



ORCHARD HOUSE
SCHOOL

Crisis and Serious Incident Management

Policy Statement

October 2020

Crisis and Serious Incident Management

Overriding duty: the care and safety of the children

1. These notes are intended to provide a guide to heads or deputy heads who find themselves confronted by a crisis facing the school. But all other members of staff need to be familiar with this document the better to understand what may be their roles in a crisis.
2. For the purposes of this note, a crisis is defined as any event at school or in London or on an expedition attended by a party from a school that will seriously affect the health or safety of a significant part or all of the school community. The incident commander is the head. If the head is absent from school at the time of the crisis or other incident; the incident commander is the deputy head.
3. By definition, it is difficult to foresee a crisis although all OHS staff members are already well trained to cope with the crisis of a fire and certain practices, such as the provision of a duplicate set of important documents, are already standard practice. Other crises are less easy to predict, but the first part of this note concentrates upon the potential eventuality of a large explosion in central London causing massive disruption and perhaps being noxious in terms of toxic gas or radiation dust. In circumstances such as these, the OHS objective is that the school should be able to be a place of shelter to children and staff for up to 24 hours.
4. Other events affecting only a smaller section of the school's community may also be sufficiently serious to merit the same management techniques deployed in a crisis. These might be termed a serious incident. Examples could include a motor accident involving a school party on a coach where several passengers are injured or the collapse of a building in which a party of children are on a visit or any sudden death of a child or staff member during the school day. Such examples will place a significant management burden on the school but will not affect the whole school.
5. This policy is intended as an aide-mémoire to be kept in constantly in mind by the head, the deputy head and other members of the school's SLT. It can be referred to during a crisis or other incident, obviously, but as a checklist rather than a prescriptive list that must be followed blindly. Indeed, in any given case the incident commander (either the head or the deputy head) may well need to diverge from the list shown below. There are six sections and four appendices as follows:
 - Section I - First Steps: Defining the crisis and establishing the crisis management team
 - Section II - Managing the crisis
 - Section III - Running down the crisis team and the response to the crisis



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- Section IV - Managing a serious incident
- Section V - Handling the media
- Section VI - Post incident review of the crisis response
- Appendix A - Crisis management - one-page summary
- Appendix B - Useful telephone numbers
- Appendix C - Excursion leaders' checklist
- Appendix D - Emergency supplies check list

I SECTION I - FIRST STEPS: DEFINING THE CRISIS AND ESTABLISHING THE CRISIS RESPONSE TEAM

I.1 First steps for the head or alternative incident commander:

- a. Upon hearing of an event that is likely to be a crisis, secure your lines of command by notifying all staff by paging that there is a crisis and that in the next few minutes you will be making important decisions as to how to react to the event. It is useful to have a code to do this, recognised by the staff, but that will avoid any anxiety on the part of the children. The code at OHS for this signal is an announcement by the head over the paging system thus: "To all staff: the Double C committee is in session, the Double C committee is in session". On hearing this, the SLT members – all of whom are by definition members of the committee – should arrange for the children in their classes to be supervised by others and should make their way as speedily as possible to the Head's office.
- b. Initial assessment: consider briefly the scope, scale and potential duration of the crisis, as these may inform your subsequent decisions.
- c. Grab hold of your crisis check list
- d. Consider contacting one of the governors (in the first instance, the managing governor), if you believe that he can help you. But remember that, unless you decide to hand over to a governor who is actually on site, you are the incident commander.

I.2 For non-SLT staff, hearing this announcement means:

- a. There is a total ban on any groups of children leaving the school, such as to go on routine recreation, educational visits or to matches
- b. They should bring all children within the building and attempt to maintain a normal timetable (however, after the end of the school day this will need modification towards indoor games and other activities that will keep the children occupied)
- c. Announce to the staff that there is a crisis and that the Crisis Committee is now in session: ensure the classes of members of the committee are covered by others

I.3 Note to heads/incident commanders on staff absence and/or panic:

- 1.3.1 Whilst it would be a matter for considerable regret, it is possible that certain members of staff may themselves panic and desert the school. Others, perhaps with small children elsewhere, may request permission to leave. As the incident commander, it is for you to decide whether to accede to such requests. One factor in your mind which you may care to discuss with such staff is whether in practical terms there is much he or she might do outside the school: indeed, leaving the school in some circumstances may expose the staff member concerned to greater risks and may add to the general confusion obtaining elsewhere. However, do not waste time trying to persuade a staff member to stay when it is clear that their anxiety will make them less than fully effective



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in the school's primary duty, which is to look after the school's pupils and keep them as safe and secure as possible. In both cases, cover may need to be worked out by the deputy head. Do not hesitate to merge classes in communal areas etc.

2 SECTION II - MANAGING THE CRISIS

2.1 Second steps: begin to manage the crisis. Take your time, stay icy calm!

2.1.1 There are no right or wrong decisions in the management of a crisis. The appropriateness of a decision will generally only become apparent later, upon subsequent analysis and review. Do not rush to take decisions - very few are time critical to seconds or minutes - but all members of staff, not just those on the SLT, should be prepared to analyse and decide issues.

2.1.2 The incident commander and the crisis team should spread the workload by delegation. In this connection, as incident commander you may wish to make use of a whiteboard, so that people are totally clear who is doing what.

a) Children not in school: Delegate to a member of the SLT an attempt to contact any staff member with children not on the school's premises. Once contact has been made, decide whether to instruct the party to attempt to return to school or whether they should be advised to seek shelter at an alternative place of safety (eg, local schools, community centres, church halls etc.). Two further points:

- i. If a party is to stay at a place of safety, attempt to obtain from the teacher who is the party leader the address, landline telephone number and any e-mail of the site chosen.
- ii. Agree a communication protocol, ie when next you expect to be in contact with that party. Ensure the party leader also has the head's private line number at the school and some mobile numbers at the school they can also try.

b) Phone traffic: Keep phone traffic that is outbound on the schools phones to a minimum and restrict this where possible to the head's private line at the school. This will free the main inbound lines for the inevitable traffic to be expected from parents. Delegate to mature members of the staff the handling of incoming telephone traffic. These staff should reassure parents with the following key points:

- i. That the children are safe and are being well looked after in a calm but purposeful atmosphere.
- ii. That the school is fully prepared and geared up to care for all children until each child's parent is able to collect him or her.

Staff manning the phones must exude a quiet yet confident manner at all times. However, as the telephone traffic inbound may number several hundred calls, it will be important that each conversation is kept short in duration. Staff manning the phones should note on the class green list the time at which he or she had a conversation with each child's parent and should further indicate which parent it was, father or mother.

c) Telephone trees: If as the incident commander you decide to invoke a telephone tree to brief parents upon the school's reaction to the crisis, retain

command and execution of the telephone tree within the school. If mobile telephone networks remain available (these may be switched off in a crisis or, as during 7/7, they may suffer overload), staff should be encouraged to use their own or the school's mobile phones (their costs will of course be reimbursed), so as to keep the landlines clear for traffic. Again, tick marks and timings on a Green List will suffice to indicate which parents have been contacted successfully. Additional points:

- Only phone the names on your own list, and if necessary assure the parent that a colleague will be making contact as regards any sibling of a child in your charge (otherwise it is difficult to prevent chaos from developing)
- Deliver clearly the standard message your incident commander has given you
- Be brief and do not stop to discuss details - do not clog up the phone lines by allowing any more than the briefest of conversations
- If necessary, curtail the conversation courteously but firmly with the words that you must move on, as you have many other parents to call
- A message may be left on answer machines - but the Green List should show the letters 'AM' rather than that it was a successful contact with the child's parent. Continue over time to make live contact with the parent concerned, or his or her spouse.

If you receive a message from a parent, make sure this is logged and noted on the Green List. If it is the responsibility of a colleague to call that parent, ensure your colleague is informed that contact has been made. Then ensure the message is passed on to the teacher in charge of that child.

- d) Local authority emergency commander:** Each local authority has an Emergency Commander and Crisis Response team. Consider touching base with these (see Appendix of Useful Telephone Numbers) and logging in.
- e) Using the school's website:** Consider also asking the IT department to post on the school's website an emergency web page, detailing in no more than three or four short and pithy points the school's reaction to the crisis and ability to care for the children for its duration, eg.

TO ALL PARENTS - RESPONSE TO "DIRTY BOMB" IN CITY

Wednesday 9 May - 6.00pm to 7.30pm

What you need to know	Response to "Dirty bomb" in City
What you need to do	
Deadline for response	

- i. All the children are safe in school - they are cheerful! Do not worry about them
- ii. We are following government advice to stay inside and avoid the dust cloud. The school is secured and fairly well hermetically sealed. We have adequate food and water supplies for the foreseeable future
- iii. We shall look after the children until it is safe for you to collect them, overnight if needed - do not rush to us or take any unnecessary risks. (We may ask you to 'hose off' dust/ashes outside when you collect your child, to reduce the risk of contamination coming into school.)
- iv. We shall update this page next at aa.bb hours - keep watching if you can, also the school's e-mail info@orchardhs.org.uk appears to be functioning ok at present but please avoid unnecessary traffic

f) Monitoring news: It is important to keep up with the news. Delegate to a member of staff near the office or within it the responsibility to keep a TV or radio on in the background. (However, to avoid panic with the children, TVs and radios should not be used to listen to news in the classrooms.) In addition to Radio 4, consider also those being broadcast by the local stations, London Radio News (FM 97.3MHz) or BBC Radio London (FM 94.9MHz). Staff should bring the incident commander the essence of any new news that may affect the decisions she or he is taking.

In addition to radio and TV broadcasts, consider also the following:

<http://www.direct.gov.uk> (instant advice from the government)

<http://www.londonprepared.gov.uk/business>

- g) Toxic or dirty weapons:** In the event that the government or news services of credibility advise that there is a toxic element to any gas or cloud resulting from an explosion (ie the suspicion that terrorists have deployed a “dirty” bomb or a chemical incident is having the same effect), consider whether the prevailing winds are such that this noxious cloud might drift towards the area in which the school is located. If it is working, these can be found on the internet from:

www.bbc.co.uk/london/weather

Alternatively, look at the direction in which the clouds are travelling or leaves are being blown.

It is very unlikely that you will have the resources safely to evacuate the school or a secure destination that could receive children and staff. If you consider that because of the wind direction and speed contamination or pollution by toxic gas or radioactive or biochemical agents is a serious and realistic possibility, hand out the emergency supplies of decorator’s Scotch tape with which every school is supplied, close all windows and external doors and attempt as best you can to seal these, together with any other obvious venting points such as extractor grills or airbricks. Of course, it will be necessary for a door to the building to continue to be used as an occasional exit: nevertheless the opening and closing of such a door should be kept to a minimum, with some form of rudimentary seal retained and maintained where possible.

Listen carefully for emergency government advice on this matter.

- h) Collection of children:** Any parent arriving to collect a child may himself or herself be covered in contaminating dust etc. Offer such parent the facility to shower this off, either by using an external hose or by allowing them the use of the school’s shower facilities. As it will be a priority to minimise contamination entering the building, dusty contaminated clothing should be left outside: use bin bags as emergency clothing if necessary.

Even though the safety of a child may be compromised if he or she were to leave the building, any parent wishing to collect his own child is obviously entitled so to do.

Conditions outside the school are likely to be fairly chaotic. Unless there are very good reasons, a child should not leave with anybody other than his or her own parent/carer. However, if you believe that the child will be removed to a place of greater security and you are confident that this would be the wish of the parent concerned, this guidance may be disregarded. In this event, keep a note of who has collected children other than his or her own and which children were handed over.

While facilities and resources permit, offer sanctuary to any parent who seeks it.

- i) **Media:** in the event of a full scale crisis affecting all of London, the media is unlikely to trouble an individual school but otherwise see Section V - Handling the Media.
- j) **Water failure and conservation:** It is entirely possible in a crisis that the water mains will fail. This failure is apparent when cold water will no longer come out of the cold water sink tap in any of the schools' kitchens. In these circumstances, the school's water tanks will provide adequate water for a further day if water stocks are conserved. Conservation measures should include turning off any auto-flush urinals and allowing flushing of other loos only on an occasional basis.
- k) **Electricity failure:** Similarly, the electricity may fail. In this circumstance, the consequences will include:
- The computers will no longer work for e-mail or internet access, nor will mains-powered TVs and radios
 - The central heating will cease to work because the circulation pumps will not run
 - Some 8-10 hours after failure, the downstairs loos at OHS might fail, once the sewage store (which is no longer being pumped to street level) begins to overflow. At this point, please seal off the downstairs cloakrooms at that school and use the other facilities, all of which drain by gravity.
 - The school's telephone exchange will fail, although the main number will continue to ring the main extension (usually ext. 4000)
 - It will be impossible to charge any mobile phones. Consider turning these on only from time to time, say every two hours on the hour. Reception time on a modern mobile phone is measured in days but transmission (speaking) time is still only a few hours at most. So, if power to recharge your mobile phones is absent and this failure is likely to endure, please restrict conversations to the briefest of periods.

Countermeasures might include:

- Use battery powered radio to keep in touch, or web radio on a smart phone
- To retain warmth, double up the children in a hall or double classrooms
- Use mobiles, sparingly, for external communication and/or internet connection (but see above re battery problems)

NB. A portable generator is generally kept at PHS and at that school it may be possible to use this on occasion for vital electricity supply.

- l) **Food:** food is important for morale. Most scenarios envisage that gas supplies will continue in a crisis for some time. All the schools have gas-powered stoves, so food preparation should not be too much of a problem. However, the incident

commander will need to consider the likely duration of the crisis, the available food stocks and whether to ration these.

m) Bedding: The schools do not have bedding but coats will provide greater comfort than simply the bare floor.

Space spare to note other points during a crisis:

3 SECTION III - RUNNING DOWN THE CRISIS TEAM AND RESPONSE TO THE CRISIS

- 3.1 There will come a point when the incident commander will consider that the crisis is passed or that staying at the school is no longer warranted. It is for the incident commander to decide how to wind down the command structure and dispose of any staff or material resources and/or remaining children still at the school.
- 3.2 Some points to consider include:
- a. Hot debrief before dismissing staff from duty: Before staff leave, try if possible to gather them together for a quick but brief discussion of what went well in addressing the crisis, and what they believe might be improved. Ask each to write down his or her points briefly, so that these are not forgotten in the review of the response to be held later
 - b. Remaining children uncollected: In unusual circumstances, it may be appropriate to shut the school, sending any remaining children away with different members of staff. Again, this will be the incident commander's decision. If a point arises where sending children or staff away is likely to be better for their health and safety, this should be done.
 - c. Securing the school: To the extent it is possible on abandoning the school, to deter thieves and looters the premises should still be secured and the alarm set.
 - d. Subsequent contact with staff: Consider how to retain contact with staff. If possible, hand out copies of the school's staff list of home and mobile telephone numbers. Record on to the office answer machine an appropriate message and consider whether to include the incident commander's mobile number in this message. Consider whether to place elements of this message on a whiteboard easel to be placed outside the school's front door.

Upon notification, it will be for the bursar to notify insurers.

4 SECTION IV - MANAGING A SERIOUS INCIDENT

- 4.1 A serious incident will only affect a small part of the school or even an individual child only; nevertheless, the seriousness of the incident may well require crisis management techniques to be deployed and will again place a burden upon a school's senior management. Examples might include a motor accident involving a school party on a coach where several passengers are injured, or the collapse of a building in which a party of children are on a visit or any sudden death of a child or staff member during the school day.
- 4.2 Although it is unlikely that school evacuation or in the alternative school quarantine measures will be needed, the stages of management are very similar to that of a full crisis:
- **Stage 1** - Define and assess the incident, judging what resources will be needed to manage it, then brief the crisis management team
 - **Stage 2** - Manage the incident
 - **Stage 3** - Run the incident down and dismiss the management team from duty
 - **Stage 4** - Review the management of the incident

There is little to add to stages 1 or 2 that has not already been covered in Sections I and II of Crisis Management earlier in this policy. However, the most likely serious incident to manage will involve the serious injury or death of a child or member of staff while on a day or residential excursion. A missing child is yet another scenario. The following notes for incident commanders may therefore be helpful:

- 4.2.1 **Stage 1** - Define and assess the incident, judging what resources will be needed to manage it, then brief the crisis management team
- a. Form your crisis management team. As school is likely to continue for most other children, retain only those team members you need to manage the incident. Tell the office staff to clear your diary for the rest of the day at the very least.
 - b. Describe the incident to the team members, say how you intend to manage it and allocate responsibilities
 - c. If you have time and would welcome additional help, attempt to call one of the governors - but you are in charge
- 4.2.2 **Stage 2** - Manage the incident
- a. **Management at the incident:** Decide whether further management resources are required at the scene of the incident or in its vicinity (eg the hospital where any casualties have been taken). If yes, despatch additional resources by whatever means are swiftest and ensure that all members of this team have mobile phones with them where the school knows the numbers of these. If necessary, hire a taxi to take the staff concerned. Do not worry even for a nanosecond about expense.

- b. **Communications:** Establish good (but not continuous) communications with the staff member in charge of the excursion. Agree with her/him when further information calls will be held between you as the incident commander and the party leader as the school's senior representative on the ground. Ensure additional contact telephone numbers are noted. Also, ensure you are clear as to which are the hospitals to which any casualties have been sent. This can be very important as in major cities such as London, casualties will often be taken by ambulance to a number of different A&E departments.
- c. **Informing parents:** Establish a telephone tree within the school under the control of an SLT member or a school secretary to notify only those parents of children on the excursion. Give priority in informing the parents of those of children where it is known the child is injured. Points to remember:
- Be brief and totally truthful
 - Hand over all relevant facts at your disposal
 - Do NOT enter into any speculation whatsoever
 - Keep a careful note on a single Green Address List as to who has been contacted and when - note if only an answer phone message has been left and in these cases, continue to try to find the parent to speak to him or her
- d. **Media management** - see Section V, immediately following this section

4.2.3 **Stage 3** - Running down the incident management response

1. **Release of staff:** When you are satisfied that the incident has been controlled and addressed, after a hot debrief release your management team as soon as is practicable. Remember, the hot debrief is as follows:
- Hot debrief before dismissing staff from duty: Before staff leave, try if possible to gather them together for a brief discussion of what went well in addressing the crisis and what they believe might be improved. Ask each to write down his or her points briefly, so that these are not forgotten in the review of the response to be held later
2. Attempt to return the school to full normality as quickly as possible. However, it will be well to begin to consider planning for the aftermath and subject topics should include:
- Long term media management
 - Handling parent concerns in the aftermath
 - If there has been a death or deaths:
 - setting up a book of condolence

- o a place whereat to lay any floral tributes
- o liaison with the bereaved parents
- o special bereavement measures for any surviving sibling at the school
- o bereavement measures for all other children in the school
- o consideration as to how to manage the Parents' Association (consult with Chairman and/or committee)
- o consideration as to who from the school should attend the funeral
- o consideration as to whether there should be a school memorial service
- o the need to manage the complex issues that arise from spontaneous and ad hoc collections and appeals

4.2.4 **Stage 4** - Reviewing the incident response

See Section VI

4.3 **ADDITIONAL NOTES RELATING TO SERIOUS INCIDENTS**

- a. Incident on school property during school hours, including serious injury or death of a child or member of staff
 - School secretary to summon emergency services asap
 - Inform head or deputy head, who will assess incident and decide whether and to what extent to follow crisis procedures
 - Quarantine zone where incident has occurred: this may become a crime scene either for the police or for the Health and Safety Executive
- b. Incident on school property after school hours
 - Governors or maintenance team will inform head and decide upon approach
- c. Incident during a school outing or during a residential trip

Party leaders: Be calm, be measured, take your time.

1. Party leader to appoint an assistant to take care of children either not harmed or not involved in the incident
2. Party leader to summon emergency services if necessary
3. Party leader to determine who should accompany casualties to hospital, ensuring remainder are left supervised and in a place of safety
4. Party leader or his appointed deputy to call and reconcile party register (children and staff) - account for missing persons
5. Party leader to inform head of incident, including:
 - Brief description of incident
 - Names of children and staff involved, brief description of status of injuries if known
 - Name(s), address(es) and contact telephone numbers of hospital(s) to which casualties have been sent or,
 - If dealing with a missing child or children, name of police station dealing with incident, name and rank of senior officer responding and contact number of CID team involved
 - Agree with the head when the next contact by mobile phone will be made
 - Head/incident commander will advise you if she is sending you additional staff members to help
6. Assistant teachers on trip first to ensure safety of children not involved in incident
7. Assistant teachers then to take name of any witnesses and to note down key times and when incident has been contained
8. Evacuation of premises during school hours
 - As far as is possible, follow tried and tested fire evacuation procedures

5 SECTION V - HANDLING THE MEDIA: DON'T! LEAVE IT TO A GOVERNOR WHENEVER POSSIBLE

- 5.1 It is a standing order at OHS that enquiries from the media should be referred to Aatif Hassan in his office (tel: 020 3696 5300) or, in his absence and if also he cannot be reached on his mobile telephone (tel: 07956 665 988), one of the other two governors (Ms Libby Nicholas 07791 953 552; Mr Isaac Dossa, 020 8696 5300). In managing a crisis or a serious incident, this rule should nonetheless be maintained almost without exception.
- 5.2 In responding to a crisis or serious incident, the school has four media objectives:
- i. To ensure handling the media does not interfere with the smooth management to resolve the crisis or serious incident
 - ii. Subject to I above, to be as helpful, informative and accurate to journalists as is possible, in a clear and concise manner
 - iii. To avoid misinformation, distortion or unhelpful speculation appearing
 - iv. To ensure, as far as this is possible, that the school is described in the media in the best light possible
- 5.3 In any crisis or serious incident, calls from the press should be anticipated. This presents a number of problems, including:
- i. It is a significant additional burden just when management resources are at their most stretched
 - ii. Incident commanders and staff are usually untrained and inexperienced in handling press enquiries
 - iii. It is all too easy to make a comment that the press can - and quite often will - misconstrue into a "story" if not even a "scandal"
- 5.4 The importance of training in media handling should not be underestimated. The managing governor has had this training. Where possible, incident commanders should therefore address the business of managing the crisis/serious incident and free themselves from the burden of media response. The way this is best done is by asking one of the governors, usually the managing governor, to handle this aspect for you as soon as it is practically possible for that governor so to do.
- 5.5 Remember that journalists have a job to do and their reputations depend upon results. They are always hungry for news and are likely to approach any member of the school community, whether staff or pupils. They may also try to contact individuals at home. All these approaches should be resisted courteously but firmly. Equally, it should not be forgotten that journalists on the school's side may present a snapshot of the school, wherein its professionalism and strength of purpose is readily apparent.
- 5.6 Journalists may well put enormous pressure on the incident commander or any member of staff. A head might say: "I have no comment to make just at present", to which an

experienced journalist will probably respond “Well, you’re the head for goodness sake, you have to comment!” But he or she is just trying it on, the truth is rather that as the incident commander you don’t have to respond until you are ready to, if at all: “No comment”, after all, means no accidents. Nor should staff ever comment to journalists: rather they should refer any journalist to the head or to Aatif Hassan or one of the other governors.

- 5.7 Some respondents to press enquiries believe they are protected if they ask that their response should be ‘off the record’. For many reasons, this protection is poor. Again, avoid talking to the press other than to refer them to a governor.

Media check list

- 5.8 If comment has to be made by the incident commander (unlikely in view of the foregoing strictures) and as an aide-mémoire to any governor charged with handling media relations during a crisis, the following factors should be taken into account:

- a. Consider the provision of a media centre, eg a hived-off classroom
- b. Ensure all media enquiries are logged in terms of:
 - Time of call
 - Duration
 - Name of news organisation calling
 - Name of reporter/researcher calling
 - Specific material questions
 - Comments made
 - Time when call has been returned
- c. Announce when and where any press conference will be held and who will be addressing this. Such an announcement will usually reduce media pressure.
- d. Consider how frequently bulletins will be issued or press conferences held, eg 4 hourly, twice daily, whatever is appropriate
- e. In the event the emergency services are involved, eg the police, make use of their expertise and ensure the school’s media efforts are co-ordinated with theirs. However, do not lose sight of the possibility that their media objectives may not coincide with those of the school
- f. Plan before each meeting with any source of media:
 - What messages you want to get across and how to put these concisely and clearly



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- What messages you would prefer to avoid and your strategy to evade such questions (this can be very tricky and is best left to those trained to do it)
- g. Be truthful on any factual matters and do not indulge in speculation of any sort
- h. Be courteous and as helpful as is consistent with the school's media objectives
- i. If you commit to calling a journalist back, always do this at the time agreed even if this is only to say "I am terribly sorry, but I have nothing new to add and can make no further comment at present."

6 SECTION VI - POST INCIDENT REVIEW OF THE RESPONSE TO A CRISIS OR SERIOUS INCIDENT

6.1 We learn from experience, which is why after any event of significance in OHS and however well it went, we believe that reviewing the event with the benefit of hindsight pays handsome dividends in improving matters the next time around. This principle applies to the management of crises and serious incidents.

Hot review

6.2 The need for a hot review is discussed above. As staff members are being stood down from duty during the management of a crisis or serious incident, try if possible to gather them together for a brief discussion of what went well in addressing the crisis that occurred earlier in the day and what they believe might be improved.

6.3 Ask each to write down his or her points briefly, so that these are not forgotten in the review of the response to be held later.

Full debrief

6.4 A full debrief should take place within five working days of an incident. The first forum is likely to be the weekly staff meeting, where comments should again be solicited. At the same time, the written notes following the hot debrief should be gathered in and collated by the deputy head.

6.5 Then a further review should be undertaken by the SLT in special session. Given their important and integral role, it may well be appropriate to ask the school secretaries to attend this session. It may also be worth asking the maintenance team to attend a part of this session.

6.6 The conclusions of these two meetings should be reported to the governors and it may well be necessary to revise this policy.

APPENDIX A - CRISIS MANAGEMENT: A ONE PAGE SUMMARY
CHECK LIST FOR INCIDENT COMMANDERS
(usually the head)

Stage 1

1. Assess the crisis and decide rapidly on its likely duration and the resources you estimate you will need to manage it
2. Summon your crisis team. Brief them on the crisis and tell them your proposed response. Use a whiteboard to allocate responsibilities, if you think this will help.
3. Delegate the routine to other staff. Ensure your energies are focused only on managing the crisis.
4. Contact one or all the governors, if you believe they will be able to help and reduce your workload

Stage 2

1. Manage the crisis: remember there are at this stage no wrong decisions. Be measured and, unless it is absolutely time critical, take your time on difficult decisions. But be clear and concise: do not allow any ambiguity in your instructions. If an instruction is complex, ask the staff member concerned to repeat it back to you.
2. If the incident is away from the school, contact the party leader and work down the list set out in Appendix C
3. Manage the information flow: decide when and how to contact parents. Keep a record of contacts.
4. Ensure news sources are monitored: These may inform or change your decisions

Stage 3

1. Hot debrief: hold a hot debrief as the crisis or serious incident comes to an end
2. Stand down staff from duty as soon as is practically possible: be prepared for the odd emotional outburst in the aftermath of an incident, as this is very common

STAFF

In a crisis, it is not always possible to keep to a plan. Indeed, usually it is impossible. So, use your common sense! Above all, please show 100% loyalty, commitment and professionalism to the incident commander (usually your head).

LAMINATE THIS PAGE AND KEEP IT TO HAND IN EACH HEAD'S OFFICE