

**‘Love God, Love others’ and ‘let you light shine’**



# **The Blue Coat CE Infant and Junior Schools' Federation**

## **Incident Response Policy and Procedures**

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As part of our health and safety policies and procedures, the Blue Coat CE Federation has this Incident Response Policy. The purpose of this policy is to support staff in managing medium to high risk scenarios where an incident would require additional action to keep the community safe. On very rare occasions, it may be necessary to (partially or fully) seal off the school so that it cannot be entered from the outside. This is to ensure that pupils, staff and visitors are safe in situations where there is a hazard in the school grounds or outside the school in the near vicinity.

An incident response procedure should be seen as a sensible and proportionate response to any external or internal incident which has the potential to pose a threat to the safety of staff, pupils and/or visitors in the school. The procedures should aim to minimise disruption to the learning environment whilst ensuring the safety of all pupils and staff.

This policy has been amended taking on the recommendations from West Midlands Police.

The recommendations in summary are:

- Replace the term 'lockdown' with something more subtle and tactically advantageous;
- Adopt/adapt the National Decision Model, the Disorder Model and the Crowd Psychology Model;
- Consider Role Profiles and the principles of maintaining effective Command Coordination and Communication (C3)
- Introduce a graduated, scalable response (this is subtly worded and enacted)
- Raise awareness raising around options when communicating with difficult individuals

An incident response is necessary when children and staff need to be partially/confined within buildings for their own safety i.e. in an emergency situation such as a hostile intruder, terrorist attack or other criminal activity.

Incident response procedures may be activated in response to any number of situations, but some of the more typical might be:

- An incident or civil disturbance in the local community that poses a risk to the school;
- An intruder on the site (with the potential to pose a risk to staff and pupils);
- Local risk of air pollution, such as a smoke plume or gas cloud;
- A major fire in the vicinity of the school;
- A dangerous dog roaming loose.

## 1. Testing of the policy

The DSL or another member of the Executive Leadership Team designated by the Executive Headteacher, will schedule at least one practice of an incident response drill per year and will be responsible to ensure all staff members are clear about the procedure before the practice drill takes place. The DSL/ELT will remind students of the incident response procedures during a whole school assembly of each year.

### NaCTSO (National Counter Terrorism Security Office) \*\*Guidance\*\*

In June 2017, NaCTSO provided advice to leaders of schools and other Educational Establishments for Crowded places guidance. This guidance has been used to inform the following procedures.

<https://www.gov.uk/government/publications/crowded-places-guidance>

It is important to remember that it is very much **the exception** to evacuate a building in the event of a hostile intruder. Unless the location of the intruders is known, a "blind" evacuation may be putting people in more danger (e.g. from an intruder or device at one of the entrances/exits) than if they had remained within the building.

## 2. A Full Incident Response Procedures

### Notification of Full Incident Response Procedures

The full incident response procedures will only be used in the most extreme situations. Staff will be notified that there has been a full incident and the full incident response procedures are to take place immediately on hearing a distinctive sound (noted below). Any member of staff that finds themselves in a dangerous situation will be responsible for notifying other staff where reasonably possible and safe to do so. Staff will work collaboratively to alert colleagues in the hall/ forest or on other premises. If children are outside playing, they will be alerted by a distinctive sound and/or other communication.

All activity to cease immediately, pupils and staff return to the closest building.

Staff will be notified that incident response procedures are to immediately take place:

BCI – An alarm will sound (a long persistent sound distinctly different to the fire alarm)

BCJ – staff to be notified by the school alarm system by hearing three distinctive rings repeated three times.

SRP – Linked to the same alarm system as the junior school.

Canteen – Linked to the same alarm system as the junior school.

In addition to this, staff will alert other staff by calling out 'A full incident response.'

Where possible, staff will also be notified by email and/or internal phone. The internal phone system will also be used by office staff who will inform adults by stating 'We need a full incident response'.

All staff should avoid putting themselves in a vulnerable situation where they are one-to-one with a parent/ visitor. If a member of staff feels they are in immediate danger, they should get support from a

colleague or call the emergency services.

It is important to make sure that all items that could be used as weapons (kitchen implements, sports equipment, tools, and cleaning products) are always securely locked away when not in use.

#### Procedure

In the event of a an incident response plan, where reasonably possible and safe to do so, staff will follow the **CLOSE** procedure:

**Close** all windows and doors

**Lock** up

**Out** of sight and minimise movement

**Stay** silent and avoid drawing attention

**Endure** Be aware you may need to follow the incident response procedures for some time

### 3. The Incident Response Procedures

#### Our safe assembly points

The above signal will activate the incident response procedures. This will begin with a process of ushering the children into the school building as quickly and as safely as possible. Children or staff, not in class for any reason, will proceed to the nearest classroom/ or safest nearest building as quickly as possible. Visitors will be notified of the procedures and be co-ordinated by a member of staff.

#### Secure entrance and exit points

The staff will ensure the locking of the school's classrooms, offices, connecting doors and all outside doors where it is possible to remain safe. Front office staff to ensure that their windows are locked, roller blinds are closed, shutters are closed. If any member of staff feels they are in immediate danger, they should contact emergency services. If practicable, staff should notify their team by phone/email that they have entered the incident response procedure and identify those children not accounted for. Front office staff will guide any visitors waiting in reception into a safe area.

#### Steps to increase protection

At the given signal the children remain securely in the room they are in. The staff will ensure the windows and doors are closed/locked and screened where possible. Children will need to be positioned away from possible sightlines from external windows/doors. Staff to support children in keeping calm and quiet. Children or staff not in class for any reason will proceed to the nearest occupied classroom and remain with that class e.g. children returning from the toilets. A roll call will be undertaken in class.

Wherever possible, use silent communications and keep noise to a minimum especially if the intruders are close by. Make sure any communication devices are secure and cannot be intercepted.

#### Internal communication during a lockdown

Mobile phones should be on silent, as stated in the mobile phone policy, so they cannot give away your position. Staff and pupils should remain in their secure environment until the exercise has been lifted by a senior member of staff/emergency services. At any point during the incident response procedure, the fire alarm may sound. As the cause of the alarm will be unknown, await instructions from senior leaders or from emergency services. Do not leave the building until you are advised to do so (unless there is a clear fire/threat).

**Additional steps to increase protection will include:****-NO ONE SHOULD MOVE ABOUT THE SCHOOL (other than ELT if it safe to do so)**

- Lock and screen doors
- Position children away from sightlines from external doors and windows for example, under a desk/ near inner wall
- Turn off lights and monitors
- Make sure mobile phones and electronic devices are on silent
- During the incident response procedure, communication should only be within school and with emergency services. Staff must not pass on information to anyone unless directed by senior staff.
- Cover windows and air vents (if the risk is pollution or a gas cloud).

**Arrangements for pupils with additional needs**

Children with complex needs possibly working in a specialist environment such as the SRP or Puffins will find it difficult to remain still and quiet for an extended length of time. Staff should ensure that the blinds of specialist provision rooms are fully closed. All doors in specialist classrooms should be locked/bolted. Staff should support the children in Puffins to move to the sensory room. Staff should endeavour to keep the children in the sensory room for as long as is necessary until the danger has passed however, in the event of a child becoming dysregulated a member of staff should support the child to quietly access the community room until they are able to return to the sensory room.

SRP - Staff should ensure that the blinds of both the classrooms and the sensory rooms are fully closed. Staff should endeavour to keep the children calm.

**4. Roles and Responsibilities**

STAFF MEMBER	RESPONSIBILITIES
Senior Leaders	<p>There are three levels of command (Gold, Silver and Bronze)</p> <p><b>Gold - EHT</b></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Deciding on the level of response required for an incident, unless you've delegated this to another staff member.</li> <li>• Decide how to communicate with emergency services, parents and any other relevant agency.</li> <li>• Remain out of view (remote from School) to ensure they are able to set, review, communicate and update</li> <li>• Assign roles around the 3Cs (Command, Coordinate and Communicate)</li> <li>• EHT to be responsible and accountable for handling of an incident response</li> </ul> <p>The three Cs may include but are not limited to:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Retains strategic oversight and set the tactical parameters</li> <li>• Develop a working strategy</li> <li>• Consult with stakeholders and partner agencies</li> <li>• Adjust the strategy based on the threat assessment</li> </ul> <p><b>Silver -Tactical –DEHT/AHT</b></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Establish a communication between bronze and gold</li> <li>• Assesses the available information and intelligence to properly evaluate the threat, vulnerabilities and risk</li> <li>• remains suitably located to maintain effective tactical command of the incident</li> </ul>

	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Ensures that all decisions and rationale are documented</li> <li>• All staff involved in the operation are briefed and debriefed</li> <li>• Consider the wider community, public safety</li> <li>• Track decisions have been actioned</li> <li>• Complete the Joint Decision Log</li> </ul> <p><b>Bronze -Operational – Year Leaders</b></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Develop a deployment plan</li> <li>• Ensures staff within their area of responsibility are briefed and understand their role, responsibilities and limits</li> <li>• Focus on staff and pupil welfare</li> </ul>
All staff	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Support visitors in your immediate vicinity to access a safe place.</li> <li>• Support with any delegated duties.</li> <li>• Ensure that doors are locked and emergency services are called if necessary.</li> </ul>
Teachers and support staff	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Bring class pupils to classroom or other place of safety.</li> <li>• Take register and stay with pupils.</li> <li>• Individual teachers/ LSA's lock/close classroom door(s) and windows. Nearest adult to check exit doors.</li> </ul>
Other things to consider	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Staff in Fed House to make sure lock is on</li> <li>• Staff in the staffroom to close blinds and turn off lights</li> <li>• Catering manager to close windows and turn off lights</li> <li>• Staff to ensure that children on the playground/ forest find a safe and secure building</li> </ul>

#### Communication with parents/community:

Lines of communication with Emergency Services will be kept open as they are best placed to offer advice as a situation unfolds. The school site may or may not be cordoned off by Emergency Services depending on the severity of the incident. Emergency Services and/or the Local Authority may work in partnership with the Executive Headteacher, or delegated leader/s, with regarding the timing of communication to parents.

The EHT will always act in the best interest of the children and staff and follow the advice of the emergency services. It may not always be in the public interest to share this information. Senior leaders will decide on when and how to communicate with the community. If appropriate, parents will be notified as soon as it is practical to do so via text message. Depending on the type and severity of the incident, there may be a delay to the dismissal of children at the end of the school day.

All incidents will be reviewed.

## 5. National Decision Model (NDM) to Support an Incident Response Procedure

In order to know how to respond the schools will adopt the National Decision Model (NDM).

It is used by everyone in policing. It can be applied:

- to spontaneous incidents or planned operations
- by an individual or team of people
- to both operational and non-operational situations

Decision makers can use the NDM to structure a rationale of what they did during an incident and why.

The NDM has six key elements:

- Code of Ethics;
- Gather information and intelligence.
- Assess threat and risk and develop a working strategy.
- Consider powers and policy.
- Identify options and contingencies.
- Take action and review what happened.



You start the model at the Info/Intel stage. If at any point as you go around the model, **new** info/intel becomes apparent you immediately go back to the start and systematically go through the model again. This is as opposed to making quick decisions and then finding a justification for them afterwards.

### Gather Information and Intelligence

**Intelligence** is **Information** that has been subject to some form of assessment by someone. The sources of information are varied. The sources of information could be:

- The person(s) who first saw a cause for concern
- Any other witnesses
- Third hand reports
- CCTV
- Pupils
- Colleagues/Staff
- Current local tensions
- School telephone/email messages

**Not all Info/Intel is the same.** People could be mistaken or they could be making false assumptions. This is why it is important that information is assessed.

- What is happening?
- What do I know so far?
- What do I not know?
- What further information (or intelligence) do I want/need at this moment?
- How do I get more info/intel?
- What is the provenance and the veracity of what the source is telling me

### Threat Assessment and Working Strategy

This analytical stage involves assessing the situation, including any specific threat, the risk of harm and the potential for benefits. Among other things, decision makers should consider the objectives of preventing discrimination, promoting good relations and fostering equal opportunities.





**LEVEL 1 - Investigative Assessment**

There is then a very discrete notification to appropriate team members of ELT (Silver) but **without** alerting the pupils. If the member of the team who goes (or is tasked to go) to the area of concern and reports all is clear, Level 1 can be stood down and the steady state resumes, i.e. return to Level 0.

If this member of the team feels that a higher need of security should be considered, and if there is time, they should contact the ELT (Gold/Silver) to discuss. If there is no time, due to the imminence of the threat, they should be empowered to declare going to a higher level and can say what that is.

**LEVEL 2 - Take Positions (Who is this going to impact?)**

After the investigative assessment of Level 1 a member of the ELT decides (Silver) the severity of the incident. They decide whether to go to level 3 or 4 (if so then Gold must be informed). They decide the best course of action following the advice of Gold. Bronze staff will be informed (FLT). Pupils may still not be alerted.

If there is no time due to the imminence of the threat, they should be empowered to declare going to a higher level and can say what that is.

The Silver member, along with those who take on certain roles, make their way to the room and set it up.

- Consideration re: calling 999.
- If time, Silver to call Gold.
- Begin creating auditable records.

Makes a quick list of the key people/groups/issues and assess the risk level (High - Medium – Low):

- Pupils
- Staff
- Visitors to the school
- Parents/family/friends
- The original trespasser(s)
- Local residents
- Local road users
- School reputation

Depending upon the info/intel, these groups are then to follow a graduated response.

**Level 3: Secure Zone(s) (state the number/s) (Partial Response)**

A decision is taken to enact what we might otherwise call 'a partial incident response.' The ELT (Silver) will decide what areas are affected and how long they will stay partially confined. Communication would be shared from silver to bronze regarding which Zone are secured.

If the situation improves, we revert back to level two. If the incident escalates we move to level 4.

**Level 4: Secure All Zones**

This may be as a result of a reported incident / civil disturbance in the local community with the potential to pose a risk to staff and pupils in the school.

It may also be as a result of a warning being received regarding the risk of air pollution, etc, Or an escalation from any other level.

Staff will be notified that the full incident response procedures are to take place by communication with the Executive Leadership Team.

If there is an immediate threat, the full incident response alarm will be triggered. If the threat is lower but requires a full incident response, this may be communicated by year leaders/ and admin staff that there is a potential risk. Staff will be notified when they can ease the procedures.

It should be possible to use code words when enacting this plan, so as to allow for proportionate steps to be taken which alerts staff and activates plans but does so without alerting pupils.

**Level 1:** *'There is a Mr Ince in the front office to see the ELT'*

**Level 2:** *'Mr Ince is saying that the boiler needs some work at [location(s)].'*

**Level 3:** *'Mr Ince has found a leak in [location(s)].'*

**Level 4:** *'Code Ince. Code Ince.'*

Contingencies to consider could be:

- The communications network fails
- Parents start to turn up
- Injured pupil
- Injured member of staff
- Staff subject of an assault
- Loss of control across the school footprint
- The media arrives
- School property is damaged, causing a Health & Safety risk

### **Contacting the Emergency Services**

All of the three blue light services (Police, Fire and Ambulance) use the mnemonic of M/ETHANE.

- Major incident
- Exact Location ('What3Words')
- Type of incident
- Hazards
- Access to scene
- Number and severity
- Emergency services

The school will provide a precise location (what3words) of where an incident is taking place and the best entrance for them to approach an incident.

### **Take Action and Review What Happened**

Staff are to remain in the incident response positions until they have been informed by Executive Leadership Team, in person, that the exercise is over. The ELT will evaluate their systems (with the crisis management team from the local Authority (if this is relevant).

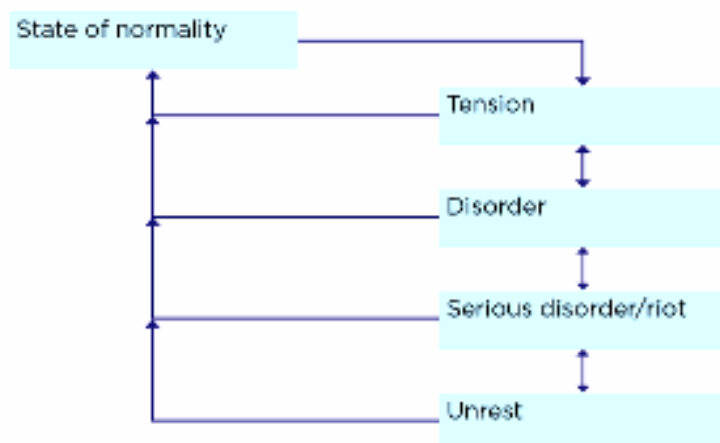
**Respond** - implement the option you have selected.

**Record** - If appropriate, record what you did and why.

**Monitor** – Was the intended outcome achieved? What lessons can you take from how things turned out and what might you do differently?

**Manage Staff emotions and well being**

### The Disorder Model



The **Disorder Model** provides a structure for leaders to understand the nature of disorder. The management of tension in communities or social groups should be regarded as a continuous process rather than a one-off crisis intervention.

Declares what state we are in during an operation or applicable incident *and* whenever a state is declared, it is always stated that we are or planning for the next stage further up.

*'We are at 'Tension', planning for 'Disorder'.* It is worth noting that after any disorder there is usually a change in atmosphere resulting to some unrest.

### Conclusion

The incident response procedures will be dealt with calmly, efficiently and effectively and with as little disruption as possible to pupils' education. The safety of all will be paramount. This policy must be read in conjunction with all other school policies that refer to the care, safety and welfare of children and staff.

### 6. The Incident Response Situations when Away from Blue Coat Federation

The Blue Coat Federation will also plan for what would happen if an incident response situation should arise when a group is away from the schools: whether this be on a short visit, day trip or longer trip that involves a party staying away. The Federation will always carry out a risk assessment prior to such visits and will consider what would happen if an emergency situation arose that was out of the control of the staff who are supervising the students on the trip.

Appropriate guidance will be given to students prior to the trip, and will be reinforced during the trip itself. It is almost impossible to predict the circumstances where an emergency situation might arise in a way that specific planning can be undertaken. As a minimum, it will be prudent to show students an emergency meeting point if the party gets separated and remind them to follow instructions from the Emergency Services.

## 7. Incident Control Officers &amp; Response Team

Rooms most suitable for an incident response
1 Classrooms
2 Hall
3 Canteen
4 Offices

Communication arrangements
Wherever possible, use silent communications and keep noise to a minimum especially if an intruder is close by. Make sure any communications devices are secure and cannot be intercepted.
Classroom telephones
Mobile phones
Instant messaging / email

**Evacuation plan, if needed**

Remember that it is very much **the exception** to evacuate a building in the event of a hostile intruder. Unless the location of the intruder is known, a "blind" evacuation may be putting people in more danger than if they had remained within the building.

**In the event that the building needs to be evacuated the schools may swap to the alternative site e.g. BCI go to BCJ and vice versa.**

**Other useful contacts:**

Name	Emergency Contact Number
Health Protection and Emergency Planning Officer	01922 650398
Out of Hours	01922 650000
Sharon Grant (managing emergencies in Schools)	07464 912284
Team Group	01922 652221
Blue Coat Academy	01922 720558
St. Matthew's Church	01922 626039

## 8. Talk to pupils both before and after a drill

### Before the drill

Talking to pupils will allow them to discuss an incident response in a familiar environment for pupils. Pupils may feel more comfortable asking questions (about an incident response or the reasons for it) with staff they're more familiar with. Staff can tailor the way they discuss the drill based on the pupils they have in their classes (for instance, pupils who speak limited English may need visual aids, or pupils with special educational needs may need additional guidance, support or specific procedures)

Whether you talk about it in an assembly or in classrooms, make sure pupils know:

- What the procedure is, step by step
- How you expect them to behave
- That this is just a drill, and they aren't in any real danger (it may help to compare it to a fire drill)

### During the Drill

- Focus on "plans to keep us all safe" and "what to do in an emergency" – using the word 'an incident response procedure'
- Tell pupils that "it's **very** unlikely we'll need to do this, but we have to practise just in case"
- Treat it similar to a fire drill, explaining that these are things the adults need to do to keep pupils safe, and this is how pupils can help
- Remind them that it's to keep them safe, and although it might feel exciting to be climbing under desks and turning lights out, it's important they take it seriously
- Make sure you give pupils time to express their concerns or fears, and to ask any questions.
- Stay calm. This will help pupils stay calm
- Use clear, simple language and be honest about what an incident response is for. You could say "this is in case someone comes into our school who shouldn't be here, this is how we'll keep everyone safe, and it's important that we all know what to do"
- Don't shy away from the fact that something could happen, but emphasise that it's **very** unlikely

### After the drill

- Praise your pupils and explain how their good behaviour kept them safe and out of harm
- Talk to your pupils about how they felt and make time to answer any questions they may have
- Ask if there was anything that your class could have done better when reacting to the drill
- Remind your pupils that it was a drill and there's nothing for them to worry about
- Then go straight back to 'work as usual'

## Appendix 1: An incident response Procedure Letter to Parents/carers

*As you may be aware, all schools have to have emergency procedures in place. We have reviewed our procedures and a copy of the incident response policy is now on our website. We will practice the procedure at least annually with children so that they would know what to do should we ever need to use it. This is done sensitively with children so as not to cause any distress, in the same way that school would practice the Fire Evacuation Procedure.*

*The incident response procedures are important and would be used in response to an internal or external incident which could be a threat to the safety of staff and children in the school.*

*An incident response procedures may be activated in response to any number of situations, these may be:*

- 1. A reported incident, disturbance in the local community*
- 2. An intruder on the site*
- 3. A warning being received regarding a local risk of air pollution (smoke plume, gas cloud etc.)*
- 4. A major fire in the vicinity of the school*
- 5. The close proximity of a dangerous dog*

*Our procedure aims to minimise disruption to the learning environment whilst ensuring the safety of all pupils and staff. You may wish to read the full policy. This can be found on the Federation website ([bluecoatfederation.co.uk](http://bluecoatfederation.co.uk)).*

*Pupils will not be released to parents during the incident response exercise. Hopefully, we will never have a situation where we would need to use the incident response procedures but we all feel safer knowing that we have procedures in place for any eventuality that would keep our children safe.*

**Appendix 2: An incident Response Checklist**

Use this checklist to take actions and record them during an incident response. Recording the time could be especially useful during drills to practice going through these actions at pace. In an emergency, use the actions listed to help you make sure nothing is missed.

Step	Time	Signed
Assess the situation and identify the threat level		
A decision is taken to enact what we might otherwise call 'a partial response'.		
Secure part or all of the premise		
If the level threat is high dial 999 and alert emergency services		
Sound alarm/signal and begin an incident response procedures		
Direct all children, staff, parents and visitors to the nearest safe place (this may be dependent on what and where the risk is)		
Secure rooms by locking doors and windows, and take action to increase protection as set out in the plan		
Close blinds and curtains		
Turn off the lights, fans and/or mobile air conditioning units		
Account for pupils, staff and visitors using registers		
Direct all children, staff, parents and visitors to hide, including under desks and away from windows		
Stay as silent as possible – put any mobile phones on silent		
Make sure everyone is aware of an exit point in case an intruder gains access		
If possible, check and search for missing or injured pupils, staff or visitors		
Keep doors and windows locked shut and remain inside until the all clear has been given, or until you're told to evacuate by the emergency services		
Communicate with local authority		



## Appendix 3: Incident Response Procedures for Children

An incident response drill is not a fire drill.



It means there could be danger outside



or inside school.



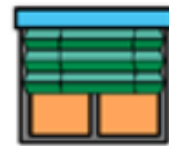
We will hear a very loud sound.



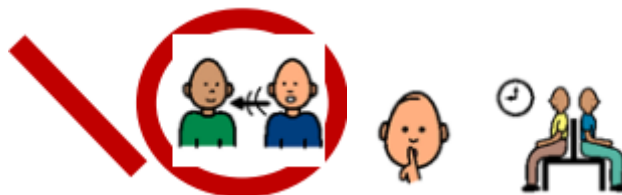
Sit on the floor



and close the blinds.



This is to keep everyone safe.



No talking. Be quiet. Wait until the drill is over

and your teacher says everything is okay.



## Appendix 4: Joint Decision Log

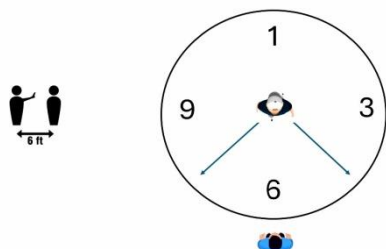
<b>Classification when complete</b>				
<b>Name of the Person completing this log</b>	<b>Print Name</b>	<b>Signature</b>	<b>Time</b>	<b>Date</b>
<b>Date and Time commenced</b>				
<b>Incident numbers</b>				
<b>Location of Incident</b>				
<b>Incident/event</b>				

<b>Decision Log Number</b>	<b>Decision - Date and Time of Decision</b>
<b>1. Identify situation &amp; gather information</b> What is your understanding of what has happened? What do we know so far? What might happen?	
<b>2. Assess threats &amp; risks</b> Do I need to take action immediately? Do I need to seek more information? Where can I get it from? What could go wrong?	
<b>3. Policies &amp; Procedure</b> Which ones have I taken into account	
<b>4. Options &amp; Considerations</b> What options are open to me? Consider immediacy of any risk/threat, limits of information etc.?	
<b>5. Decision &amp; Rationale</b> Decision controls- why are we doing this? What do we think will happen? Do we have a common understanding and position on; <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Situation</li> <li>• Available information</li> <li>• Terminology</li> <li>• Working practices</li> <li>• Conclusions</li> </ul> Is the benefit proportional to the risk?	
<b>6. Review of Decision - Time and result</b>	
<b>Names of People Making Decision</b>	
<b>Name of Person Recording Decision</b>	

## Appendix 5: Communicating with Difficult Individuals

### Consider how you stand

Position yourself strategically with open hands raised above your waistline. Balance your weight equally on both feet, placing your stronger leg to the rear and your weaker leg forward. This stance enhances your stability and allows your front leg to act as a protective barrier. Maintain a reactionary gap of 6 feet (2 metres). If they move, you subtly move too.



### Manage Your Own Emotions and Responses

Emotional awareness and self-regulation are key aspects of emotional intelligence – the ability to identify and manage your own emotions and the emotions of others.

Staff emotional intelligence is closely linked to their ability to communicate effectively in difficult situations. It is important to:

- demonstrate empathy
- understand possible reasons for a person's behaviour
- be aware of the impact of their own behaviour on others

### Active Listening

Active listening is a system of opening and maintaining communications through the use of empathy, listening and body language. It is a skill that can be acquired and developed with practice. However, active listening can be difficult to master so its development may take time and patience.

Active listening should be used throughout an encounter. Being open to what a person is saying helps to build rapport, which could help reduce tension.

**Tips** – Allow the person time to speak, continue to signal non-aggression, adopt a relaxed posture and use friendly, open gestures. Be aware of your own non-verbal signals – signalling a non-aggressive response can help defuse a situation. Move slowly, allowing the person space, while adopting a basic or interview stance.

### Manage Your Own Emotions and Responses

Emotional awareness and self-regulation are key aspects of emotional intelligence – the ability to identify and manage your own emotions and the emotions of others. Emotional intelligence is closely linked to their ability to communicate effectively in difficult situations.

### People Who May Be Harder Than Others to Communicate With

There may be times when people are experiencing further difficulties in communicating and/or being understood:

1. Language, hard of hearing or other comprehension issues
2. So angry, excited, agitated, confused, scared, etc that it is harder to get through to them
3. Developmental or neurological differences, e.g. autism
4. Affected by drink, drugs, medication
5. Suffering from mental ill-health
6. Suffering from another medical condition, e.g. in a diabetic crisis
7. Playing up to peer/crowd pressure
8. In a difficult environment, e.g. loud noise, unsafe position, etc.