

Emergency Planning and Response

Guidance for schools on preparing for,
and managing the response to emergencies

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Design note for users of this guidance

This document has been designed primarily for online reference and contains a large number of bookmarks and hyperlinks to assist the reader and to reduce 'scrolling'.

These links are denoted by light blue underlined text ([as in this example](#), which is not in itself a bookmark or hyperlink). You can normally access documents via such links by positioning the cursor over them and then pressing the **ctrl** button on your keyboard and left-clicking the mouse.

You may wish to edit some of these links out if you intend to print off extracts or the whole of the document.

It is recommended that two or three hard copies of this, or any adapted version, are kept in schools as a precaution against internet access being lost; you should, however, check at least annually to ensure that you have the latest version as contact details in particular can become out of date very easily.

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**Essex County Council
Schools, Children & Families Directorate**

**Enquiries about this document should be addressed to the
SCF Communications Team
01245 436242 / 436188**

June 2010

Foreword

The scope and complexity of activities currently undertaken by schools is increasing and as the role of schools changes, it is inevitable that interactions between schools and the community will also increase.

Few activities are undertaken without some element of risk and even mundane activities can result in tragedy.

Critical and major incidents can come out of the blue with little or no warning. At such times there are great demands upon schools and the County Council for information and action. At times of stress *a planned response* will better prepare those responsible to respond to the challenges placed upon them.

This document provides guidance for school management teams and governors involved in incidents affecting the school. It offers advice on what to include in a school incident management plan which would guide the actions of those responsible in the event of an incident. The advice is general in nature and schools will need to adapt some sections for their specific needs. Additionally, there are resources available on the internet to guide schools in the formulation of their own plans; and many of these links are provided within this guidance.

The guidance has been updated throughout to reflect feedback received from Head Teachers and to include organisational changes within Essex County Council. Key changes include:

- Schools, Children & Families Emergency Duty Officer –to provide support to head teachers with the response to major incidents affecting the school that take place outside of normal office hours
- Easy reference 'Action cards' highlighting the key considerations for Head Teachers when managing the operational response to an emergency or critical incident

Business Continuity & Emergency Planning
Schools, Children & Families Directorate

June 2010

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1.0 Introduction

This document has been prepared by Essex County Council's Schools, Children & Families Directorate in conjunction with the County Council's Emergency Planning & Business Continuity Service , Risk Management Consultancy Service and external partner agencies. The document supersedes *Major incidents affecting schools*, which was last updated in 2006.

Essex County Council acknowledges in the appendices to this guidance, other sources that have been invaluable in drawing up this new document. We also acknowledge the assistance of other organisations, such as the media, which play a major part in communications when managing critical incidents.

1.1 *How to use this document*

The document has five sections;

Introduction – outlines the purpose and scope of the document and provides a working definition of a critical incident, as well as defining the roles and responsibilities of headteachers and governors.

Preparation – gives guidance on the establishment and use of supporting policies which may minimise the impact of a critical incident.

Action – contains the key actions that you should take in the event of a critical incident.

Contacts – lists the key contacts you may need when dealing with a critical incident. The lists should be supplemented with contacts specific to your school.

Support from the LA and other bodies – contains sources of support from the County Council and other bodies

Where possible, live hyperlinks have been provided to web-based documents or useful information.

1.2 **Purpose/Audience**

- To provide non-statutory guidance and model documentation for school and Children Support Centre senior managers and governing bodies on preparing to deal with emergencies (also referred to as 'critical incidents') affecting the school.
- To clarify the definition of a critical incident.
- To inform Headteachers, Children Support Centre managers and governors of the key County Council contact points and support services available in the event of a critical incident and to link to other sources of information and guidance.
- To provide a reference point for County Council staff, and relevant partner organisations, who need to be aware of the procedures commended to Essex schools.

1.3 **Scope**

- This guidance is relevant to all schools and Children Support Centres, and should be adapted to local circumstances. Also relevant to Foundation and Aided schools, where senior managers and governing bodies may need to make particular adaptations to the models to match their needs and status.
- Covers critical incidents on the school site, or in the local community and affecting the school; and off site, such as during school visits of all kinds.
- Covers incidents which can certainly be 'major' for an individual school (such as bereavement or severe structural damage to the buildings) but which do not normally fall into the emergency services' understanding of what constitutes a 'critical incident'.
- Includes strongly commended guidance on creating a School Incident Management Plan as the school's policy and practice document.

1.4 **Definition: critical incidents**

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/or Essex County Council and/or District Councils and/or other agencies.

Examples of critical incidents impacting on schools include:

- death or serious injury as a result of violence, accident, self-harm and/or sudden or traumatic illness;
- child protection incident (individual or collective abuse)
- events which result in higher than normal absences (e.g. infectious diseases such as influenza or meningitis)
- major fire;
- building collapse;
- riot and/or civil disorder;

- natural disaster such as flooding;
- terrorism;
- missing person(s)/abductions;
- intense media interest arising from incidents such as those listed above.

Such incidents can occur, for example:

- on the school site during school hours;
- on school transport;
- whilst the pupils are taking part in activities away from the school site;
- on school premises as part of after-school activities;
- within the local community involving pupils from the school.
- Within the vicinity of the school

1.5 The key role of the School Incident Management Plan

- On many occasions, incidents that involve bereavement, loss and/or trauma, or property damage can be effectively managed by a school through the implementation of a well-constructed **incident management plan**. This may involve the school accessing County Council or other outside services as required.

1.6 Roles and responsibilities within schools

- The Governing Body is responsible for ensuring that **appropriate policies and procedures** are created and maintained.
- The Headteacher/Principal/Head of Children Support Centre is considered to carry the **primary responsibility for the implementation of the governing body's school incident policy and procedures**. A deputy or assistant headteacher should be nominated to cover in the absence of the Head. In the case of school trips or other out-of-school activities, the adult(s) in charge should be **clearly identified in advance** to avoid any confusion in the event of an incident.
- It may be helpful to classify levels of responsibility using the emergency services' categories of Gold Command (the Leadership Team); Silver Command (for example, Middle management); and Bronze Command (all other staff). This helps to make it absolutely clear where the lines of command, reporting and accountability lie and is particularly valuable at times of potential major disruption to the normal running of the school.

2.0 Preparation

Schools may wish to consider the following opportunities for introducing **preventative measures and procedures** for dealing with incidents into their day-to-day running and into the school curriculum.

2.1 *School curriculum*

Schools will invariably have to tackle **sensitive issues** such as death, bereavement and serious injury and should not ideally have to address these issues for the first time following an incident of this nature. Addressing these issues in the curriculum will mean that pupils will have had some familiarity with them, even if only in the classroom. If young people have experience of dealing with such subjects within the curriculum they will not become shrouded in mystery and taboo. As with other sensitive issues it is often **helpful if parents and governors can be involved in the planning**.

Areas to consider looking at and reflecting on are life, death, bereavement and rites of passage within a multi-cultural and multi-faith framework using well chosen literature in RE, drama, history, humanities and sociology. Primary schools can include these in projects about self, health or families or through a Personal and Social or Citizenship programme.

In planning a programme, schools should be sensitive to

- helping teachers deal with these delicate issues and take into account their personal experiences; the pupils' backgrounds; having an informed understanding of the different cultural and religious attitudes to disability, disasters, death, bereavement, mourning and funerals;
- how different religions and cultures interpret the causes of disaster and explain the events;
- the atmosphere of support and trust amongst its pupils and the extent to which they would be able to talk and share their feelings.

2.2 *School security policy*

It is clearly always better to prevent incidents occurring. Effective school security systems should offer protection and enable ease of access to the school for pupils, staff, parents and visitors. Two areas to consider are

- **entry security** to prevent unwelcome visitors entering the school; and
- **out-of-hours security systems** to reduce the potential for arson damage and vandalism.
- **Visitor validation** - The statutory guidance states that individuals such as psychologists, nurses, dentists, centrally employed teachers, and other public sector staff will have been checked by their employing organisation, whether local

authority, Primary Care Trust, or Strategic Health Authority. It is not necessary for schools or FE colleges to see their CRB disclosure as appropriate checks will have been carried out. Schools and FE colleges will however want to check identity when an individual arrives to ensure that impostors do not gain access to children.

The **number of incidents on site** should be recorded to support the assessment of the level of security risks at school as part of the County Council's security strategy. This approach is detailed in Section 4.9 of the *Asset Management Plan Local Policy Statement (Statement of Priorities)* available on the [Essex Schools Infolink](#) (Service Areas – Capital Programmes – Asset Management Plan)

The DCSF publishes a variety of written and audio/visual material on its website dedicated to school security issues. The web address is <http://www.teachernet.gov.uk/wholeschool/healthandsafety/schoolsecurity/>

2.3 Behaviour policy

Schools will have an **agreed set of expectations** for behaviour and need to consider **codes of conduct** for all areas of the school and all activities undertaken by the pupils. This is particularly important where activities themselves are **potentially dangerous**, such as sport; or are taking place in areas of the school which pose **hazards**, such as laboratories and technology facilities.

Well-publicised tragedies have occurred during out-of-school activities. Before embarking on these activities, agreeing codes of behaviour with parents and participants before the event, and a full risk assessment, will help to reduce the potential for serious incidents. **Compliance with the County Council's codes of practice is essential.**

2.4 Planning for offsite & educational visits

All activity beyond the school / establishment gate organised by the establishment must be risk managed. It is essential that schools / establishments plan and deliver visits with significant risks mitigated, with an emergency / contingency plan in place as part of this.

All establishments / schools require a trained Educational Visits Coordinator (EVC), with all visits risk managed & planned in accordance with Code of Practice 28, *Safe Practice on Educational, Adventurous and Recreational Visits*. This would include having a specific Emergency Plan. Staff both on the visit and in support of it need to be trained and considered to be competent in its execution. The Emergency Plan will need to be appropriate to all the visits from within reach of the school, to expeditions overseas.

Every establishment must have a **generic Emergency Plan** for offsite visits that links into the school's Incident Management Plan. This plan is the responsibility of the EVC. This plan will need to include specific information covering -

- Standard documentation expected to be carried by visit leaders and emergency contacts including all relevant information (visit forms, briefing notes, contingency

plans)

- documentation covering such things as medical and parental consent, insurance, passports, Roadside Assistance, European Health Insurance cards and spare money and credit cards;
- Responsibilities and competence of 'emergency contacts'
 - This is usually through two 'Emergency Contacts' who must be contactable 24 hours a day, senior enough to co-ordinate support and near enough to go to the established base (e.g. within 1 hour travel).
- contact plans for parents and other staff who could assist
- immediate first aid and/or emergency services assistance;
 - Plus communication links with other groups on issues such as transport, accommodation, school and insurance company
- information on how to reach emergency support from ECC
- short- and medium-term welfare of staff and pupils involved including medical and home contact information
- record keeping and accident reporting procedures;
- an understanding of the establishment's insurance cover (e.g. staff, vehicle and offsite activities insurance)

Each plan should then be **specifically modified** to meet the needs of the particular visit reflecting the risk management by considering -

- the type of activity;
- the location of the visit and the transport method;
- the nature of the group of young people;
- staff competencies;
- the distance from support;
- specific foreseeable eventualities which may require possible changes to programme and consideration of actions such as repatriation

Thorough planning as well as preparation of all staff (head of establishment, EVC, leader, emergency contacts) may in fact help to head off some problems and head off others developing with early and effective action.

Note: There needs to be a plan for all visits beyond the gate of the establishment. This might be anything from a major expedition, to a temporary excursion. For the latter, there still needs to be an approach so that the leaders know what to do and that the school knows where the individuals are (even if the school office is shut because of a traffic jam, whilst the visit is on).

This might include an approach to make sure that it is clear which school is looking after a pupil that is working on more than one campus for an assignment. How do the schools

know where the child is? Who will support the child in the eventuality of an incident at either location?

Any plan should consider all eventualities from informing parents of a delayed flight to coping with a fatality. The plan should be flexible enough to cope with the full range of possibilities and link closely with the competencies of those carrying it out.

Where adventurous activities are involved or activities may be vulnerable to changes in weather etc it is essential that a 'Plan B' is prepared to ensure that leaders do not proceed with an activity in adverse conditions.

For certain visits such as remote and adventurous travel, the Emergency Plan will need to be considerably more detailed (and liaise closely with any external providers providing technical assistance) than that for local less hazardous visits.

Some tour operators and insurance companies offer some form of emergency assistance and this is often of a very high quality. In such circumstances the visit organiser should seek to use the service on offer and incorporate it into the visit planning

The EVC must be trained and is responsible for confirming that there is a suitable Emergency Plan in place for all visits.

- Additional guidance is issued by ECC in the training /updating of EVCs, in the training of visit leaders and is also available at <https://educationalvisits.essexcc.gov.uk/Reference.asp>
- A range of documentation is also available on the Teachernet web site. The Council largely endorses this documentation; however it should be noted that some details, are different; in which case the Council's codes of practice take precedence.
- The [County Educational Visits Adviser](#) monitors safety standards on educational visits and offers training and advice.

2.5 Health and Safety

Health and Safety should be an integral part of managing a school and the activities which take place as part of the Schools undertaking.

Every school should have a Health & Safety Policy which clearly sets out how Health & Safety is managed within the School and the responsibilities of all employees. Community and V/C Schools must adopt the *Health and Safety Policy for Schools* issued by the Schools Service. Foundation and V/A Schools are required to develop their own (using the template on the Health and Safety pages of the Schools Infolink if they wish). It is necessary for this to be accepted and signed by the Governing Body of the School.

Specific arrangements for managing health and safety include:

- Schools should ensure they follow the health and safety standards and generic assessments from the Health & Safety pages of the Schools infolink.
- Standards and generic assessments relate to curriculum and non-curriculum subjects, e.g. Drama, Science, Small Building Projects, Working at Height etc. Generic assessments are required to be completed with school specific / local procedures.
- Where generic risk assessments are not available the school must ensure that risk assessments are carried out, control measures identified and put in place and these are communicated to employees.
- It is important that health and safety is considered as part of the planning process for projects, lesson planning, events etc.
- A routine programme of testing and inspection of any plant, equipment or machinery must be in place. Standards on frequencies are on the Health & Safety pages of the Schools Infolink.
- Arrangements for health and safety monitoring should be in place including general inspections and hazard reporting procedures.

All schools should refer to the Health & Safety pages of the Schools Infolink – A to Z Managing Risk.

For further advice, contact the ECC Health & Safety Support Desk on 01245 436896.

2.6 Training

School staff experiences many pressures and demands on their time. However initial whole-staff training on the prevention, management and response to incidents will raise their awareness and understanding of these issues and what to do. Regular reminders and updates serve to keep the issues live and enhance the sensitivity of staff to preventative measures.

Training in how to deal with aggression, the school's security procedures, health and safety, risk assessment and how to cultivate a sense of self-awareness could all be considered.

Administrative staff in schools could receive training to help them respond quickly and efficiently to any crisis and to queries from distressed families.

2.7 Administrative support

In the event of a disaster, good administrative and back-up systems assist effective

management and ensure a fast response. Practical measures should include

- a **list of all pupils and staff**, with **next of kin contact details** held centrally at the school both on computer and hard copy, with back-up discs and **additional hard copy at an alternative site**, such as the home of a designated member of staff (Consideration must be given to **data and child protection issues** with regard to the security of personal information held at the home of staff members. While it is good administrative practice to have an off-site copy of the data, you should also consider the **security** of that data and the **rights of the individual** (the 'data subject') to know **why and how their data will be stored and used**);
- prompt **completion of registers** at the beginning of each morning and afternoon session. Names of **pupils who are late or who leave school early** should be recorded;
- an **inventory of equipment** held on site and a second copy retained at an alternative site. The inventory should be **regularly updated**;
- an **effective signing-in and -out procedure** for all visitors and volunteers in school;
- **emergency procedures** for all areas of the **school site**.

2.8 Pastoral support

Generally, schools have effective pastoral support policies and structures, which include strong links between pupils and class teachers/form tutors. Where these relationships are well developed and underpinned by a clear school ethos of care, trust and support, with strong links with parents and carers, management of crises is more effective.

In church schools, the local parish and the [Diocese](#) are also able to lend pastoral support following a crisis.

2.9 The School Incident Management Plan

Having a policy and procedures in place for dealing with critical incidents in school is one of the many aspects of risk management that are required of, or recommended to, schools.

The County Council strongly advises governing bodies to create and maintain a School Incident Management Plan. This will help to ensure that the kinds of preventative measures outlined in this section become embedded practice in school and that there is a clear point of reference for all members of the school community. The Plan will cover the areas set out in the previous section of this document and will include measures for dealing with critical incidents and incidents that can be managed entirely within the school. Points to bear in mind are:

- a) The governing body and senior managers should ensure that a plan is in place and that it **reflects good practice**, as set out in this document.
- b) Where a plan is already established, ensure that governors and senior management **review and update existing plans on a regular basis**. Ensure that the school's plan is included within a cycle of monitoring and evaluation as for other related plans such as Health and Safety.
- c) Consider identifying a governor to take **responsibility for overseeing the maintenance** of the school's plan, perhaps in conjunction with the member of the school's senior management who would deputise for the Headteacher in his or her absence:
- d) Ensure that the school's incident management plan, these guidelines and contact information are **accessible both during and after school hours and on and off the school site**.
- e) Ensure that **all school staff are aware** of the plan and how it is initiated. Include this information within the **induction process** for new staff.
- f) Ensure that a school **critical incident management team** (made up of senior staff and/or governors) is clearly identified with the following agreed roles and responsibilities:
 - lead responsibilities and **points of contact** for emergency services, media, insurance and outside agencies;
 - responsibility for **obtaining information and contacting** parents/carers and families of those involved;
 - **briefing and liaising** with staff, pupils and parents; making arrangements for pupil and staff **support**;
 - co-ordinating a **record of contacts and actions (Appendix 5 – Incident Log)**, managing telephone contacts and individuals coming into school; and
 - maintaining **normal running** of the school.
- g) Where these individuals, for whatever reason, are not available, identify who will **act in their place**.
- h) Consider **rehearsing** the school's plan for a number of incident scenarios: for example, during/after school hours, on/off site, part of/outside of school organised activities. How would the plan address an incident that involved an **evacuation** of the school site? You might use the opportunity to use a fire practice 'slot' to rehearse for a bomb threat, for instance.
- i) Identify how you would make arrangements for an **independent outgoing phone line**.
- j) Identify staff with **First Aid** qualifications.
- k) Consider utilising the **experience of other schools** within your locality when writing your plan. You could, for example, pool efforts to write one (with details such as named responsible adults adapted). It might also be possible to **share resources** in the event of an incident.

3.0 Action

These are the typical tasks and actions that a school may need to undertake to manage an incident. The school's plan should make it clear **who** will undertake each task (and, in their absence, who would **cover** for them) for a **range of possible scenarios** (such as during out of school hours, on/off site, part of/outside of school organised activities).

Person(s) with **lead responsibilities** within the plan should have **24-hour numbers** by which they can be contacted. These persons should then have 24-hour contact numbers for **all other individuals** named within the plan. The plan should contain **all the other appropriate contact numbers** that may be required (See [Contacts](#)) as well as a copy of these guidelines. It may also be appropriate to include an up-to-date **plan of the school site**.

It can be helpful to recognise that an incident typically consists of three phases – immediate actions, managed response and return to normality.

3.1 Phase 1 – Immediate actions

Actions 1 – 7 should be undertaken straight away; however the order in which these actions should be undertaken will be determined by the needs of the situation.

Action 1

Ensure the safety of all children and adults - assess continuing risk;

- Contact emergency services as appropriate.
- Enter in incident log all contacts made, actions taken and times.

Recording what has happened in a log of events with times and details of actions taken will be important for any subsequent inquiry which could range from an internal school/ECC inquiry to a formal inquiry with legal implications such as a Coroner's inquiry or an insurance claim.

Those involved may be required to give a statement to Police and/or attend court as a witness. The original contemporaneous record of events and actions is crucial in these circumstances.

- If off site, establish arrangements for reuniting children, adults and staff with their families.
- Determine that adults and staff involved in the incident are safe to drive or take public transport or whether they need collecting or transportation.

Action 2

Implement the School's Incident Management Plan

- Person(s) with lead responsibility to be released from all duties.
- Collect school's incident management plan and contact numbers.
- Open a log of events, actions and times.

- Establish an independent telephone line (for example: a mobile or borrowing a phone line in a nearby building).
- Inform associated schools that could be directly affected by an incident.

Action 3

Obtain information about the incident

- Obtain information about the exact nature of the incident, for example:
 - When and where incident occurred.
 - Names of children and adults involved in the incident including those who witnessed it.
 - Nature of any injuries/fatalities sustained.
 - Hospitals where injured have been taken.
 - Names of adults with injured children/adults.
 - Actions undertaken by emergency services, including arrangements for caring for children/adults who do not require hospital treatment.
 - Locations of the uninjured.
 - Remaining hazards at the scene.
- Collect relevant pupil/staff lists and contact numbers as appropriate.
- If telephone contact, note relevant number(s).
- Control the escape of inappropriate or inaccurate information via mobile or public phones from within the group.

Action 4

Contact key people (see [Contacts](#))

- Contact the [SCF Communications Team](#) at ECC and agree whether the Schools, Children & Families Service needs to initiate critical incident support and/or other actions as appropriate. The SCF Communications Team will then co-ordinate the other ECC support services as described below:
- Where notification of a critical incident is received from a school, the SCF Communications Team will establish what form of support is required immediately and what might be required in the near future (for example, the death of a pupil with a terminal illness might be imminent and the LA given advance notice that counselling support might be requested within the next few days).

This might typically involve any one, or a combination, of the following:

- the SCF Trauma Support team (counselling service for anyone within the school community);
- the ECC Media Team;

- on-site support from (for example):
 - a SCF senior officer;
 - an Emergency Planning officer;
 - a Health & Safety officer.
- Any ECC personnel visiting the site will agree with the Headteacher and/or the Chair of Governors or their representatives the duration and nature of the support required and this will be logged with the SCF Communications Team. The team will keep in touch with the school during, and immediately after, the incident, as appropriate, calling upon different forms of LA support on behalf of the school as the situation develops.
- The SCF Communications Team will follow up all such incidents to ensure that the support offered was appropriate to the school's needs
- Church of England Aided schools should also contact the [Chelmsford Diocesan Office](#) and Catholic schools should contact the [Brentwood Diocesan Office](#) in the event of an incident.

Out-of-hours incidents

- Alert the Childrens Social Care Emergency Duty Service for both serious situations affecting vulnerable children and adults and for other major incidents affecting the school, who will alert the appropriate contacts within the Directorate and elsewhere.

Action 5

Mobilise the school's incident management team

- Brief the school's Incident Management Team.
- Clarify tasks, make plans and assign roles.
- Set up timetable of meetings to review management of incident. A senior officer from the LA may be present – see Action 4.

Action 6

Contact families of pupils, adults and staff involved in the incident

- Designate key member(s) of staff to make contacts.
- Ensure that persons making contacts are fully briefed. (It may well be appropriate to rehearse and/or have written guidance as to what is to be said).
- Use the record of contacts to avoid confusion and distress through duplication of contacts and to ensure that no one is missed out.
- Establish and offer useful telephone numbers, either for support or for more information, such as emergency disaster number or hospital.

- Check that families/parents are not left alone in distress; suggest that they make contact with other relative/neighbours.
- Where appropriate, share the contact number of other families involved in incident where they have given permission for this.
- Where appropriate, give advice to parents and families (in line with the County Council's media advice) on responding to contacts from the media.
- Where appropriate, give information about arrangements for uniting or putting in contact children, adults and staff with their parents/families.
- Where a parent or family cannot be contacted, consider asking the Police or another professional to visit the home.

Guidance should be taken from the Police if the incident involves injury or death or if the incident is very serious but the full facts are not yet known.

It may be necessary, particularly in a small school, to enlist the help of the [ECC Human Resources \(Schools\) team](#), governors, local religious/community leaders, GPs, police and so on, if there are a large number of parents to be contacted and supported. Some families/parents may need to be brought to school to receive information about what has happened.

Action 7

Brief staff, governors, pupils, parents, religious leaders and other members of the school community

- Contact and brief chair of governors; request that he/she inform all other governors.
- Hold briefing meetings for all teaching and non-teaching staff; consider setting up a schedule to keep staff informed and updated (such as break times, beginning/end of day)
- Issue a prepared statement for all parents.

If a press statement is required, take advice from the County Council's Media Team ([Contacts](#)).

A prepared statement should give the known facts of the situation, initial actions that the school is taking and appropriate expressions of sympathy and concern.

- Inform all pupils in the most appropriate way.

Ensure that staff tasked with telling children are able to undertake this task. Make special arrangements to protect and support staff, adults and children who were close in any way to those affected.

- Identify pupils, adults and staff who are absent. Make appropriate arrangements for them to be briefed.

3.2 Phase 2 – Managed response

Action 8

Plan management of the incident (with identified ECC staff and other agencies as appropriate)

- Meet with the [senior](#) ECC officer(s), the school's Incident Management Team and other professionals as mobilised by the Schools, Children & Families critical incident arrangements and/or County Emergency Plan.
- Review plans, clarify tasks, assign roles and make further plans accordingly.
- Ensure that school and other agencies' actions are properly co-ordinated.
- Establish timetable of meetings to review the management of the incident.
- Clarify criteria for withdrawal of outside agencies at appropriate stage.
- Access further advice from the Emergency Services if required.

Action 9

Set up arrangements to deal with enquiries

- At the earliest opportunity, and certainly before speaking to any representative of the media, contact the County Council's [Media Team](#).
- Ensure that all media contacts are either directed to, or are dealt with in line with advice from, the County Council's [Media Team](#).

Names of those involved in the incident should not be released or confirmed to the media or other callers until the statutory authorities (such as the police) have confirmed the identity and the parents and families have been informed and have given permission.

- Consider providing those answering the phone with a written statement as to what it is appropriate for them to say (see notes on Action 7)
- Caution staff about talking to the media.
- Organise additional staff to deal with phone enquiries and people coming to the school as necessary.
- Designate separate areas for parents, media, staff and agencies managing the incident and others; avoid too many people in any one space.
- Ensure that an entry is made in the incident log of all important contacts.

Action 10

Make arrangements to support children and adults

- Identify those children, adults and staff who are most likely to be in need of support.

- Arrange for school staff/support agencies, including the [LA's Trauma Support Team \(part of SENCAN\)](#) to provide support. It is good practice to inform and/or seek consent from parents/carers where their child is to be involved with an outside agency.
- Ensure that pupils, adults, staff and parent/carers are aware of the support arrangements that school is making and how these are accessed.
- Consider setting aside and staffing an appropriate area for children who are becoming too distressed to continue with their lessons.
- Consider setting aside and staffing a further area for people coming into school who are distressed.
- In addition to the individuals directly affected, children and adults who are most likely to suffer distress as a consequence of an incident are those who:
 - are uninjured, but were at greatest risk;
 - directly witnessed death/injury/violence as part of the incident;
 - are siblings;
 - have any possible perceived culpability for what has happened however indirect or incorrect; (for example, those who may blame themselves and/or those who may be blamed by others)
 - are experiencing instability at home;
 - have learning difficulties;
 - have pre-existing emotional and behavioural/mental health difficulties;
 - are vulnerable due to cultural and/or language difficulties; or
 - have previously suffered bereavement or loss.
- Maintain normal school routines wherever possible.

If the school has to close, ensure all staff and parents are briefed on the arrangements for the collection of children. Supervise children being collected and make arrangements for those who are not able to be collected. Ensure that staff and parents are clear as to the arrangements for re-opening the school.

- Consider holding staff meeting with support agencies to discuss appropriate management strategies for distressed children.
- Plan how to manage distress that may be caused by ongoing police/legal proceedings and media attention.
- Give children permission individually and collectively to discuss what has happened and their reactions.

Deal sensitively with open expressions of distress. Allow children to discuss what has happened in lessons where they clearly wish to do this. Do not discourage them from talking.

- Consider putting on a special class session to give pupils information about the

grieving process and to enable them to talk through their experiences.

- Plan appropriate support for staff to enable them to cope with children's questions and discussion.
- Ensure that all staff including those co-ordinating the school's response do not neglect their own need for support.
- Schedule staff co-ordinating the school's response to be 'off duty'.
- Ensure staff are alert to physical and/or emotional change or any other signals of distress among staff as well as children.
- Refer staff, adults and, with parental consent, children to outside agencies for support.

Action 11

Make arrangements for personal effects, registers and area(s) of the school affected

- In discussion with parents/families, decide on what to do with the personal effects of the individuals who are critically ill or have died.
- Consider discussing with relevant class members what would be appropriate for work (including work as part of any displays), such as desks, books, or lockers belonging to individuals who have died or are critically ill.
- Make arrangements to adjust class registers, rotas and any other pupil listings accordingly.
- Make appropriate arrangements for the part of a school where the incident occurred.

3.3 Phase 3 – Return to normality

Action 12

Make arrangements for expressions of sympathy and/or acknowledgement of what has happened

- Make arrangements to express support/sympathy to families, children and adults who have been hurt or bereaved.
- Make arrangements to support the plans that the family may have for a memorial.
- Make plans for attendance at funerals. Find out if school representatives are welcome. Ensure that school representatives feel able to cope with these tasks.
- Make arrangements for someone from school to visit the injured in hospital or the bereaved at home.
- Consider sending cards and messages from children and staff to children, adults and staff affected.

- Consider organising a special assembly/service to acknowledge collectively what has happened and how the school is coming to terms with this. Consider involving local religious leaders. Consult with families of individual affected.
- Consider setting up an area in the school where writing, art work or other mementos can be dedicated to individuals affected.

Action 13

Plan for the return to school of those involved in the incident

- Home visit by an appropriate member of staff to discuss arrangements for return (such as visits or part-time attendance).*
- Planned support for emotional needs (such as how to cope with the comments and questions of other pupils or permission to remove themselves from lessons to go to an agreed place if they are becoming distressed).
- Support for possible physical needs (such as mobility difficulties, or disfigurements).
- Rota of home visits from school friends.
- Where appropriate, organise work to be sent home prior to return.
- Brief staff and children on how best to support individuals returning to school.
- Arrangements to differentiate work, for example: manage missed coursework; special arrangements for exams; also, adjust workloads for members of staff returning to school.

Action 14

Plan memorials and commemorations

- Consider an appropriate memorial, taking into account the wishes of those who were involved or bereaved (such as a special garden; tree; furniture; painting; sculpture; photograph; memorial prize).
- Appeals and donations are a complex area and advice should be sought from the British Red Cross.
- Discuss how to mark anniversaries, for example: commemorative service/assembly; concert; display.

* For reasons of safety and support it is recommended that staff making home visits do so in pairs

4.0 Support from the LA and other bodies

County Council roles and responsibilities

4.1 SCF Communications Team

The [SCF Communications Team](#) is the first point of contact for the school. Where another service receives a call for advice and/or assistance, this should be forwarded without delay to the SCF Communications Team.

The role of the SCF Communications Team includes -

- determining, in consultation with the school, whether an incident is critical;
- acting as the key contact between the school and Essex County Council services;
- advising the school on its actions.

Where an incident is deemed to be critical, the role extends to -

- mobilising and co-ordinating resources within ECC services as required;
- triggering ECC Emergency Planning as required;
- supporting / leading in the school's management of the incident.

Decision 1: In consultation with the school, the SCF Communications Team will determine whether the incident is of a nature that requires considerable support from LA and/or other sources.

The decision for determining whether an incident is deemed critical is based on the definition of a critical incident. This essentially involves making a judgement that the incident -

- constitutes a serious disruption;
- has arisen with little or no warning;
- is on a scale **beyond** the coping capacity of the school; and
- requires assistance from Emergency Services, and/or ECC and others.

Other factors which may be taken into account could include:

- the school's coping capacity being diminished because it is not operating under normal conditions;
- the experience of headteacher / management team;
- a combination of adverse circumstances.

If the incident is deemed not to be critical

The SCF Communications Team should advise the school on its actions as required. Arrangements should be made for the school to keep in regular contact with the SCF Communications Team so that the situation can be monitored and additional advice

provided as necessary. Depending on the unfolding of events, it may become necessary to deem the incident as critical at a later point in time.

If the incident is deemed to be critical

Decision 2: In consultation with the school, the SCF Communications Team will determine what additional resources are required and who will mobilise them accordingly.

Decision 3: In consultation with the school, the SCF Communications Team will determine whether the County Council Emergency Planning Team also needs to be involved.

The County Council Emergency Planning Team should become involved where an incident-

- is of a large scale magnitude, for example involving large numbers of people; covers a wide geographical area beyond the school; or affects a number of schools; and/or
- requires a co-ordinated response between emergency services; and/or
- requires additional resources beyond those available to the ECC services already supporting and advising the school.

Decision 4: To decide who will take overall control of the school's management of the critical incident.

Decision 5: In consultation with the school, the SCF Communications Team will determine whether the ECC Insurance Service should be involved.

The ECC Insurance Service should become involved where an incident –

- requires assistance from an insurance professional;
- has caused major damage to premises; and/or
- involves damage to the building which has caused major disruption to the school's activities.

Decision 6: To decide whether the SCF Communications Manager or another senior LA officer should go directly to the school or temporarily stay in place and co-ordinate the additional resources from County Hall.

4.2 LA Trauma Support Service

The Special Educational Needs & Children with Additional Needs Service (SENCAN) has experienced and trained professionals who can respond rapidly with support during and following incidents in schools.

Aims

To provide a service that enables a school and school community to cope and come to

terms with the emotional and psychological impact of a critical or major incident and its consequent effects through

- normalisation – helping those involved realise that their physical, mental and emotional responses are entirely normal and that it is the incident that is abnormal;
- reduction of tension through the airing of feelings;
- cognitive organisation – making sense of the experience and incorporating it into the frame of reference and meaning with which they understand themselves in the world; and
- validating and enhancing existing ways of coping/mobilising inner resources to develop new ways of coping.

The work of the support agencies should be seen as supporting and complementing, rather than replacing, the work of school based staff.

Protocol

1. Following a decision between the school and the [SCF Communications Team](#) that a critical incident has occurred, the SCF Communications Team will inform the Principal Educational Psychologist or County Senior Ed Psych for Mental Health & Emotional Well-being and in the event of their absence admin at county hall will get in touch with the relevant Senior CAMHS EP for the area.
2. The Principal Educational Psychologist (or senior manager) will initiate the SENCAN protocol on dealing with critical and major incidents in schools and appoint a lead officer.
3. The lead officer will require the following information from the school or SCF Communications Team. The name and contact details for the person(s) co-ordinating the school response.
 - Information about the critical incident.
 - Details of the school's incident management plan (in the case of a critical incident) and actions that the school has already taken.
 - Other agencies that are involved and their actions to date.
4. The lead officer will agree with the Principal Educational Psychologist the tasks, personnel and time scales for input into school.
5. The Principal Educational Psychologist will then liaise with the relevant senior managers, who will arrange cover for team members in consultation with their professional line managers.
6. The lead officer will then agree tasks, personnel and time scales with the school. This will be subject to review with the person(s) co-ordinating the school response.

Tasks that SENCAN could undertake:

- Advice to the person(s) co-ordinating the school response on appropriate actions

at individual, group and/or whole school levels for managing trauma, stress and bereavement reactions amongst children, their families and school staff.

- Advice to school staff and parents on appropriate actions for managing trauma, stress and bereavement reactions amongst children and also with regard to themselves, colleagues and/or other family members.
- Liaison and support for pupils, families and wider community and also to provide access and support in terms of language and culture.
- Individual and group support and counselling for children and adults who have identified themselves or who have been identified as requiring support.

4.3 Capital Programme & Building Development Service (CP&BD)

The SCF Communications Team will inform CP&BD and Facilities Management of any incident that results in the school or any part of the school being taken out of use.

Role and responsibilities

The role of CP&BD includes

- liaison as appropriate with all emergency services;
- co-ordination with Essex Property and Facilities to undertake a damage assessment;
- mobilising and co-ordinating resources within ECC services as required;
- involving school officers and governors; and
- involving Diocesan officers as necessary in the case of an aided school.

In liaison with the SCF Communications Team and the school, CP&BD will advise on the following:-

Decision 1:

Whether the school can continue / resume use of the premises with the minimum amount of disruption.

Action: CP&BD will work with the school and County Asset Management to ensure that the premises are safe and fit for use.

Decision 2:

Whether the school can use only part of the premises or the premises are totally unusable.

Action: Liaising with SCF Planning and Admissions, CP&BD will take the appropriate action to ensure that alternative accommodation is provided as soon as possible.

4.4 ECC Emergency Planning & Business Continuity Team

The [County Council Emergency Planning & Business Continuity Team](#) is responsible for preparing emergency plans to enable the County Council and District and Borough Councils to respond to an emergency. Plans are made in conjunction with the emergency services, industry, and the utilities and voluntary organisations; and training events and exercises are also held.

The team provides round-the-clock emergency cover, to receive notification of emergencies and to activate and co-ordinate an effective response. This operates 24 hours a day, 365 days a year.

The Emergency Planning Team maintains a comprehensive list of the organisations and individuals with whom contact may be needed in the event of an emergency, for example:

- providers of food, transport and equipment;
- environmental and industrial organisations;
- utilities (gas, water, electricity, telecommunications);
- government agencies.;
- voluntary bodies such as WRVS and British Red Cross.

One of the Emergency Planning Team's roles is to make plans for events where there are large crowds. The team also works closely with industry to prepare off-site emergency plans to mitigate the effects of a major industrial accident.

The Emergency Planning Team can provide assistance during all phases of an incident.

4.5 ECC Human Resource Service

If, as a result of a critical incident, a headteacher or governing body feels that further action is required in respect of an employee who may not have followed the agreed policies and procedures already mentioned in this document, they may wish to consider invoking a disciplinary investigation. In these circumstances, the school should refer to the appropriate human resources policy adopted by their governing body and seek the advice of their human resources service (either within the County Council - [HR \(Schools\) Advice & Support](#) - or elsewhere).

4.6 ECC Media Team

In a crisis it is inevitable that the school will be contacted by the media. This can be seen to be insensitive and uncaring by school staff, but it is a part of any journalist's job.

Obviously the scale of media interest will depend on the scale of the crisis itself - it could range from two/three phone calls to a number of television crews turning up at the school

gates, demanding interviews with the headteacher and parents.

The [ECC Media Team](#) can field media calls, and issue statements on behalf of the school. (Those statements having been agreed beforehand with the headteacher/deputy or chair of governors).

If there is intense media interest, media relations officers will also visit and handle press queries on site.

In the case of an aided or controlled church school the Media Team will liaise with the [Diocese](#) over press statements whenever possible.

4.7 ECC Risk Management Consultancy Service - Health & Safety

The Council's Risk Management Consultancy Service Health and Safety Team sets standards and provides professional advice and guidance to schools on any matters concerning the health and safety of staff, pupils, volunteers or visitors.

Headteachers need to report any incident involving employees and non-employees i.e. pupils, visitors, members of the public using the online reporting form (Community and V/C Schools only. Foundation and V/A Schools must record and keep on record in the School). Further guidance on the types of incidents that need to be reported can be found in the Incident Reporting Procedure on the Health & Safety pages of the Schools Infolink.

In addition to this certain incidents, such as death or major injury as a result of an accident, will require immediate reporting to the Health and Safety Executive under the Reporting of Injuries, Diseases and Dangerous Occurrences Regulations (RIDDOR). Guidance on incident reporting including RIDDOR can be found on the [Essex Schools Infolink](#) site under the Health and Safety A-Z Managing Risks, I for Incident Reporting.

During office hours the Health and Safety Team can be contacted on 01245 436896 for any health and safety queries, including if an incident needs to be reported.

Out of normal office hours the County Risk Management Consultancy Service Health and safety Team can be contacted through the [Emergency Planning Team](#) which maintains a list of 24-hour contact numbers.

4.8 ECC Insurance Services

Risk Management Consultancy Services manage all aspects of insurance and risk management and will provide a full service of advice, assistance and support to schools concerning all aspects of insurance and risk management to those schools that wish to Procure their Insurance via Risk Management Consultancy Services;

- liaise with schools, insurers, advisers, solicitors and others to provide an efficient day

to day service;

- ensure that all areas of risk are adequately covered and limits of indemnity are reasonable in line with current trends;
- provide governors and staff with information and assistance to reduce the need for their budget and resources to be used unnecessarily for insurance and risk management purposes;
- process all claims and enter into correspondence, with the help of Essex Legal Services where appropriate, with claimants and their legal representatives as appropriate;
- handle all insurance-related County Court Summons and legal requirements within appropriate fixed timescales with assistance from Insurers and Essex Legal services;
- reduce the impact and disruption to schools should the premises suffer serious damage or be rendered unusable, by immediately enlisting the attendance of suitable professionals;
- With the help of Essex Legal Services obtain all documents to defend a claim within the set legal time limits; and
- provide assistance to insurers and solicitors to enable a claim to be properly defended.

4.9 Support from the Dioceses

- If the school is an aided church school and there are buildings issues, a [Diocesan representative](#) will be involved in the earliest planning meetings.
- The Diocese will be available to provide pastoral support if requested by the school.
- The Diocese may produce a press statement, ideally in liaison with any statements produced by the [ECC Media Team](#).

5.0 Monitoring incidents and evaluating response

Internal monitoring and evaluation

After managing an incident, it is good practice to review the procedures and update or amend the Incident Management Plan in the light of experience and lessons learned. However, it is always worth remembering that no two incidents are the same and that only general conclusions can be drawn.

ECC monitoring

It is very useful for the County Council to build up a bank of experience and knowledge from schools from which we are able to draw examples of good practice. We therefore request that, when drawing up an Incident Management Plan, schools not only reflect on and review their own practice but also provide the Schools, Children & Families Directorate SCF Communications Team with details of any incident which necessitated the implementation of the Incident Management Plan. This would serve a number of purposes:

- As an evaluation of the effectiveness of the Council's published guidance.
- To record the experiences of schools to build up a bank of good practice that can be used in the future to make responses more efficient and effective.

To enable a school to be put into contact with another that has already dealt with a similar incident for mutual support and advice.

- To evaluate the responsiveness and effectiveness of LA support, if accessed.

Appendix 1

Emergency Contacts at Essex County Council

SCF Communications Team		01245 436242
Office hours 09.00 – 17.00	Office	01245 436188
		01245 437278

Children’s Social Care Emergency Duty Service		
- for serious situations affecting vulnerable children and adults outside of normal office hours.	Office	0845 606 1212
- for major incidents affecting the school that take place outside of normal office hours		

Other Useful Numbers

ECC Emergency Planning

Emergency Planning Officer	Office	01245 430378
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County Media

Senior Press Officer	Office	01245 430650 01245 430394
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ECC Risk Management Consultancy Service - Health & Safety

Health & Safety Support Line	Office	01245 436896
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Human Resources

HR (Schools) Service Advice & Support	Office	01245 436120
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Educational Visits

County Educational Visits Adviser	Office	01245 430925
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County Insurance Service

Principal Risk and Insurance Manager	Office	01245 431482
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Diocesan Contacts

Church of England schools	Office	01245 294440
	Home	01245 251461
Catholic schools	Office	01277 265284
	Home	01245 495276
	Mobile	07885 144213

Appendix 2

References (websites)

The following list includes the full website addresses (URLs) that sit behind hyperlinks in this document: Space is left for you to add any additional sites of which you may be aware.

Essex Schools Infolink (home page)	http://esi.essexcc.gov.uk
Essex educational visits guidance	https://educationalvisits.essexcc.gov.uk/default.asp
Teachernet (home page, then search for educational visits guidance)	www.teachernet.gov.uk
Essex County Council (home page)	www.essex.gov.uk
Essex pandemic 'flu guidance	http://esi.essexcc.gov.uk/vip8/si/esi/content/binaries/documents/Advice_and_Guidance/Pandemicfluguidance_Aug06.doc
Bereavement advice and support	http://www.dh.gov.uk/dr_consum_dh/groups/dh_digital_assets/@dh/@en/documents/digitalasset/dh_092247.pdf

Appendix 3

Flood planning

There are some very simple steps that can be taken to develop self preparedness for your location.

Step 1: Find out if your location is at risk of flooding by checking on the Environment Agency website, www.environment-agency.gov.uk, and enter the postcode for your location.

If you are at risk of flooding:

Step 2: You should register for free on the Environment Agency's Floodline Warning Direct by calling 0845 988 1188.

Step 3: Understand what the flood warning codes are and what the implications are for your location.

Flood Watch: Flooding of low lying land and road is expected.

Be aware. Be prepared. Watch out!

Flood Warning: Flooding of homes and business is expected. Act now!

Severe Flood Warning: Severe Flooding is expected. There is extreme danger to life and property. Act now!

All Clear: No further is expected. Water levels will start to go down.

Step 4: Check with your District Council, Borough Council or Unitary Authority to find out what their "Sandbag Policy" is, as this varies between local authorities.

Step 5: Investigate purchase of flood mitigation equipment. This is not just a case of buying sandbags. There are many different types of flood protection products available. However it is not one size fits all and a serious degree of investigation is required to ensure you purchase the most appropriate product for your location and type of flood risk. For example if you are at risk of flooding from sea water, some of the polymer filled bags do not inflate in salty water. A good source of information is an independent organisation, The National Flood Forum, who produce "The Blue Pages", a directory of flood product suppliers. www.floodforum.org.uk and follow the links to Blue Pages.

Step 6: Check your insurance, and confirm what you are actually covered for.

Step 7: Make a list of important telephone numbers. You may well already have such a document to cover other emergency such as evacuation due to fire.

- Step 8:** Know where and how to turn off your utilities, electricity, gas and water supplies.
- Step 9:** Store valuable, sentimental or important documents and objects out of the reach of flood water.
- Step 10:** Consider vehicles you may have parked, whether those of staff, visitors or business vehicles and where they could be re-located to in the event of a flood.
- Step 11:** Prepare an emergency kit suitable to your location. Ensure it contains 1st aid kit, torch, battery, rubber gloves, buckets, whistle other appropriate items for the purposes of your location.
- Step 12:** Follow advice given by Local Authority and / or Emergency Services.
- Step 13:** Monitor information being given via the media, local television and local radio. This will be the main way information will be passed out to the community.
- Step 14:** Monitor local weather forecasts to develop understanding of how intense periods of rainfall, or extreme tides may affect your location.
- Step 15:** Ensure there is sufficient drainage from hard standing areas. To help protect buildings during short intense periods of rainfall.
- Step 16:** Don't forget to consider the school pets. Move outdoor pets, such as rabbits and guinea pigs, indoors to a garage or shed. Keep all domestic pets indoors and upstairs, if necessary. Plan to take these animals away from the school during the flooding event. For further advice of animal welfare during flooding visit www.rspca.org.uk

During a Flood

Flood can kill! Stay in a safe place.

Avoid contact with flood water, it will be contaminated.

Don't walk on sea defences, river banks or cross river bridges, they may collapse.

Don't walk, swim or drive through floodwater. There may be hazards such as missing manhole covers or underwater obstructions. Flowing, ankle deep water is enough to knock a person off their feet.

Only use 999 if you believe there is risk to life.

Do not try to return to your location unless you have been told it is safe to do so.

After a Flood

Call your insurance company

Contact your utility suppliers to arrange re-connections.

Investigate alternative accommodation if your location is un-useable.

Keep a record of flood damaged property.

Don't eat fruit or veg that may have been growing in the school veggie patch, (if you have one).

Open doors and windows to help ventilate your building/s.

Don't attempt to start repairs until the flood is over.

Monitor the weather forecasts.

If you are not at risk of flooding.....

Check to see if your location will be come isolated on high ground.

Check to ensure your access and egress routes will remain clear and not become flooded.

Some thoughts and ideas.....

During the next Fire Drill, consider how this would work if you have just received a flood warning and advice to evacuate your location?

1. Who do you need to contact?
2. Where would the students go?
3. How do you contact the parents? Telephone lines may be down.
4. How do you continue the education of those students affected? The flooding event may be quite protracted, with a long recovery phase.
5. What if this occurred during the exam season?

Many of these points are probably already covered under your Fire Plan or similar document. However, it's a good idea to apply these considerations to a flooding scenario.

For more information on how to prepare for and respond to flooding events visit the Environment Agency website www.environment-agency.gov.uk

Appendix 4

Pandemic 'flu planning

The latest guidance on national and local arrangements for managing an outbreak of pandemic 'flu may be found on the [Essex Schools Infolink](http://esi.essexcc.gov.uk) (<http://esi.essexcc.gov.uk>).

The location from the home page is **Advice & Guidance / 'F' / 'Flu (pandemic)'** but the above link will take you straight to it.

Appendix 5

Incident Log

Note: Copies of this template should be made so that the log sheets are ready for use if required.

Incident:

Location of Incident:

Date:

Time:

Maintain a log below of your actions taken as the incident progresses.

Date	Time	Event / Action Taken	Reason(s)
Please attach any emails sent and received			

Name:

Signature:

Date:

Appendix 6
Action Cards

Phase 1 Immediate Actions

Phase 2 Managed Response

Phase 3 Return To Normality