

**Managing the Media following a Critical Incident**

This guidance note has been provided to support schools in managing the press and media following a Critical Incident in a school or setting.

Although this list is not exhaustive, a critical incident may include a child going missing off site, the death of a pupil/staff member or a serious case review.

The following information is advice and guidance to support schools in the management of the interest from the press and the common pitfalls to avoid.

**Contact from the press**

If you are contacted by the media/press ensure that you give yourself time to respond. Do not feel pressured to share information immediately. Consider the following and then agree a time to be further contacted by the press.

Take the journalist’s name, publication and contact details.

Ask where the story will appear: publication, programme, day and time.

Try to find out where the journalist is coming from e.g. what’s the angle of their story?

Ask who else has been contacted and what information has been shared.

DON’T be tempted to share ‘off the record’ information. There is no such thing!

DON’T tell a journalist that something is not a story-this will make them more determined.

If the issue is particularly controversial seek advice from Children’s Services and the Local Authority’s media team. Ensure that you also inform your chair of Governors of the contact from the journalist.

**Interviews**

If you are requested to give an interview, consider the following:

What is the angle of the interview or story?

Who else is being interviewed?

If others have been interviewed, what has been said already?

What do they want to ask you?-ask for the line of questioning beforehand.

Will it be live or pre-recorded?

When will the interview be broadcast?

If the interview is live, will another person be interviewed at the same time e.g. a head to head?

If you are going to be interviewed use the hand model-what are the five key points you wish to get across in your interview?

Clarify your position and statement beforehand with those who need to know e.g. chair of Governors/Children’s services.

**Writing a press release**

Ensure that the press release has structure with the most important information at the top.

Introductions should not be more than 25 words.

Provide basic information e.g. who, what, why, when, where and how.

Include contact points e.g. for more information etc.

Write in plain English, keep sentences short and succinct.

Include comments/quotes.

Don’t use jargon.

Ensure that those who need to see the information are given it beforehand e.g. chair of Governors/Children’s Services.

Is a picture required-if so are relevant people available?

Make sure you are available on the day of press release for radio/tv interviews.

If you are unhappy with the reporting of a story you have a right to complain. The editor’s code of conduct includes a section on right of reply:

<https://www.ipso.co.uk/IPSO/makeacomplaint.html>

The code also states that pupils must not be approached or photographed at school without the permission of the school authorities.