

Incidents - General

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1. Definition of Incident

The following are defined as incidents, but this list is not exhaustive. Any similar occurrences can be defined as an incident by a Manager, and recorded as such.

Where Procedure details are provided, they apply to chapters in this manual. It is recommended that users read these chapters for clarification of what constitutes an Incident in each case; users may turn to the relevant chapter or click on the title.

00 = No Chapter reference

Contacting the Police Procedure	Physical Assault or violence caused to a child or member of staff/carer
00	Injury, of a serious nature, caused to a member of the public by a child or staff/carer
00	Accident, of a serious nature, caused to a member of the public child or staff/carer
00	Barricading by children resulting in forced entry by staff/carer or the Police
Contacting the	Damage, of a serious nature, caused maliciously or non accidentally

Police Procedure	
Drugs and Substance Misuse Procedure	Illegal access/possession of controlled drugs or substances
Self Harming Procedure	Self harming, of a serious or persistent nature
Death or Serious Illness/Injury Procedure	Suicide, attempted suicide or death of a child
Searching Children and their Belongings Procedure	Searches of a child or a child's belongings without the child's permission
Countering of Bullying Procedure	Bullying, of a persistent or serious nature
Physical Intervention Procedure	Physical Intervention (including Restraint) upon a child
Contacting the Police Procedure	Police or other emergency services being notified or attending an incident
00	Any other event/occurrence determined by a Manager as an Incident

2. Notifications

If an Incident occurs, the manager/supervisor (Supervising Social Worker for Foster Carers) must be notified as soon as practicable but at the latest within 1 working day.

The child's social worker must also be informed within 1 working day and an agreement reached with the social worker about whether it is necessary to inform the child's parent(s). If so, it should be agreed who should undertake this task.

Where Incidents are serious, Designated Managers (See Contacts Appendix) within the authority and, in some circumstances, other agencies, must be notified. Separate chapters in this manual define what is serious, for example

- Persistent self harming or harming which has necessitated hospital or medical treatment is defined as serious, and deemed to be an Incident. See **Self Harming Procedure**
- Searches of a child or a child's belongings without the child's co-operation or where a level of force has been used, is serious and deemed to be an Incident. See **Searching Children or their Belongings Procedure**

3. Incident Recording

3.1 Which records must be completed

Different records must be completed, depending on the seriousness of the Incident.

Physical Intervention/Restraint

Where Physical Intervention/Restraint is used upon a child, the following records must be completed.

In Children's Homes:

Note the Incident in the Record of Physical Intervention Log and the relevant child's Daily Record. If staff/carers are injured, an Accident Report Form must be completed

In Foster Homes:

Note the Incident in the relevant child's Daily Record. If staff/carers are injured, an Accident Report Form must be completed

In Locality/District Teams:

Note the Incident on the relevant child's Case Record. If staff/carers are injured, an Accident Report Form must be completed

The following must be recorded in relation to the Restraint:

1. The name of the child
2. The date, time and location
3. Details of the behaviour requiring use of Restraint
4. The nature of the Restraint used
5. The duration of the Restraint
6. The name of the staff member(s) using Restraint and signature
7. The name(s) of any other staff, children or other people present
8. The effectiveness and any consequences of the Restraint
9. Any injuries caused to or reported by the child or any other person
10. And the signature of a person authorised by the registered provider to make the record

All other incidents (excluding physical intervention/restraint)

In Children's Homes:

A detailed record of the incident should be made on an Incident Report Form. The record should include the time and date of the incident, the name of the child/young person involved, the names of the staff who were present, the location of the incident and the nature of the incident. This should be followed by a detailed record of what led up to the incident, what happened during the incident and what happened afterwards, including any follow up action taken at the time. The incident log should be signed by the member of staff completing the record and made available to the registered manager, or other designated manager, of the home as soon as possible. The incident log should be signed off and then placed on the child's file.

In Foster Homes:Awaiting a decision

In Locality/District Teams:Awaiting a decision

In the absence of any record/form for Foster Homes or Locality Teams, the following must be recorded:

1. The name of the child
2. The date, time and location
3. Details of the behaviour leading up to the incident, including any preventative measures taken by staff/carers
4. Details of the incident and how it was managed, including the use of any physical interventions other than **Restraint**
5. If Physical Interventions other than Restraint were used, the nature and duration of their use
6. The duration of the Restraint
7. The name of the staff member(s) involved and their signatures
8. The name(s) of any other staff, children or other people present
9. The effectiveness and any consequences of the Restraint
10. Any injuries caused to or reported by the child or any other person
11. And the signature of a person authorised by the registered provider to make the record

3.2 When to complete the records

Unless stated differently in procedures contained in this manual, records pertaining to incidents must be completed within 48 hours. However, it is advisable that staff/carers do not complete records immediately after an incident, but wait until they can calmly recollect what happened.

If an incident leads to, or is followed by, the absence of the person responsible for completing records due to leave, sickness, rostered rest days, it is normally reasonable to expect that person to

complete the records before leaving. If exceptional circumstances, such as hospitalisation, prevent this from happening, the manager/supervisor must arrange for the records to be completed as accurately as possible in another way.

Before completing records, it may be helpful to talk to others involved to help recollect events, but staff/carers should avoid having suggestions put to them that are inaccurate or inconsistent with what they did or observed.

3.3 Who should complete the records

The staff member most significantly involved should complete the records, after consulting other staff concerned; except where there is any risk that a Complaint, child protection or criminal investigation will be made. In which case each person involved must write his or her own record. Separate records must also be completed if there is significant difference or dispute between staff on what occurred.

3.4 Guidance on completion of incident records

Detailed guidance on recording is contained in **Values and Principles Procedure**

- a. Write down what happened in chronological order, preferably stating the time each event occurred.
- b. Don't express opinions and don't make assumptions about what happened.
- c. If you are writing the report on behalf of others make sure you check and report their versions, not what you think they said or did.
- d. Differences of opinion, recollection or knowledge must be accurately recorded
- e. Always use full names. If the common name for a person is an alias or nickname, always put the persons full name in brackets the first time you use the alias.
- f. Always indicate, in brackets, the status of the person named (e.g. Foster Carer, RSW, Child)
- g. Avoid using jargon or professional terms unless you are confident that readers will understand them.
- h. Don't use generalisations such as "aggressive", "Verbal" or "offensive"; use plain English, write down exactly what was said or done, and by whom.
- i. State clearly what diversionary tactics or strategies were used, and by whom; also state the impact or changes the tactics brought about.
- j. If Physical Intervention was used, state the name of the technique used; if the technique has no name, describe the intervention rather than saying "He was held or restrained".
- k. Also state who used the intervention, the duration it was used and what was said and done during the intervention until the child was released.

- l. If more than one intervention was used, state the order they were used in - and why it was necessary to escalate or reduce the intervention.
- m. If there are particular techniques used give their technical names and say in what order they were used.
- n. The child should be asked to contribute to the report(s); as part of this process, the child should also be offered a Life Space Interview. If requested, if there is a significant difference between staff and child versions or a complaint is made, an independent person must offer support to the child and obtain his/her views/comments.
- o. If Restraint or other Physical Interventions were used, state whether a Life Space Interview was conducted, and the outcome of that interview. Guidance on Life Space Interviews is contained in **Behaviour Management Guidance**.
- p. If completing a form/record, don't leave sections blank or any significant spaces. If you have nothing to report in a section, either draw a line through it, put N/A or (for example, in the section on injuries) "No Injuries". Alternatively strike a line through the space.
- q. Always sign and date the record and make sure other staff/carers do the same before you pass it to the manager.

If you have any concerns about your own or other peoples actions or decisions you must discuss them with the manager as soon after the incident as possible. If you feel uncomfortable or uneasy about returning to work also talk to a manager.

4. Manager/Supervisor Responsibilities

4.1 Prevention of Incidents

1. Managers must ensure staff/carers are familiar with relevant procedures; using creative and interesting methods to bring procedures to their attention, discussing them in supervision sessions and meetings, undertaking role plays etc.
2. If procedures appear to require updating or amendment, including the way in which incidents are recorded, the matter must be followed up with line management.
3. Staff/carers are required to do all they can to contact managers if they anticipate an incident or immediately afterwards if they did not. If, for whatever reason, managers are not likely to be available, they should ensure suitable contact arrangements are in place, that a colleague has been identified to provide cover or that staff/carers understand the levels of their delegated authority.
4. If managers anticipate that an incident may occur, they must plan to reduce or prevent the risks, and they must inform staff/carers

5. If staff/carers inform managers that they suspect or anticipate an Incident, they must be taken seriously and provided what appropriate levels of support, guidance and direction to manage situations safely.
6. If managers anticipate a serious incident that may require intervention by the Police or other emergency services, consult or inform those agencies.
7. Also consult relevant social workers.
8. Keep accurate records of your contacts, conversations, decisions and actions.

4.2 Immediate Management Responsibilities

When the manager is informed that an incident has occurred, the following tasks should be undertaken immediately:

- Co-operate with Police/emergency services if contacted; or consider whether the Police or other emergency services should be contacted.
- Check if anyone has been injured; ensure first aid or hospital treatment as appropriate.
- If physical intervention has been used, whether or not the child was injured, s/he must be given the opportunity to see a Registered Nurse or Medical Practitioner - and the outcome recorded.
- Check whether there is any damage; and that it is made safe or repaired
- Listen to everyone involved, note what they have said, provide support and advice if necessary; but don't make judgements or take sides.
- Ensure that the child is given adequate opportunity to contribute to the reports, consider whether the child would benefit from discussing the incident with an advocate. If Physical Intervention has been used, offer the child a Life Space Interview. Guidance on Life Space Interviews is contained in **Behaviour Management Guidance**.
- Establish whether people need to be separated, for example if there are complaints; and take what action is necessary.
- Ensure those involved are recording their recollections in detail in an Incident Record. If any conflicts between those involved or potential complaints, ask each person to write a separate record. These records should normally be completed and passed to the manager within 24 hours of the incident. See **Section 3.2, When to Complete the Records**
- If there are complaints or any potential child protection issues, follow them up in line with appropriate complaints or Child Protection Procedures.
- Arrange for social worker, parents and others, including Designated Managers and others to be notified. See Designated Managers Appendix

5. Management Reviews

5.1 Purpose of the Management Review

The purpose of the Management Review is to unpick the circumstances leading to the incident, the manner in which it was managed and the actions and decisions of all those involved - with a view to reducing or preventing future similar incidents.

As a Last Resort it may be necessary to reprimand, sanction or take other disciplinary measures against a person involved; but the review should never be conducted in the context of trying to blame those involved.

Everyone involved, staff and children alike, will have been affected, probably negatively; some may have been traumatised.

Don't look to catch people out, seek to help people learn from what has happened.

Take a positive, developmental stance throughout, even if things could have been done differently.

5.2 Who should undertake the review?

The manager should undertake the review, unless directly involved or as required by a line manager.

5.3 Timescales

Under normal circumstances, the manager/supervisor must review the incident within the following time scales

Restraints:

Within 3 working days of the Restraint report being completed by staff.

All other Incidents:

Within 5 working days of the Incident Report being completed by staff.

If there are Police, Child Protection or Complaints investigations, the review should be postponed until they are complete.

5.4 Gather Information

1. Don't make judgements early on. Don't take sides.
2. Start from the point of view of seeking to learn from what has happened
3. Involve everyone, including the child, at all stages. Inform them of the anticipated time scales.
4. Listen, note, explore; try to identify the circumstances or behaviours which triggered the incident. Analyse the extent to which everyone adhered to procedures or recognised good

practice; were people working effectively together, were they planning ahead, sharing information, doing what they could to anticipate and prevent the incident from occurring?

5. Read the records of the incident, clarify and challenge, if necessary, generalisations, assumptions, justifications etc. Unpick and simplify jargon.
6. If Restraint or other Physical Intervention was used, ensure staff/carers are able to demonstrate they applied it in keeping with procedures and guidance.
7. Did everyone appear to behave reasonably in the circumstances? To what extent was the child (or staff) set up by the actions of others; did anyone act in a way which provoked or increased the likelihood of the incident
8. Look beyond that which is stated in the record of the incident; what hasn't been included which should have been in the circumstances.
9. If anyone was injured, check and note the outcome of any first aid or medical treatment offered/given.
10. If physical intervention was used upon a child, whether or not the child was injured, check and note the outcome of any first aid or medical treatment offered/given.
11. Obtain views from everyone involved about whether the incident was managed as required by procedures or in line with recognised good practice.
12. Consult and keep your Line Manager informed if required to do so, if the review is complex or potentially controversial or if you need assistance/support.

5.5 Consider Information

- a. Remain objective, stay positive and look for developmental outcomes. Only consider sanctions or disciplinary measures as a last resort.
- b. Balance what actually happened against what was required by procedure, recognised good practice or in the light of staff experience, skills and knowledge.
- c. Consider how the child acted in the light of his/her background, skills, and knowledge.
- d. Consider your own interests and needs; look at the role you played; or should have played; be open to criticism.
- e. Get help if you need it; consult your line manager, especially if policy or other decisions outside your brief are required.
- f. Consider whether there are any training or other support mechanisms that ought to be put in place for staff - or for yourself. Is there a need for specialist help, support or counselling.
- g. Consult the social worker; consider whether any changes are required to the child's Placement Plan; including new or amended expectations, strategies or interventions to help reduce

or prevent the likelihood of a repeated incident. Is there a need for specialist or therapeutic help, support or counselling.

h. Come to a decision, which can be sustained - which can be put into practice.

i. Avoid 'punishing' or looking to blame. Seek outcomes that are encouraging and developmental

If changes are required to the child's **Placement Plan**, the manager/supervisor must co-ordinate these changes; which may mean undertaking a Placement Review.

5.6 Debrief and Support

Make sure everyone is informed of the outcome, and is given the opportunity to make comment.

Having undertaken the management review, the Manager must ensure that all concerned do not have unresolved feelings, guilt or other concerns about their own behaviour or other people.

In some circumstances it may be necessary for the Manager to ask an independent consultant or counsellor to provide assistance; especially if there are indications of post-traumatic stress disorder.

The emphasis must be on everyone learning for the future - and reducing or preventing similar incidents from occurring.

It may also be appropriate for all concerned, including the child if it would be beneficial to meet and discuss what happened.

If there are procedural, policy or practice issues which individuals or whole teams can benefit from the Manager must follow them up.

The Manager must record the outcome.