

Safeguarding and Welfare Requirement: Health

Providers must have and implement a policy, and procedures, for handling critical incidents.

6.8 Critical Incident

Policy statement

Procedures need to be drawn up, agreed and followed in order that children and staff are kept safe and protected in the event of a critical incident occurring in the setting.

Definition

A critical incident is a traumatic incident that could result in death or near death of a child or staff member. Services for Young Children (SfYC) will need to be notified as soon as possible for support in contacting all the necessary agencies that need to be informed of the incident, as well as providing the children and staff at the setting with the most appropriate support.

Procedures

Should a critical incident occur, the manager will take the lead to undertake the following actions:

- contact the emergency services
- contact the child's family
- manage and reassure the other children
- contact the owner/chairperson
- contact the local SfYC office for support and advice
- agree what to say and contact all parents
- agree what to say (with support of the SfYC local office who can seek advice from experienced press officers) and speak to the media to ensure consistency if necessary.

Actions following the incident

- inform Ofsted
- inform our Local Social Care – 0845 603 5620
- inform insurance company
- update the local SfYC office
- update and debrief the staff team

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- write a report (using clear and specific language and details)
- review our procedures to see if we can learn anything from the incident
- consider counselling as necessary – our insurance company or local doctor's surgery may provide this, and our SfYC team may also be able to support us.

Dealing with a child's death that occurs outside of the setting

In the sad event of the setting being notified of a child's death there can be ongoing actions and issues that need to be addressed. These can include distress for staff, children and parents; Social Care or Police investigations; dealing with high media interest as well as long-term training needs for staff.

There is no need to contact Ofsted or Social Care. If there are concerns that this incident is a child protection issue we follow our child protection policy and procedures.

Actions following the incident

- inform our local SfYC office for support
- consider counselling for our staff as above
- if we are required to give a statement to the media, our local SfYC office can provide access to an experienced press officer who will be able to offer advice and guidance. Agree what to say with the staff so that they all give the same information to ensure consistency.
- contact all parents to ensure that they hear about the incident directly from us and try to ensure that they are given the same information. Our local SfYC office will be able to offer advice and guidance.

Further guidance

- Hampshire County Council SfYC

This policy was adopted at a meeting of _____ *(name of provider)*
Held on _____ *(date)*
Date to be reviewed _____ *(date)*
Signed on behalf of the provider _____
Name of signatory _____
Role of signatory (e.g. chair, director or owner) _____