

# CRITICAL INCIDENT POLICY

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Approved by (Name, date, signature)



Executive Board Chair, David Kreyling  
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# CRITICAL INCIDENT POLICY

## MISSION

We believe in investing in people. As professionals in the teaching and training professions, we strive to provide a better future for the children, young people and home settings we work with. Success for us means unleashing the potential of each individual so they can grow, develop and reach the potential of which they are capable. Our values are grounded in our determination to be the change we want to see in the world, through passion, commitment and integrity. We strive to plant a seed of kindness and compassion in a generation that will produce resilience and hope and enable them to aspire and achieve productive and fulfilled lives. Our success is measured in the lives we changed.

At the Omnia Foundation, we create a secure and safe environment that encourages communication, self-belief, mutual respect and success. We provide a rich and balanced curriculum that develops every child, allowing them to achieve their true potential.

## Aims of the policy:

- to ensure that all staff are aware of how critical incidents should be reported, investigated and recorded
- to provide information to home settings on how the foundation manages critical incidents#
- to ensure that accounts are taken from all parties involved in and witness to a critical incident
- to ensure that all information relevant to the incident is recorded accurately and in a timely manner, allowing for processing and recollection of detail
- to ensure that the wellbeing of all parties involved in a critical incident are the highest priority
- to ensure that accounts of the incident are corroborated robustly
- to ensure that notes of all meetings and communications, digital or in person, including but not limited to debriefs and the taking of statements, are recorded accurately and with times and dates

This policy should be read in conjunction with the Me, Myself and I Policy, Rights & Responsibilities Policy, Use of Physical Intervention Policy and Child Protection Policy.

## Definition of a critical incident

The foundation acknowledges that due to the needs of the students in its care, the environment is high risk and that from time to time, staff may be unsuccessful in their efforts to deescalate situations.

For the purposes of this policy, a critical incident is defined as “any internal incident where the effectiveness of the foundation response is likely to have a significant impact on the confidence of the parties involved, their home settings and the community.”

This is separate from and unrelated to the foundation’s Emergency Management Plan (Business Continuity Plan), where the influences on foundation operations are external and beyond the control of the organisation.

## Types of critical incident and their definitions

As a general guide, a critical incident would be a situation in which an individual’s dangerous responses and reactions may result in the personal safety of those involved being seriously compromised:

Level 1 – Physical Assault

Level 2 – Absconding

Level 3 – Significant Damage to Property

Level 4 – Serious self-harm, on or off-site

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## Protocol for reporting, investigating & reporting a critical incident

1. Once the situation has been made safe, the incident must be reported to either the Head of Foundation or the Chief Operating Officer.
2. This member of staff will now be the Lead Investigating Safeguarding Officer (“the LISO”).
3. Based on the initial accounts of the principal agents involved in the incident, the LISO will make a decision as to whether or not the event can be regarded as a critical incident or not. If they are satisfied that the incident warrants investigation as opposed to an evaluation of practice, the LISO will declare a critical incident.

ONLY THE LISO HAS THE AUTHORITY TO DECLARE A CRITICAL INCIDENT.

4. The LISO will then take the following actions AS A MATTER OF URGENCY
  - a. contact home settings to advise them that there has been a critical incident, the nature of the incident and how it will be investigated. Further details will be communicated as soon as possible to home settings as and when they become available. All telephone conversations must be followed up with an email confirming what was discussed on the phone.
  - b. open a Critical Incident Log pro forma for the incident, which is stored on the drive (see Appendix I)
  - c. open an incident on CPOMS under the identified student(s)' names with the following text:
    - i. A critical incident took place today at (give time) involving (give names) and was reported to me by (enter name). I will be undertaking a full investigation and the outcomes and associated documentation will be uploaded in due course and attached to this file
5. Once the above files have been opened, the LISO will
  - a. ask the principal agents to make a note of their initial accounts
  - b. conduct interviews with and take statements from all involved: students as participants or eye-witnesses and staff as participants or eye-witnesses. All statements must ultimately be recorded on headed paper, dated and signed by the person giving the statement as an accurate account. These will be stored with the Critical Incident Log in a folder on the drive
  - c. ensure that all first aid and initial wellbeing checks for students and staff have been carried out, recorded appropriately and the records uploaded into the relevant critical incident file
  - d. co-ordinate debriefs with students and staff, evaluating with all involved what went well and what could have been done better. This may be delegated to another member of staff who was not involved in the incident. A summary of the debriefs and the outcomes must be recorded on headed paper, dated and stored in the incident file
  - e. ensure that a comprehensive plan, with an emphasis on timely restorative work and wellbeing, is put in place which addresses both the short term and long term needs of the:  
student (subject), student (object), student (witnesses), staff (object), staff (witnesses)  
The staff/services delivering the resulting interventions should be identified by name in the plan.
6. In light of the debriefs, the LISO will ensure that all appertaining paperwork, eg policies, procedures and RRP's are amended by the relevant person/people. The LISO may also make the decision at this point to stand down from a critical incident.
7. Follow-up actions, including reviews of paperwork, communication with home settings or board members, brief details of educational and protective consequences implemented must be recorded briefly on the Critical Incident Log
8. The LISO will determine when the incident can close. A note must be made regarding the delivery of the relevant interventions and their impact, whether the student has shown remorse and a brief mention of plans going forward. The Critical Incident Log should then be uploaded to CPOMS as an attachment to the original file.

## Initial Accounts

An initial account will constitute the principal agents' immediate recollections of what happened and will later be followed up with a formal interview. It is important to preserve the authenticity of the details around the incident but the foundation recognises that staff perceptions may be distorted during the incident and for a period of time following the incident. It is important to allow time between those initial accounts and the taking of the formal statement in order for processing to take place.

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## Perceptual Distortion

The foundation acknowledges that during a critical incident, staff will be under pressure and stress to ensure the safety of the students and staff is preserved. For this reason, it may be that their perception of time and space is affected, for example, they may not recall how long something lasted or how close another person was to them. This is completely typical in a stressful situation and so it is important to reassure students and staff that they may not remember everything that happened in the right order and that is why their accounts are corroborated against each other to ascertain the clearest picture of what happened.

## Debrief

A debrief is important with all staff following a critical incident in order to evaluate what could have been done better to manage the situation. The timing of the debrief will be determined by the LISO as other factors will need to be taken into consideration: whilst it is important to preserve the authenticity of the information noted in first-hand accounts, and to do this means swift action, there may be some circumstances where it is more important to address the wellbeing and welfare of students and staff involved. Also depending on the timing of the incident, eg if it happens towards the end of the day, there may not be enough to hold a debrief and plan for the welfare of those involved. In these circumstances, the wellbeing concerns must take precedence.

## Confidentiality

It is vital that staff and students do not discuss details about the incident with each other until the incident is declared concluded. This is to preserve the authenticity of the accounts and to ensure that staff or students do not unduly influence the accounts of others. This applies to home settings also.

## Involvement of police or other emergency services

The foundation acknowledges that there are times when it will be necessary to call the police to deal with an incident. However, this must only be used as a last resort for the following reasons:

1. It is essential that the students trust staff to manage incidents such as these. Unless the situation becomes an imminent viable threat of severe injury or severe damage, staff are urged to remain calm at all times, to hold their own zone, unless expressly requested to support and to reassure students that they have everything under control
2. Some students have a negative experience of the police and involving them may only serve to exacerbate an already volatile situation

Depending on the severity of an injury, the LISO may decide that it is appropriate to call an ambulance or take a member of staff or student to hospital.

All actions relating to the emergency services must be recorded and shared with home settings at the earliest opportunity.

## Monitoring & evaluation

This policy will be monitored regularly by the Executive Board and reviewed by the Chief Operating Officer every year.

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## Appendix I

### Critical Incident Log

Name of Student(s)

Date of incident:

Incident type:

- Level 1 - physical assault
- Level 2 - absconding
- Level 3 - significant damage to property
- Level 4 - serious self-harm, on or off-site

Name of person reporting the incident

Name of Lead Investigating Safeguarding Officer

Other staff/students/adults involved (participants or witnesses)

Brief description of incident

Actions taken by Investigating Safeguarding Lead

Follow up actions

Additional comments/closure of incident

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