# **UK Trauma Council Critical Incidents policy template for FE (Further Education) colleges**

**This policy template is yours to adapt, brand and edit as best fits the needs of your FE college, staff and learners.**

We would appreciate you acknowledging the UKTC in your completed policy.

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| 1. | **Introduction and five guiding principles including definition of a critical incident**  We consider that a critical incident is an event that is potentially traumatic, and affects a large part, or the whole of our college, rather than just one or two individuals.  Such events are likely to cause many people in our community distress and may threaten to overwhelm our capacity to cope.  *This policy might also be useful to support our college’s response to serious incidents that affect just one or a few learners by using the guidance to shape our response to the specific learners affected.*  This policy is based on five evidence-informed principles that will help us respond to a critical incident in ways that reduce the impact of trauma and create the best environment for recovery. These principles help learners to feel:   * *Safe* * *Calm* * *Connected* * *In control* * *Hopeful* |
| 2. | **Purpose and benefits of policy**  The purpose of this policy is to help the senior leadership, the governing body (or similar board) and whole staff team respond to critical incidents in a way that will best support the psychological recovery of the learners and staff and enable the college to function effectively.  Using this policy will help us by guiding us to:   * feel confident that the responses we make are underpinned by the best available evidence * support our staff and learners following a critical incident * facilitate psychological recovery and reduce the potential traumatic impact of the event * empower our college community to function effectively * help identify learners who might be more at risk to the potential impact from the trauma of the event. |
| 3. | **Links to other key policies**  This policy will be implemented alongside other relevant college policies including Pastoral Care, Anti racism, Safeguarding, Internet/Mobile Use, Health & Safety, Media and SEND (Special Educational Needs and Disabilities) Policies. |
| 4. | **Key staff roles** **in the event of a critical incident:**  In the event of a critical incident the Critical Incidents Management Team (CIMT) will be formed to undertake the following roles:  *(Enter staff names)*  Overall CIMT lead  Site safety/first aid co-ordinator- including communication with emergency services  Communication with and support for staff  Communication with and support for learners  Communication with parents/carers/relatives  Liaison with external agencies  Media liaison  CIMT support (person responsible for supporting the above team)  Adaptations to roles might be required depending on the nature of the event and who is involved. Some staff might also take on multiple roles where appropriate. Staff will be able to decline any task that they currently feel unable to do. |
| 5. | **Our response**  At each stage of our response to a critical incident we will ask *what we can do that will help our learners and staff feel:*   * *Safe* * *Calm* * *Connected* * *In control* * *Hopeful* |
| 5a. | **Preparation**  **In our preparation for a potential critical incident, to help our college community to feel safe, calm, connected, in control and hopeful we will…**   1. Use a Senior Leadership meeting to review our current policy 2. Deliver an INSET session to all staff and governors ([UKTC INSET resource](https://uktraumacouncil.org/resources/ci-inset)) 3. Update our critical incidents policy considering the discussion from our INSET session and drawing on evidence-based principles ([UKTC Critical Incidents guidance](https://uktraumacouncil.org/resources/ci-guidance)) 4. Prepare our CIMT (Critical Incidents Management team) identifying staff who are best placed to undertake key roles. |
| 5b. | **Immediate response-**  **In the first hours and days that follow a critical incident, to help our college community feel safe, calm, connected, in control and hopeful we will….**   1. Contact and use emergency service support as appropriate 2. Ensure that all staff and learners are accounted for and that the whereabouts of all people involved is known. If people are missing this will need to be acted upon. 3. Speak to staff and learners directly involved in the incident to consider immediate safety needs and any support needed. 4. Ensure our learners and staff needs for water, food and rest are accommodated. 5. Seek to establish as far as possible the facts of the incident – who, what, where, when? 6. Decide whether the event qualifies as a critical incident. 7. Meet with senior leaders where possible and agree which members of staff will form the Critical Incidents Management Team. 8. Speak to involved professionals such as the police, medical professionals and social care to gather information and to agree any restrictions on what can be said and to whom. 9. Provide staff all with an initial outline of the incident and outline any first steps to be taken at this stage. 10. Contact the families of our staff and learners directly involved to ensure that they are aware of the incident and of what has happened to their family member including where they are. 11. Contact key stakeholders: our chair of governors, the local authority or Multi-Academy Trust to inform them of the incident and to seek the support of specialist staff such as the Educational Psychology Service or media officer if appropriate. 12. Inform the rest of our college community, providing accurate and honest information. Consider sharing information in small groups if possible, and by staff who feel confident doing this. (See [UKTC Critical Incidents guidance](https://uktraumacouncil.org/resources/ci-guidance) immediate response for details on giving information). 13. Inform other professionals who work regularly in our college but who might be missed as part of general staff communications, such as visiting counsellors and peripatetic specialists. 14. Make plans to deal with the enquiries of learners, families, and the press. This can be done in collaboration with a media officer. 15. Decide how our college can operate or whether it will be better to close it for a short while. If being kept open, will teaching be suspended temporarily and what alternative arrangements will be put in place? 16. Consider the practical implications of the incident on the running of our college, for example covering the classes of members of staff who are not able to be there. 17. If the critical incident is on a large scale, triggering the involvement of multiple services, decide if a Team Around the College is required to help co-ordinate multiple agency involvement. If so, establish who this will include and schedule initial meetings (see [UKTC Critical Incidents guidance](https://uktraumacouncil.org/resources/ci-guidance) Supplement 5). 18. Begin to identify those in our community (staff and learners) who may be more vulnerable and need closer attention and support (see [UKTC Critical Incidents guidance](https://uktraumacouncil.org/resources/ci-guidance) Supplement 4 for further information). 19. Restore our familiar routines and structure within our college day as far as is possible and helpful. 20. Staff to explain and normalise distress, encouraging learners to use what helps them feel calmer. 21. Share and teach strategies to help regulate emotions ([UKTC Critical Incidents lesson plans](https://uktraumacouncil.org/resources/ci-lessons) for 12+ years). 22. Facilitate connection between peers, staff and home. 23. Work to include our college community in decision making to give them some influence and control where possible. 24. Provide parents, carers and relatives with information about how to best help their child. 25. Keep a sense of hope visible, explicitly affirming how we will get through this together. |
| 5c. | **Medium term response-**  **In the first weeks that follow a critical incident, to help our college community feel safe, calm, connected, in control and hopeful we will….**   1. Update staff, learners, parents, carers and relatives of the latest information as more details become available. 2. Build on news about how services are working to keep the community safe 3. Present information in printed form for learners who would benefit from this, using simple text or their preferred symbols. 4. Where appropriate, develop partnerships with external professionals that hold expertise in the event we have experienced e.g., a service that helps colleges following an apparent death by suicide ([See UKTC Critical Incidents guidance](https://uktraumacouncil.org/resources/ci-guidance) Supplement 6 for further sources of support) 5. Closely monitor those in our community that may need targeted support including personalised care plans as they are at risk of developing more persistent problems ([See UKTC Critical Incidents guidance](https://uktraumacouncil.org/resources/ci-guidance) medium term stage and supplement 4) 6. Monitor staff wellbeing, encouraging personal and collective responsibility to seek help both internally but also ensure information about external services is readily available. 7. Facilitate further opportunities for peer and community support in planning ways to help and /or memorialise those impacted. 8. Make plans that involve discussion about the future. |
| 5d. | **Ongoing response-**  **In the months and years that follow a critical incident, to help our college community to feel safe, calm, connected, in control and hopeful we will….**   1. Seek to develop a new normal, embedding routines and structures that have been helpful. 2. Make referrals to services for learners that might need specialist support, involving them and their parents/carers/relatives in the decision making. 3. Acknowledge key dates and triggers that might be more difficult for some and put in measures to identify and support those most affected. 4. Collectively plan how we will mark the first anniversary using this as an occasion to remember what happened, name those who died, were bereaved or affected by the event and to acknowledge how we have all coped. 5. Consider how we might develop an ongoing legacy of the incident that helps us show the value of those in our community. 6. Seek feedback from our college community about how we responded to this critical incident to identify lessons learned. 7. Record and share these lessons, reviewing our policy considering them. 8. Highlight and celebrate plans made and look to explicitly acknowledge how far we have come. |
| 6. | **How & when dissemination and review**  This policy was signed by (governors?) finalised on (date) and shared with staff in meeting/briefing. It will be stored in our (shared drive?) and accessible to all staff as needed. Principal/ senior leadership have ownership to review and update it at least every three years. |
| 7. | **Who else can help?**  When seeking outside support, we will draw from those who share our understanding about what can help and empower us to embed the guiding principles. This might also include developing a Team around the College.  Contact details for key services/organisations we may draw on include:   * Local authority critical incidents team * Educational Psychology team * Child Death Lead for local authority * Social care * Police/ other emergency services as appropriate * LEA media spokesperson as appropriate.   Other organisations who hold specific expertise relevant to the critical incident will be identified e.g., following a suicide.  Where our learners need specialist support for enduring difficulties, we will make referrals to:   * General Practitioners (GPs) * Educational Psychology Service (EPS) * Child and Adolescent Mental Health Services (CAMHS) * Mental Health Support Teams (MHST) * Improving access to psychological therapies (IAPT services) for those 18 and over * Charities (such as counselling and child bereavement services) * College counsellor * Youth services and youth hubs |
| 8. | **Links to other resources/websites**  [**UKTC Critical Incidents resources**](https://uktraumacouncil.org/resources/critical-incidents)   * UKTC Critical incidents guidance * UKTC Critical incidents INSET session for staff consider and prepare their educational community response * UKTC Critical incidents lesson plans to help young people regulate emotions (12+ years) * UKTC Working with parents and carers resources * UKTC Traumatic bereavement resources including an [animation](https://uktraumacouncil.org/resources/traumatic-bereavement-for-school-communities) and a [Schools and colleges guide](https://uktraumacouncil.org/resources/traumatic-bereavement-for-school-communities)*. These resources help those working with children and young people recognise when trauma might be impacting the ability to grieve. Includes information sheets for young people and for parents/carers.*   See [UKTC Critical Incidents guidance](https://uktraumacouncil.org/resources/ci-guidance) supplement 6 for further resources/ websites and organisations. |

This policy is based on a template by the UK Trauma Council as part of their Critical Incidents resources.