulfil these roles effectively • Ensures that all staff have read the L2 Critical Incident Policy are clear about their roles in the response plan, and have had any training required • Ensures that the response plan is regularly reviewed and practised • Ensures that communications throughout an incident are maintained with the emergency services, Trust Emergency Contact and/or the Trust Critical Incident Team, and other necessary stakeholders.
All staff	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Supports a critical incident plan in the event of a critical incident • Acts in ways to protect the health and safety of pupils and adults if involved in an academy’s critical incident

9. Our Ethos and Values

As identified at the opening of this policy, our structure and approach here is underpinned by our Christian ethos and values, focused on an ethos that is both distinctive and inclusive.

In our adoption and subsequent adaptation of this policy we have asked ourselves two clear questions: “Is this policy and practice underpinned by our vision and values?” and “What is the impact of our vision and values on those subject to the policy?”. This is a key focus of our ongoing development of policy and practice.

Appendix 1: Communication Plan

What information	Target Audience	By what method	Communicated by?	Frequency	Comment
<i>General update</i>	<i>Main Board Local Authority Diocese</i>	<i>E-mail</i>	<i>Emergency contact and/or comms lead</i>	<i>On the hour. To be replaced as 'by necessary' from 8pm til 8am. Then to be reviewed.</i>	<i>Short para summarising What, When, Next Steps.</i>

Appendix 2: Template Critical Incident Record

Name of the Emergency Contact completing this portion of the record:					
Serial	Date/ time	Event/activity	Individuals involved	Details of decision made	Rationale
1					
2					
3					
4					
5					
6					
7					
8					
Name of the Emergency Contact completing this portion of the record:					
Serial	Date/ time	Event/activity	Individuals involved	Details of decision made	Rationale
1					
2					
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4					
5					
6					
7					
8					

History of most recent policy changes and review period

Date	Page	Change(s) made	Origin of Change (e.g. TU request, change in legislation)
September 2022	All	Rewrite	Update from 2016 version

Policy Owner	Operations Directorate
Date Adopted	November 2022
Latest Review Date	
Next Review Date	November 2023
Level	Level 1
<i>DBAT Policy levels:</i>	
LEVEL 1	DBAT policy for adoption (no changes can be made by the Academy Council; the Academy Council must adopt the policy)
LEVEL 2	DBAT policy for adoption and local approval, with areas for the Academy to update regarding local practice (the main body of the policy cannot be changed)
LEVEL 3	DBAT model policy that the Academy can adopt if it wishes
LEVEL 4	Local policy to be approved by the Academy Council