



## School Critical Incident: Immediate Actions Checklist

The initial response to a critical incident by the senior team in school can be fundamental to the overall incident response and damage limitation. The following checklist can be used within a school critical incident plan to provide a generic list of actions for the incident team leader to follow.

These initial actions work best when supported by a series of considerations specific to the most likely incidents you could face, such as: serious injury, fatality, RTC, safeguarding failure, site security breach, fire/flood, overseas visit, missing person, data protection breach, and others specific to your setting.

For assistance from Pharos Response to draft a new or review your existing emergency plan, please contact the Pharos team at: [info@pharos-response.co.uk](mailto:info@pharos-response.co.uk) or 01183 800 140.  
[www.pharos-response.co.uk](http://www.pharos-response.co.uk)

<i>Initial actions checklist</i>	Tick
Take immediate steps to safeguard people involved. Confirm first aid provided and emergency services called. Assign staff to escort emergency services to the scene, ensure medical information for casualties is passed on.	
Confirm no other staff/pupils at immediate risk. Decide whether to stay in location, move to a safer location, lockdown or evacuate. Any other immediate actions to help contain the situation / ensure safety of others?	
Establish initial <i>confirmed</i> facts: what happened, where, what time, who is involved, injuries. If not obvious, is there any indication of the likely cause of the incident?	
Brief school incident management team members, identify as 'critical incident' and form the team. Would other colleagues' specific/technical knowledge be useful (HR, IT, finance etc)?	
Establish initial communications: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Confirm the last update received and when the next communication is due.</li> <li>• How updates will be received by the team from the incident scene. Establish contact protocols.</li> <li>• Confirm correct contact details for those at the scene. Consider mobile battery / access to charging.</li> <li>• Brief school reception/admin/site staff and others who may receive inbound calls or visitors on-site.</li> </ul>	
Severity assessment: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Assess the severity of confirmed or potential injuries/allegations/issues.</li> <li>• Could the incident have resulted from an actual or perceived failing connected to the school?</li> <li>• Assess the likelihood of negative press / social media - how 'newsworthy' might this be?</li> <li>• Incident escalation assessment: could the situation realistically get worse and if so, how?</li> </ul>	
Initial internal resources: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Should a member of staff be deployed to the scene to provide support? Who?</li> <li>• What assistance is available? First aid/nurse, counsellor, legal, employee helpline.</li> <li>• Consider providing dedicated numbers for inbound parent and press calls to keep main lines clear.</li> <li>• Designate a critical incident meeting room; a press holding/interview area; a parent briefing area.</li> </ul>	
External resources - what other resources might be available? Emergency services, FCDO; police Safer Neighbourhood Team; trip provider, transport operator, insurers, Local Authority / other schools. Assign single points of contact as necessary.	
Assess and consider the relative benefits of closing school / returning from the trip early.	
Are next of kin aware? If not, plan to do so. (NOTE: Emergency services would usually notify of any fatalities)	
Draft initial holding statement - not for release without authority from the incident team leader.	
Confirm that pupils / staff have been instructed not to post on social media, explaining reasons why Establish incident social media monitoring. Social media channels to point to any published statement.	
Start an incident log capturing all events, communications and key decisions.	