HEARTWOOD
LEARNING TRUST

LEADERSHIP GUIDANCE

CRITICAL INCIDENT REPORTING

A practical guide for Principals and senior leaders

RESPOND | REPORT | RECORD | UPDATE

Clear action and timely Trust oversight

HEARTWOOD LEARNING TRUST

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What Principals and Senior Leaders need to know

Critical incidents require immediate school action and prompt Trust notification.

The core requirement

Respond to the immediate risk, report to the correct Trust lead, record the incident on CPOMS and provide updates.

All schools must report and record critical incidents promptly. This allows the Trust to maintain appropriate oversight, provide support and make sure that any required safeguarding or operational action is taken.

The main requirement is to respond to the immediate risk, report the incident to either the Director of Safeguarding or Deputy Chief Executive Officer (Determined by the table in Annex A) , record it on CPOMS and provide updates.

Why Trust-level monitoring matters

- understand the nature and seriousness of an incident
- provide timely advice and support
- coordinate the response where several services or agencies are involved
- identify risks that may affect other schools
- monitor recurring concerns and emerging patterns
- support affected pupils, families and employees
- identify learning and improvements to practice
- Responsibilities of the Principal

Your immediate responsibilities

- Take immediate action to protect pupils, employees and others from harm.
- Contact the emergency services or relevant external agencies where required.
- Report the incident immediately to the respective Trust lead, either the Director of Safeguarding or the Deputy Chief Executive Officer, depending on the nature of the incident.
- Record the incident on CPOMS using the appropriate Critical Incident Area category.
- Make sure the record is clear, factual and completed as soon as reasonably possible.
- Provide further updates when new information becomes available or the level of risk changes.

Principals must not delay reporting while waiting for every fact to be established. The initial record can be updated when further verified information becomes available.

If there is uncertainty about whether an incident meets the critical incident threshold, the Principal should seek advice from the Director of Safeguarding or the Deputy Chief Executive Officer.

Recording, monitoring and final checks

Critical incidents are recorded and monitored centrally through CPOMS.

What the CPOMS record should include

What happened The date, time, location and a clear factual account.	**Who was involved** The pupils, employees and other people directly involved.
Risks and protective action The immediate risks and action taken to protect pupils and employees.	**Emergency response** Medical treatment, emergency services and external agencies contacted.
Communication Contact with parents or carers where appropriate, and the Trust lead notified.	**Updates and decisions** Further verified information, decisions, actions and changes in risk.

Final response check

RESPOND Immediate safety action has been taken.	**REPORT** The correct Trust lead has been contacted.
RECORD A clear factual record has been made on CPOMS.	**UPDATE** Significant new information and decisions are being shared.

"keeping everyone safe"

If in doubt, seek advice and report the concern promptly.

Report to the Deputy Chief Executive Officer

These incidents require immediate safeguarding oversight and advice.

Escalation

If the Deputy Chief Executive Officer is unavailable, contact the Director of Safeguarding.

CPOMS Category Name	Critical incident Area	First Person to Report to immediately	Second Person to Report to, if unavailable	Chief Executive Officer
Child Death	A child has died unexpectedly	Deputy Chief Executive Officer	Director of Safeguarding	To be informed by telephone and kept updated throughout
Life threatening injury	A child sustains a potentially life-threatening injury or serious and permanent impairment of physical or mental health or development, including through accident, assault, abuse, neglect or honour-based abuse	Deputy Chief Executive Officer	Director of Safeguarding	To be informed by telephone and kept updated throughout
Life threatening illnesses	A child is taken seriously ill with a life-limiting medical condition, or is seriously ill and requires immediate hospital treatment or referral	Deputy Chief Executive Officer	Director of Safeguarding	To be informed by telephone and kept updated throughout
School into disrepute	A staff member has brought unwanted media attention to the school, including where they are reported to have been arrested on suspicion of criminal activity	Deputy Chief Executive Officer	Director of Safeguarding, where safeguarding or	To be informed by telephone and kept

			suitability concerns are present	updated throughout
Emergency lockdown	An incident in the community causes the school to implement an emergency lockdown, immediate evacuation or closure	Deputy Chief Executive Officer	Director of Safeguarding, where safeguarding or suitability concerns are present	To be informed by telephone and kept updated throughout
Serious school incident (other)	An incident in the community has the potential to cause threat to life, impair the mental health and wellbeing of staff or pupils, cause trauma, or bring media focus to the school	Deputy Chief Executive Officer	Director of Safeguarding, where pupils or safeguarding issues are involved	To be informed by telephone and kept updated throughout
Negative media attention	Any other incident that may attract media attention, require external agency involvement, or create significant safeguarding, operational or reputational risk	Deputy Chief Executive Officer	Director of Safeguarding, depending on the nature of the incident	To be informed by telephone and kept updated throughout
Violence against an employee	Serious assault or fight involving an employee, where an employee is assaulted by a pupil and sustains an injury requiring medical attention or hospital treatment	Deputy Chief Executive Officer	Director of Safeguarding	To be informed by telephone and kept updated throughout

Report first to the Director of Safeguarding

These incidents require immediate safeguarding oversight and advice.

Escalation

If the Director of Safeguarding is unavailable, contact the Deputy Chief Executive Officer.

CPOMS Category Name	Critical incident Area	First Person to Report to immediately	Second Person to Report to, if unavailable	Chief Executive Officer
Sucide attempt	A child has made a suicide attempt or has given what is perceived to be a realistic intention to make a suicide attempt	Director of Safeguarding	Deputy Chief Executive Officer	To be informed by telephone and kept updated throughout
Serious Sexual Abuse / Chils Sexual Exploitation	A child is believed to have been subjected to serious sexual abuse, including organised abuse, complex abuse, grooming, trafficking or slavery	Director of Safeguarding	Deputy Chief Executive Officer	To be informed by telephone and kept updated throughout
FGM HBV FM	A child is suspected to have undergone, or is suspected to be at significant risk of, FGM, forced marriage or honour-based violence	Director of Safeguarding	Deputy Chief Executive Officer	To be informed by telephone and kept updated throughout
Police arrested on serious offence	A child has been arrested on suspicion of perpetrating a particularly serious offence against another child, adult	Director of Safeguarding	Deputy Chief Executive Officer	To be informed by telephone and kept

	or property, including serious sexual offences such as rape			updated throughout
Serious CCE / Prevent	A child has been arrested on suspicion of county lines criminal activity or being engaged in extremist activity	Director of Safeguarding	Deputy Chief Executive Officer	To be informed by telephone and kept updated throughout
Missing child	A child is missing or absent and there are significant safeguarding concerns	Director of Safeguarding	Deputy Chief Executive Officer	To be informed by telephone and kept updated throughout
Serious fight / violence	Serious assault or fight involving a pupil, where a pupil sustains an injury requiring medical attention or hospital treatment	Director of Safeguarding	Deputy Chief Executive Officer	To be informed by telephone and kept updated throughout
Possession of or threat with weapons	Possession of, or threat with, a weapon	Director of Safeguarding	Deputy Chief Executive Officer	To be informed by telephone and kept updated throughout