

SPECIALIST EDUCATION SERVICES

Critical Incident Policy and Practice

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*SES Avocet House Ltd (4926028), SES Turnstone House Ltd (7972485) and SES Kite Ltd (12634002)
are subsidiary companies of Specialist Education Services Topco Ltd (13159680)*

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1 INTRODUCTION

SES provides highly individualised education and care packages for up to 16 children, and personalised care for vulnerable young adults. Young people and vulnerable young adults coming to our establishments do so because of their need for 52 week placement and a highly specialised education and care.

The very nature of running a high quality organisation with a strong emphasis on risk reduction strategies for all foreseeable circumstances, involves thorough, well documented procedures which are the key to avoiding unwanted, difficult, and worse still, disastrous circumstances occurring. Nevertheless, unforeseen events can occur at any time. By their very nature, critical incidents are out of the ordinary in respect of magnitude and scale and are not easily predictable before the event.

In the event of a critical incident, it is likely that, by its very nature, its successful management will involve the full resources of the organisation and certainly the involvement of the Directors of SES, who might well play a leading role. Although difficult to define, the following description applies:

“Any incident where the effectiveness of the response is likely to have a significant impact on the confidence of the victim(s), their family, placement authorities and/or the community, and has the potential to generate significant public interest at a local, regional, national, or international level.”

Illustrations of critical incidents may be:

- The unexpected death of a member of staff or a young person in our care.
- A serious accident on or offsite that is likely to involve the attention of others (Health and Safety Executive and/or media)
- Serious and dangerous/debilitating illness of a staff member or young person in our care
- Fire and loss of core services such as buildings.
- Disciplinary or criminal matters related to employees or young people that are significant enough to attract media attention.
- Terrorist attack
- Occurrences of such an exceptional or unusual nature they are of significant interest to the media or wider public, (at this point these will be difficult to pre-define because of their unique nature)
- Prolonged outbreaks of contagious or infectious diseases

2 PROCEDURES

In the event of a suspected critical incident the SES Principal must be contacted immediately on the establishments main number 01508 549320 or 01508 517000 or on their personal emergency number.

The final judgement as to whether an incident is a critical incident rests with the SES Principal who will inform the Directors of SES. This task, but not the judgement, may be delegated by the SES Principal.

The Deputy Principal is regarded as the equivalent of the SES Principal for the purposes of a critical incident and should be contacted immediately in the absence of the SES Principal.

2.1 AT THE SCENE OF THE INCIDENT

The nature of critical incidents means that there could be a strong possibility that the staff at the scene are not necessarily members of the management team. Also despite their levels of experience and competence within their everyday work the sheer magnitude of the event leaves them feeling helpless and vulnerable. The immediate actions of those adult(s) at the scene are the most critical.

N.B. Actioning the critical incident procedure does not take priority over a duty of immediate care. For example, in the event of a serious accident the first priority is to administer first aid and contact the emergency services.

However, there should be no contact with other outside agencies of any kind until it is appropriate to do so under the procedures outlined below (a 'phone call home from a young person to a parent through genuine feelings of anxiety, panic or reassurance can start a chain of uncontrolled information flow that may unnecessarily create great distress).

Therefore, information and guidance to colleagues at the immediacy of the scene is to:

1. Ensure everyone's immediate safety
2. Ensure contact is made with the emergency services
3. Administer First Aid
4. Control immediate communication, which includes a phone call back to the SES Principal.

Any unavoidable interface with the media and requests for comments at this stage needs to be handled as follows:

"I am sorry I am unable to comment at this stage, there will be a statement issued by a senior manager in due course"

2.2 CONTACTING THE DIRECTORS

It is likely that the SES Principal will be the one making the critical incident call to the Directors. However, the SES Principal may be at the scene, or have a good reason for delegating the actual call to a colleague.

Whoever makes the call, for the sake of clarity and calmness and to avoid any misunderstanding, they must open the conversation in the following way.

They must state their name and the name of establishment followed by,

“We believe that we have a critical incident and need to bring it to the attention of the Directors”

At this point the management of the incident, if confirmed as a critical incident, will be conducted by the Directors. The Directors will take the SES Principal through an information gathering process that will result in agreeing and confirming the priority of actions and who is responsible for each of them.

2.3 DIRECTORS CHECKLIST

Amongst other questions, the Directors will want to know:

- Are people hurt and injured?
- What provision is already in place in respect of looking after team members and young people at the scene and immediately afterwards?
- Is the establishment secure, safe and staffed to meet the immediate needs of those in residence and or those arriving back in the aftermath of an event?
- Has there been any unavoidable media involvement thus far? If so what has already been said?

Discussion will take place around:

- Agreeing timing and responsibility for alerting key people such as next of kin and placement authorities.
- Preparing an initial media statement, (a “holding” statement if necessary).
- Meeting with necessary parties to create contingency plans in respect of ongoing care for victims, etc.
- Meeting with necessary parties to create contingency plans in respect of provision for loss of services over the short and medium term where this applies.
- Contacting the company media advisor.
- Contacting the company insurers and seeking legal advice if required.

3 **CRITICAL INCIDENTS AND BUSINESS CONTINUITY**

In the case of an extreme incident business continuity may be threatened. All organisations should have plans in place to manage this risk as best they can. Appendix A attached to this document is the current Business Continuity Plan.

4 **REVIEW**

This document will be evaluated and reviewed within two years of its current date.

5 **APPENDIX A: Business Continuity Plan**

(See overleaf)

SPECIALIST EDUCATION SERVICES: SES BUSINESS CONTINUITY PLAN

The following Business Continuity issues apply equally to both establishments. Both sites could be used to support each other in the event of one of them becoming partially or wholly unusable.

For SES Kite homes, the significant business risk is fire to the premises. In this situation short term accommodation would need to be secured using the list included in the plan below. All other key threats would be dealt with in a similar way.

Key Threats	Potential Triggers	What Would be Affected	Action Needed
Fire to Main Building	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Lightening • Arson (External person) • Arson (Internal person) • Accidental Fire – cooking, play, etc • Electrical problem 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Living quarters for up to 8 children and 2 or 3 sleep in staff • Administration facilities House & SES • Staff Meeting Facilities • Main Cooking Facilities • Internal Social and Recreational Space • Bathing/Toilet Facilities 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • The first 24 hours would be the most challenging in respect of finding immediate care and shelter for young people, as well as dealing with emerging issues in respect of the aftermath, not least communication with parents, placing authorities, press etc. As each establishment are within 3 miles of each other, the full resources of the company would be available to be harnessed. See additional Appendix B detailing actions. • Local B and B or Hotel providers identified for immediate aftermath; (Use of lounges in main House or Pavilion or Learning Centre to be considered) • Suitable 3x 3 Bedded or 2 x4 bedded Mobile Caravan spec and possible purchase areas identified in advance. • Any spare capacity at sister home (Turnstone House) to be utilised (or vice versa) • Mobile Large kitchen/recreation area. • Security adaptations, e.g. alarms clearly identified in advance. • Location in Grounds and service connection options identified in advance • Identification of a possible rented accommodation in the local area. • Regular safety and compliance checks • Use of children's family/home arrangements where possible • Assess immediate alternative accommodation needs (within 6 hrs of event) • Have a short term (first week) accommodation plan in place (within 24hrs) • Have a medium term sustainable accommodation plan in place (within 1 week)
Fire to Coach House (Avocet House Only)	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Lightening • Arson (External People) • Arson Internal • Accidental Fire – cooking play etc • Electrical problem 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Living quarters for up to 3 children & 1 staff • Some Cooking Facilities • Small amount of Internal Social and Recreational Space 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Local B and B or Hotel providers identified for immediate aftermath; (Use of lounges in main House or Pavilion or Learning Centre to be considered) • Any spare capacity at sister home, Turnstone House to be utilised (or vice versa) • Suitable 3 Bedded Mobile Caravan spec and possible purchase areas identified in advance. • Security adaptations, e.g. alarms clearly identified in advance. • Location in Grounds and service connection options identified in advance

		<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Loss of some Bathing / Toilet Facilities 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Regular safety and compliance checks Use of children's family / home arrangements where possible Assess immediate alternative accommodation needs (within 6 hrs of event) Have a short term (first week) accommodation plan in place (within 24hrs) Have a medium term sustainable accommodation plan in place (within 1 week)
Fire to Learning Centre	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Lightening Arson (External People) Arson Internal Accidental Fire – cooking play etc Electrical problem 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Indoor education facilities for all Education Staff Administration 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Specific providers of mobile learning accommodation and the specific accommodation required identified in advance. Some shared use of Learning Centre Facilities at Turnstone / Avocet House Timescale from order to delivery and serviceability known in advance. Contingency plan for use of house and coach house, pavilion, etc before mobile installation and after. Service requirements and installation clear in advance. Furniture list identified and ready Regular safety and compliance checks Assess immediate alternative accommodation needs (within 6 hrs of event) Have a short term (first week) accommodation plan in place (within 24hrs) Have a medium term sustainable accommodation plan in place (within 1 week)
Flu Pandemic (or similar outbreak)		<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Availability of Staff to care for well and sick children Income in the event of the death of children 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Specific Guidance as appendices to Health and Safety document. Learning from a Norovirus/covid outbreak to supplement existing guidance. Provision of another facility to spread risk and increase staff availability. Loss of income insurance to cover loss of one child National guidance online or through emergency services
Death of a Child / Children / Young Adult	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Car Accident Internal or otherwise New Strain Flu Pandemic Other unpredictable incident 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Stability of all placements Income stream Business reputation 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Inform secretary of state, Ofsted, Placing Authorities – including host if not Norfolk placement, CCG Liaise with emergency services Preparation for attendance at any relevant meetings eg SUDIC (Sudden Death of Infant and Child) Initial alert to SES Insurance Company - Marsh Likely monitoring visit from Ofsted Prepare for Coroners Investigation (Lead by Insurers Solicitors) Regular update of and enforcement of Travel and Transport Policy and Practice, document Individual child risk assessments – All in place.

			<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Communication with all Placing Authorities • Communication with insurers to seek legal advice and support in managing incident • Contact all families of young people to give re-assurance • Provide bereavement support for the community • Media support through insurers to be instigated
Abuse Scandal	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Abusive adult on the staff team 'under the radar' • Appointment and monitoring procedures error. • Another resident perpetrates 'under the radar' 		<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Existing Documentation and procedures should be adequate. • Maintain quality – CP referrals to be part of KPI data
Sudden Death of Proprietor	Not fully predictable	The day to day running of SES Topco and the constituent companies would remain largely unaffected in the short term, although there may be some emotional impact on the teams and a new climate of uncertainty to manage in the immediate aftermath. Executive function would be compromised as time progressed.	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Discussion with key senior leaders and managers involving this scenario to create response protocols • Complete summary action document for beneficiaries of Proprietor's estate and SES Board, also held by solicitors, Mills and Reeve (Tel: 01603 660155, Key Contact James Hunter) • Involvement and oversight by existing Board of SES Directors, Currently Operational Director, SES Principal and SES Deputy Principal.

Lead Person	B & B Providers	Location	Capacity	Contact details
SES Principal	Sisland Tithe Barn	Sisland, Loddon	Self catering cottages for between 2-6 people (Owl Barn and Orchard Barn)	http://www.sisland-tithe-barn.co.uk The Tithe Barn Sisland, Norwich NR14 6EE 01508 520520
	The Swan Motel	Gillingham, Beccles	14 bedrooms Bed and Breakfast	www.gillinghamswan.co.uk Loddon Road Gillingham, Beccles NR34 0LD enquiries@theswanmotelgillingham.co.uk

				01502 470005
Ringsfield Hall	Ringsfield, Beccles	14 bedrooms, mix of dormitories, twin, family and double		www.ringsfield-hall.co.uk Hall Road Ringsfield Beccles NR34 8JR info@ringsfield-hall.co.uk 01502 713020
Barn Owl Holidays	Chedgrave, Loddon	3 cottages sleeping 6 people each		www.barnowlholidays.co.uk Byrons Green Big Back Lane Chedgrave NR14 6BH barnowls@bt.clara.co.uk
Static Caravan Sales	Location	Capacity	Contact details	
Ian James	Highbridge, Somerset	Providers of second-hand and new statics of various sizes		01278 780565 www.ianjamescaravans.co.uk
Hansons Used caravans	Beverley, Yorks	Providers of second-hand and new statics of various sizes		Office Telephone: 01759 306036 Contact Paul Wadsworth Direct on 07739 320 798 or send him an email: paul@hansoncaravans.co.uk www.hansoncaravans.co.uk Showroom at: Barmston Road, Swinemoor Lane, Beverley, HU17 0LA
Orchard Caravans	Wells Next The Sea, Norfolk	Providers of second-hand and new statics of various sizes		Orchard Caravans(Norfolk)Ltd Great Eastern Way, Wells-Next-The-Sea Norfolk NR23 1LY Tel: 01328 710394 E-mail: orchardcaravans@aol.com
Temp Classrooms and Storage	Location	Capacity	Contact details	
Anglo Scottish	Fakenham	Any size		Anglo Scottish Equipment (Southern) Ltd Accommodation Centre Holt Road, Fakenham NR21 8JH Tel: 01328 856 266 sales@angloscottish.info www.angloscottish.info
Cabins and Containers UK	Hopton, Great Yarmouth, Norfolk	Any Size		Hopton Timber Estate, Hall Road, Hopton, Great Yarmouth, Norfolk. NR31 9AX

				08454 98 91 98 01502 733 828 sales@cabinsandcontainers.co.uk www.cabinsandcontainers.co.uk
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5 **APPENDIX B: Critical Incident and Business Continuity Day 1 (Response to Fire)**

The biggest threat to the company's ability to provide immediate and interim care for its young people is a fire that renders the main house on either site unusable. At Turnstone House that involves the loss of an eight bed space, living and cooking facilities. At Avocet House this would involve the same implication for six young people (for SES Kite establishments this would be the main home). The following guidance relates to an assumption that the fire is of such an extent that the building is deemed unsafe.

The following **DAY ONE** actions are conceived as a response to such a scenario in either establishment and although specific to the worst case scenario described above, some of these actions, logistics and principles could apply to other critical incident scenarios. In crude terms planning in detail for the worst, should cater to some degree for other unperceived events.

The following actions are listed in a perceived, logical chronological sequence. In practice events may unfold differently and time pressures mean an alternative order is implemented; the reality is that that some actions will happen in parallel and different people will undertake specific tasks.

On site Personnel at the Scene - Actions

- Evacuate the building as per each sites fire and evacuation procedure including ringing the fire brigade.
- Alert the Directors that there is potentially a critical incident and explain situation.
- The Director will confirm who is the available remote point of contact and alert the on site leadership if and when this changes.
- Depending on weather conditions, liaise with fire brigade whether a retreat to shelter in other onsite buildings is best and safest option.
- If alternative shelter is going to be needed in a short timescale then communicate this to the remote contact you've been given.
- The remote contact will make contact with representatives of the other site (Avocet or Turnstone) and set in motion arrangements to prepare and get ready to receive the young people and their carers

Remote Personnel - Actions

- Directors will start the process of leadership and co-ordination of communication.
- Whoever, is contacted initially by the onsite personnel is by definition the first remote point of contact.
- Any changes to this will be communicated back to the onsite leadership throughout the course of the incident.
- Emergency contact details for all SES children are kept in the offices at both sites thus guaranteeing access to contact details if access to one site office is breached.
- Remote personnel should ensure support for the immediate safety and shelter of the young people is the first priority.

- Should the support from the other site be required either physically through use of premises and or access to information and other resources, then the Director / remote point of contact will arrange for the necessary communication to take place.
- The offsite (remote) leadership will co-ordinate and decide the most appropriate timing in respect of communication to stakeholders beyond SES.

Considerations in the first 24 hours

- The Learning Centres on either site are the most likely venue for immediate emergency shelter.
- Transport arrangements put in place if transit between sites is required.
- Consider the balance between, disruption, speed of response and opportunity for community help from the host, unaffected site. The answer to this cannot be pre-determined and would need to be assessed at the time.
- Depending on the time of day, immediate purchase of camp beds and sleeping bags may be an option, but with a workforce of 75 staff and their connections it is highly likely that emergency beds and bedding could be mustered at quite short notice.
- Food should not be an issue with onsite facilities at both sites and takeaway options.
- Provision of replacement clothing for young people affected.
- Provision of specific 'counselling' (Key people to talk to) over and above the core team who are caring for the young people.

5 APPENDIX C: SES Kite Closure Contingency Planning

In line with the Supported Accommodation Regulations 2023, in the highly unlikely event of SES Kite homes ceasing to operate either permanently or temporarily, the following contingency planning would take effect:

- The young people would be supported in alternative local accommodation (hotels, B+B) by the wider SES staff team until longer term supported accommodation can be sourced by their placing authority.
- Records for the young people would be transferred and stored within the SES Turnstone Ltd establishment, and/or shared with the placing authority.

6 ADDITIONAL APPENDICES:

(Kept in the SES Principal's office in the main red documents file).

- A Planning for a Human Influenza Pandemic: Guidance to Schools and Children's Services
- B Planning for a Human Influenza Pandemic: Infection Control – How to Reduce The Spread of Pandemic Flu: Guidance for Residential Settings for Children and Vulnerable Young People
- C Model Plan/Checklist for Schools