Title of document	**Critical Incident Guidance for Suffolk LA Maintained Schools – how to formulate your school specific policy and procedures**	
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IMPORTANT NOTICE: Whilst Martyn's Law has been 'passed', it is not fully in effect until April 2027. This means that the SIA may make changes in their requirements of schools and Local Authorities. However, all parties are required to prepare as fully as they are able before that point, and schools will be advised of those changes.

1. Introduction

1.1 Purpose

This document provides clear, practical guidance for schools to follow before, during, and after a critical incident and to formulate a school specific policy. It is crucial that schools do not simply print this document and use it as their own – each establishment is individual in its premises age and layout, its staffing, its pupil or student cohort and its geographical location.

Schools are expected to already have Site Security Risk Assessments which can be referred to when planning incident responses.

1.2 Definition of a Critical Incident

A critical incident is an event that has the potential to cause significant harm, disruption, or trauma to pupils, staff, or the school community. This can include: bomb threat, trespass and threat, environmental disaster, transport incident, premises failure or nearby major incident affecting the school. A fuller list is given in ***Appendix A***.

This guidance centres around evacuation, invacuation and lockdown due to Martyn's Law. Other types of critical incident such as transport incidents or premises failures will already be planned by schools, either within local risk assessments for educational trips, or via Business Continuity Plans.

1.3 Scope

This guidance applies to all Local Authority education settings, including early years, primary, secondary, special schools, and alternative provision. Trusts and Free Schools are welcome to use this guidance but please be sure to adapt it as required.

1.4 Definitions

The terms 'pupil' and 'student', 'child' and 'young person / people' are interchangeable and have no bearing on the guidance.

2. Immediate Priorities (The First Hour)

This section sets out the critical actions required to protect life, stabilise the situation, and establish control during the first hour of any serious incident.
It is designed to be clear, calm, and easy to follow in a high-stress situation.
Appendix B is an 'easy-read' First Hour checklist.

2.1 Protect Life and Prevent Further Harm

- **Assess immediate danger:** Identify any threats to pupils, staff, or visitors (e.g., fire, intruder, hazardous substance) – this is via a phone call threat to the school office, ***Appendix C*** shows a template for making notes whilst the threat is being made

- **Move people to safety:**
    - **Evacuate** if the danger is internal.
    - **Invacuate** or **lockdown** if danger is external.
- **Administer first aid:** Designated first aiders should support casualties once it is safe.
- **Request assistance early:** Never delay calling emergency services if there is any potential risk to life.

2.2 Contact Emergency Services

- Dial **999** immediately and provide:
    - Nature of the incident
    - Exact location and access routes
    - Known casualties or risks
    - Any immediate actions already taken (e.g., lockdown)
- Assign a staff member to meet emergency responders at an agreed entry point.
- Maintain open communication lines for updates.

2.3 Alert Headteacher / Incident Lead

- Notify the Headteacher or the nominated Critical Incident Lead as soon as possible.
- If they are off-site, escalate to the next senior leader.
- The Incident Lead initiates the Critical Incident Plan and coordinates the response.
- Ensure leadership is informed early to avoid conflicting instructions.

2.4 Secure the Scene

- Prevent movement into or out of the affected area unless required for safety.
- Restrict access to preserve evidence where relevant (e.g., crime scene, accident investigation).
- Direct pupils and staff away from danger zones.
- Ensure gates, entrances, or internal doors are secured as appropriate to the response (evacuation vs lockdown).

2.5 Communicate Initial Instructions to Staff

- Use the school's **agreed communication method** (e.g., code phrase, tannoy alert, radio, messenger system).
- Give **brief, clear instructions** such as:
    - "Initiate lockdown."
    - "Evacuate to Fire Assembly Point B."
    - "Keep pupils in classrooms and await further instructions."
- Ensure staff know to:
    - Stay calm
    - Supervise pupils closely

    - Keep phones free for emergency use
    - Not release pupils unless directed

2.6 Begin an Incident Log

- Start recording **all key decisions, timings, and actions** as soon as possible.
- Include:
    - Time the incident was reported
    - Who was notified
    - Instructions given
    - Agencies involved
    - Resource needs
- The log should be maintained by the Incident Lead or a designated staff member.
- A clear log supports:
    - Emergency service coordination
    - Later reviews of risk assessments
    - Safeguarding and legal requirements

2.7 Support and Supervise Pupils

- Ensure pupils are kept calm, supervised, and safe from distressing information.
- Avoid speculation; only share facts that staff are authorised to communicate.
- Provide additional support for vulnerable pupils (SEND, SEMH, those with trauma history).

2.8 Manage Immediate Practical Needs

- Assign staff to essential roles, such as:
    - Door security
    - Medical assistance
    - Pupil supervision
    - Communication management
- Check for:
    - Missing pupils
    - Pupils or staff needing medical attention
    - Safeguarding concerns
- Ensure essential equipment is available (first aid kits, radios, grab bags).

3. Roles and Responsibilities

3.1 **Headteacher**
Provides overall leadership and oversees the school's response.

3.2 **Critical Incident Lead**
Coordinates management of the incident and liaises with emergency services.

3.3 **Senior Leadership Team**
Supports decision-making, supervision, and communication.

3.4 **Administrative/Communications Staff**
Manages internal and external communications as directed.

3.5 **Site Team**
Supports access, safety, utilities, and practical issues.

3.6 **Local Authority / SHaW Team**
Provides strategic support, advice, and communication assistance.

4. Martyn's Law (Terrorism Protection) Requirements

4.1 Overview

Martyn's Law – or the Terrorism (Protection of Premises) Act 2025 – aims to improve public protection by ensuring organisations think ahead about how they would respond to a violent attack. It became law on 3 April 2025 and applies to premises where 200 or more people are expected to be present.
Appendix D is called 'Martyn's Law – An Easy Read for Schools'. This includes a template for secondary school students to read.

4.2 Implementation Timeline

Martyn's Law has a minimum 24-month implementation period, with enforcement expected by April 2027. Further guidance will be issued by the Home Office, DfE, and SIA.[1]

4.3 Application to Schools

All early years, primary, secondary and further education settings are placed in the Standard Tier, even if more than 800 people are present. The Standard Tier focuses on proportionate, low-cost, staff-led preparedness. **It is important to note that irrespective of the fact that schools with fewer than 200 people are out of scope, Suffolk County Council's SHaW Team requests that all schools conduct a Critical Incident Policy including the elements of Martyn's Law. The Joint Emergency Planning Unit have supported this stance.**

4.4 Key Duties for Schools

4.4.1 Responsible Person

Each school must designate a Responsible Person who oversees compliance and registers the setting with the Security Industry Authority (SIA) – this is described in ***Appendix G***.[2]

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[1] Brodies Law Firm / Department for Education
[2] Oxfordshire County Council Governor Services

4.4.2 Proportionate Emergency Procedures

Schools must maintain simple procedures covering:[3]

- Evacuation
- Invacuation
- Lockdown
- Internal and external communication

4.4.3 Staff Training and Awareness

Staff should be familiar with response procedures and understand how to act calmly and effectively.

4.5 What Schools Are Not Required to Do

Schools in the Standard Tier do not need to install CCTV, conduct bag searches, or make significant physical changes. The focus remains on practical, low-cost measures.

4.6 The integration of Martyn's Law with the School's Critical Incident Plan

These procedures feed directly into Section 2 (Immediate Priorities – The First Hour), and Section 6 (Managing the School during the incident) from this document. The Responsible Person supports the Critical Incident Lead during an incident. Post-incident reviews must consider statutory obligations under the Act.

5. Communication

Effective communication is essential during any critical incident. Clear, timely, and controlled messaging helps maintain safety, reduce panic, and ensures coordinated action.

5.1 Internal Communication (Staff)

This section explains what to communicate and how to do it in a real incident.

How to communicate internally:

Schools should use pre-agreed communication systems, such as:

- Phone/PA system as appropriate to the incident
- Radios or walkie-talkies
- Agreed emergency code words
- Staff messaging apps (only if approved in safeguarding/IT policy)
- A runner system (where technology is unavailable)
- Best practice during the incident

[3] Browne Jacobson – Preparing for Martyn's Law

Ensure that you use the most effective and the safest form of communication with regard to the incident type. For instance, where quietness is the key to safety, the use of a phone or PA system would be unlikely to be the safest option.

Use clear, direct instructions such as “Initiate lockdown”, “Evacuate the building”, “Keep pupils in classrooms.” Do not go into any unnecessary detail and use a calm, steady tone — panic spreads fastest through voice.

Repeat key messages if needed for clarity. Confirm receipt of your message; ask staff to acknowledge by radio, message, or visual signal.
Ensure that you keep all lines open for urgent updates — discourage unnecessary speech.

What staff need to communicate back:

- Confirmation they have taken the action (e.g., “Year 5 secure and accounted for”).
- Any missing pupils or staff.
- Any injuries or urgent concerns.
- Any pupils in highly dysregulated states or needing assistance.

***** THESE PROTOCOLS ARE PART OF YOUR TEMPLATES FOR CRITICAL INCIDENTS – *APPENDIX E* HAS THREE TEMPLATES – LOCKDOWN, EVACUTATION AND INVACUATION *****

5.2 Communication with Families

Why this matters:

Well-handled communication prevents panic, reduces misinformation, and protects staff from being overwhelmed by calls (which may block the line for Emergency Services instructions).

How to do it:

Use pre-prepared templates for texts, emails, website statements and ensure one authorised person writes and sends all messages (usually Headteacher or designated SLT member).

Use school communication systems such as:

- ParentMail / IRIS ParentMail
- School app if applicable
- Email mailing lists – if easy to use in an emergency
- Automated text systems

Keep the message brief, factual, and calm and avoid speculation about cause, blame, injuries, or police activity.

What to include:

- That an incident has occurred.
- That pupils are safe as far as is known at that time.
- Instructions for parents (e.g., *Do not come to site*, or *Wait for collection instructions*).
- A reassurance that updates will follow.

What NOT to do:

- Do not answer individual parent calls during the incident.
- Do not share unverified information.
- Do not release names of injured or affected individuals.
- Do not allow staff to post anything on personal social media.

5.3 Media and Social Media Handling

Media Management:

- Only one authorised spokesperson should communicate externally (usually the Headteacher or designated member of SLT)
- Refer all press enquiries to Educational Support via edorgsupport@suffolk.gov.uk or **01473 263 940**, who will contact the SCC Communications Team
- Do not allow staff or pupils to be interviewed without consent.
- Avoid releasing operational details that could compromise safety or police activity.

Social Media:

- Post only controlled, factual updates through official channels.
- Monitor for rumours or misinformation.
- Do not respond to argumentative or speculative comments.
- Consider temporarily disabling comments if permitted by platform settings.

5.4 Liaison with Emergency Services

How to communicate with responders:

- Provide clear information upon their arrival:
    - Exact nature of incident
    - Location(s) affected
    - Numbers of casualties or missing persons
    - Any known risks (e.g., chemicals, intruder location)
-

- Assign a staff member to act as the Emergency Services Liaison so responders always have one point of contact.
- Be honest about what you don't know — guessing can cause risk.

When the Emergency Services are in contact with you, update the incident log with:

- Advice or instruction given by emergency services
- Times of key decisions
- Actions taken
- Evidence preserved.

5.5 Communication with Children

Children need simple, honest, and calm communication. The aim is to keep them informed enough to stay safe without causing unnecessary distress. Use appropriate language or signage for the age and ability of the pupils or students. Some poster examples are given in ***Appendix F.***

General principles:

- Keep tone calm, steady, and reassuring.
- Use age-appropriate language (simple and concrete).
- Avoid graphic details or speculation.
- Emphasise that adults are managing the situation.
- Allow time for brief questions if safe to do so.

How to communicate during different responses:

If evacuating:

"We need to go outside now. Stay with me and walk quickly."
Avoid saying words like "danger" or "terrorist" in front of pupils.

If invacuating:

"We are moving to a safer place inside the school. Stay close to your group."

If locking down:

"We need to stay quiet and keep the room safe. Follow my instructions."

Supporting anxious pupils:

- Use brief reassurance: "You're safe with me."
- For SEND or SEMH pupils, staff may use known calming strategies.

******* ALWAYS avoid language that could increase panic (e.g., "There's someone dangerous outside"). *******

As an overall rule, DO NOT let pupils use mobile phones. This will prevent misinformation and parent panic.

After the incident:

- Give factual information appropriate to age.
- Normalise emotional responses: "It's okay to feel shaken."
- Signpost who they can talk to (e.g., pastoral teams, trusted staff).

6. Managing the School During the Incident – Evacuation, Invacuation and Lockdown principles (see *Appendix E* for templates)

Every school will have its own building layout, assembly points, and routes. The procedures below give a **generic, best-practice 'how-to'** which each school can adapt to its unique environment. Staff should always follow site-specific plans stablished during training and drills.

6.1 Evacuation (How to Do It)

Evacuation is used when **the danger is inside the building** or when being outside is safer.

Key Principles

- Move **away from danger**, ideally outside.
- Follow **pre-planned escape routes** identified in drills.
- Keep pupils calm, quiet, and together
- **Do not rely on your current Fire Assembly Point as these are easily identifiable by those causing the threat.**

How to Evacuate

1. **Give the evacuation signal** using the school's agreed method.
2. **Teachers should lead pupils out immediately**, leaving bags, coats and belongings behind.
3. **Use your nearest safe exit** — if your usual route is blocked, switch to an alternative.
4. **Support pupils needing assistance**, including SEND or mobility needs.
5. **Do not return for anyone or anything** once you have left the room.
6. **Go directly to the school's designated assembly point**, established during drills.
7. **Take a register** as soon as it is safe.
8. **Report any missing pupils or staff** to the Incident Lead or nominated marshal.

9. **Keep pupils supervised and together** until further instructions.
10. **Do not re-enter the building** until emergency services declare it safe.

Additional considerations

- Ensure fire doors are closed behind you to slow spread of fire or smoke if that is the reason for evacuation
- Staff should be familiar with secondary assembly points in case the main one is unsafe.
- For out-of-class activities (PE field, labs, playground), teachers must follow the nearest safe evacuation route, not necessarily the route used during fire drills.

6.2 Invacuation (How to Do It)

Invacuation is used when **there is danger outside**, but it is still safe to move around *inside* the building.
Examples include:

- Chemical spill or smoke outside
- Dangerous dog
- Police incident near the school
- Severe weather

Key Principles

- Bring everyone **inside the building** quickly.
- Move to a **pre-identified safer internal area** (determined in drills).
- Maintain calm and control.

How to Invacuate

1. **Issue invacuation instruction** using the school's agreed system.
2. **Transition people inside quickly**, including pupils and staff outdoors.
3. **Close external doors** behind the last group entering.
4. Move pupils to the **designated safer internal area**, such as:
    - A hall
    - A studio
    - A central corridor away from windows
    - A classroom with reduced visibility.
5. **Take a register** once the group has settled.
6. **Close all windows, blinds/curtains**, and turn off lights if advised.

7. **Seal or block vents** if directed (depending on the cause e.g., external chemical issue).
8. **Await further instructions** from the Incident Lead or emergency services.
9. **Keep pupils supervised and calm** until the all-clear is given.

Additional considerations

- Pre-identify backup internal areas in case the primary one is unavailable.
- Ensure staff and pupils know the route to the safe internal locations from *anywhere* on site.
- Maintain communication with front-office staff who monitor external updates.

6.3 Lockdown (How to Do It)

Lockdown is used when **there is an immediate danger on or near the site** and remaining in place is the safest option.

Examples include:

- Violent intruder threatening entry
- Unidentifiable seen on site
- Parent on site with a no-contact order
- Police warning of a threat in the area.

Key Principles

- Stay **inside**, stay **out of sight**, stay **quiet**.
- Control entry and visibility.
- Maintain supervision and calm.

How to Lock Down

1. **Give the lockdown signal** immediately using the agreed method (code word over walkie talkies / pop up alert email on classroom laptops etc).
2. **Staff should:**
    - **Bring pupils into the nearest safe room**.
    - **Lock the classroom door** if possible, or secure it with furniture if not.
    - **Turn off lights** (if appropriate).
    - **Close blinds or curtains** to block visibility from outside.
    - Move pupils **out of sight lines** (away from doors/windows).
3. **Silence mobile phones** and ensure pupils do the same.

4. **Keep pupils quiet and calm** — use reassurance, not explanations that could cause panic.
5. **Take a register silently** and record who is present.
6. **Do not open the door** for anyone unless you are told to do so by either:
    - A known senior leader using a pre-agreed password/phrase, or
    - Emergency services.
7. **Ignore fire alarms** unless you see smoke or fire (intruders may attempt to trigger evacuation).
8. **Maintain communication** with the Incident Lead only if safe — e.g., via silent messaging or radio on low volume.
9. Remain in lockdown until an **authorised all-clear** is given.

Additional considerations

- Staff supporting pupils outside (playground, PE field) must:
    - Move quickly to the **nearest safe indoor location**,
    - Avoid crossing open spaces unnecessarily,
    - Follow pre-practised alternate lockdown routes.
- SEND or highly dysregulated pupils may require specific strategies that staff practise in advance.
- Staff should have pre-identified hiding spots/low-visibility zones in their classrooms.

6.4 General Principles for All Three Procedures

***** Preparation matters *****

Each school must pre-identify:

- Primary and secondary **assembly points** (evacuation)
- Primary and secondary **safe internal areas** (invacuation)
- **Low-visibility zones** in each room (lockdown)

During drills, staff should practise:

- Closing blinds/curtains quickly
- Positioning pupils safely
- Using alternate routes
- Accounting for pupils with mobility or SEND needs
- Silent working under pressure

Communication during procedures

- Keep instructions short and calm.
- Avoid unnecessary information.
- Only share age-appropriate messaging with pupils.

6.4 Supervision of Pupils

Supervision during a critical incident is a safeguarding priority. Pupils must be kept safe, accounted for, and supported emotionally and physically.

Key expectations for staff:

- **Remain with your group at all times.** Staff should not leave pupils unsupervised unless directed by the Incident Lead.
- **Position yourself to observe all pupils.** Maintain clear sight of the group where possible, even during lockdown or invacuation.
- **Keep the group together.** Pupils must not wander, change groups, or collect belongings.
- **Monitor emotional wellbeing.** Look for signs of distress (crying, panic, shutdowns) and use known de-escalation or grounding strategies.
- **Discourage use of mobile phones.** Prevent panic, misinformation, and children messaging families prematurely.
- **Ensure regular headcounts.** Particularly after movement (e.g., during evacuation, returning indoors, shifting rooms).
- **Support vulnerable pupils.** Children with trauma histories, anxiety, SEND, or safeguarding flags may require additional reassurance or calming strategies.

During supervised movement (evacuation/invacuation):

- Staff lead from the front and, where possible, another member of staff follows at the rear.
- Maintain supervision even in safe areas — pupils should remain with their original supervising adult.

6.5 Arrangements for Early Collection

Early collection of pupils during or after a critical incident must be **controlled, safe, and documented**, especially when families may be distressed or confused.

Principles

- Safety first — do not release pupils until the site is secure.
- Identity badges must remain strictly in place.
- Uncontrolled collection can compromise both safeguarding and emergency service operations.

How to manage early collection

1. **Designate a collection point**

- Away from the incident area, but close enough for controlled movement.
- Use the location identified during drills or planned procedures.

2. **Use a controlled access and egress system**

- Use one entrance and one exit so it is easy to see people coming and going
- Staff should be positioned to prevent crowding and ensure orderly flow
- Consider having staff wear Hi-Viz to clearly show they are staff. **Remember to wear staff lanyards.**

3. **Verify identity before release**

- Check the child's contact list (parent/carer only).
- Request ID if staff do not recognise the adult (i.e., the staff member releasing the child may not be that child's teacher)
- Never release a child to anyone not on the authorised list, even if they claim urgency.

4. **Log every collection**

- Time collected
- Name of adult collecting
- Staff member authorising release
- Any concerns or unusual behaviour

5. **Safeguard children not collected**

- Continue supervision until either normal end-of-day procedures resume, or emergency services advise otherwise.

Communicating with families regarding collection

- Provide clear instructions on *when*, *where*, and *how* collection will occur.
- Advise parents **not to come to site** until instructed — this prevents congestion and avoids interfering with emergency services.

6.6 SEND Considerations

Pupils with SEND may require adapted safety procedures. Preparation and individualised planning is essential to safeguarding these children during an incident.

Planning before the incident

- Update **Pupil Risk Assessments**, **Healthcare Plans**, and **EHCPs** with specific critical-incident needs.
- Identify pupils who:

    - Struggle with sudden change
    - Have mobility issues
    - Require 1:1 support
    - Have sensory sensitivities (alarms, loud noises, crowds)
    - May become dysregulated or attempt to abscond
- Rehearse adapted emergency procedures with affected pupils where appropriate (social stories, visual cues, practice dry-runs).

During an incident

- **Provide additional adult support** if available (1:1s stay with their pupils).
- Use **calming strategies** familiar to that pupil (weighted items, sensory tools, quiet verbal reassurance).
- Avoid triggers:
    - For lockdown, turning off lights may cause sensory distress — staff may use alternative calming strategies while still reducing visibility from windows.
- For mobility-impaired pupils:
    - Use designated evacuation chairs or routes.
    - Allocate extra time and additional staff to support movement.
    - Ensure SEND evacuation routes have been tested.

After the incident

- Provide space, reassurance, and familiar adults.
- Offer early pastoral/SENDCo check-ins.
- Adapt routines temporarily if the pupil is distressed (reduced timetable, safe space provision).

6.7 Maintaining Safeguarding Obligations

Safeguarding requirements do **not pause** during a critical incident. Staff must uphold the same professional standards, confidentiality, and vigilance expected in day-to-day practice.

Core safeguarding expectations:

- **Maintain professional boundaries.** Even under stress, staff must continue to supervise pupils appropriately and avoid unsafe practices (e.g., leaving pupils unattended).
- **Protect confidentiality.** Staff must not share unverified or sensitive details with pupils, parents, or on social media.
- **Monitor for safeguarding indicators.** Fear, separation, prior trauma, or chaos can exacerbate risk for vulnerable pupils.
- **Never release pupils without correct verification.**

- **Ensure DSL availability.**
    - The DSL or Deputy DSL should be informed as soon as practicable.
    - DSLs help identify pupils most at risk of trauma, shock, or exploitation.

Record-keeping:
Safeguarding concerns arising during the incident must be logged on the school's system (CPOMS / MyConcern, etc.) ***as soon as it is safe and practical to do so*.**

All decisions relating to pupil safety must be documented in the incident log.

Post-incident safeguarding checks:

Pastoral staff/DSLs should check on:

- Pupils known to social care
- Children with SEND
- Previously identified vulnerable pupils
- Pupils who were separated from their group during the incident
- Pupils who witnessed distressing scenes

- Staff should be reminded of the need to monitor for delayed trauma responses (withdrawal, behaviour changes, disclosures).

7. Psychological / Mental Health First Aid and Wellbeing

Critical incidents can cause significant emotional distress for pupils, staff, and the wider school community. Psychological or Mental Health First Aid (PFA) focuses on providing **calm, compassionate, and practical support** in the immediate aftermath while helping people feel safe.

***** The goal is not therapy; it is to reduce stress, stabilise emotions, and support recovery. *****

7.1 Immediate Emotional Support
Immediate emotional support should begin **as soon as it is safe to do so**, once the initial danger has passed.

Core principles of immediate emotional support

- **Promote safety**
  Reassure pupils and staff that they are safe now. Use grounding language such as: "You're safe now, we're together, and help is here."
- **Promote calm**
  Use a steady voice, breathing techniques, or grounding activities (5-4-3-2-1 sensory check). Encourage slow breathing and simple regulation strategies.

- **Promote connectedness**
  Keeping people with familiar adults and peers helps reduce panic and fear.
- **Promote practical help**
  Offer water, tissues, quiet spaces, and help with contacting family (if appropriate and authorised).
- **Avoid forced conversations**
  Do **not** push individuals to talk about what they saw or felt.
  Allow silence. Let them talk if they choose.
- **Monitor for those in shock**
  Look for trembling, dissociation, confusion, or numbness — provide close supervision.

7.2 Supporting Pupils

Pupils may react in very different ways depending on age, developmental stage, previous trauma, special educational needs, and proximity to the event.

Key supportive actions for pupils:

- **Reunite students with familiar staff** wherever possible.
- **Provide simple, honest information**, using age-appropriate language. Avoid speculation.
- **Normalise their feelings:**
  "It's okay to feel scared or confused. Lots of people feel this way after something frightening."
- **Offer reassurance about safety** and what adults are doing to protect them.
- **Create calm spaces**
  Some pupils may need a quiet room with supportive adults.
- **Watch for delayed reactions**
  Children may seem calm initially but display distress later (nightmares, withdrawal, irritability).
- **Support pupils with SEND**
  Adapt communication, use visuals/social stories, and involve teaching assistants or familiar adults.

What staff should avoid:

- Do not provide graphic details.
- Do not make promises they cannot keep (e.g., "Nothing bad will ever happen again").
- Do not allow speculation or sharing via social media.
- Do not minimise feelings (e.g., "You're fine", "Don't worry").

Supporting pupils who witnessed distressing events:

- Provide closer supervision.
- Offer quiet spaces and sensory tools.
- Follow individual support plans or EHCP regulation strategies.
- Refer to pastoral/DSL teams if concerns emerge.

7.3 Supporting Staff

Staff wellbeing is critical; distressed adults cannot effectively support pupils.

Emotional support for staff

- Allow staff time to **breathe, regroup, and debrief informally** before returning to duties where possible.
- Provide access to a **private, calm space** where staff can sit, have water, and decompress.
- Acknowledge emotional impact:
  "This was frightening for all of us — thank you for staying calm."
- Encourage staff to speak to SLT, the DSL, or a trusted colleague if needed.

Practical support for staff

- Rotate staff if possible so no individual is left supporting distressed pupils for prolonged periods without relief.
- Allow flexibility: some staff may need temporary removal from the incident area or to be replaced in supervision roles.
- Offer additional breaks, adjusted duties, or early release if safe to do so.

Post-incident considerations

- Provide access to occupational health, counselling, or employee assistance programmes (EAP).
- Normalise stress responses without judgement.
- Hold a staff debrief (not a therapy session) to share factual updates and next steps.

7.4 Involving Specialist Services

Some incidents require additional support beyond the school's internal capacity.

When to involve specialist services

- Pupils or staff display severe or prolonged trauma responses.
- There has been a death or significant injury.
- Large numbers of pupils or staff were affected.
- The incident involved violence, targeted harm, or traumatic exposure.
- Ongoing risk factors are present.

Specialist services may include:

- Educational Psychology Services
- Mental Health Support Teams (MHST)
- CAMHS crisis services
- Local Authority Emergency Planning or Critical Incident Response Teams
- Bereavement services (Child Bereavement UK, Winston's Wish)
- Social care (if safeguarding concerns emerge)
- Police Family Liaison Officers in cases of fatalities or serious crimes

How to manage specialist involvement

- Coordinate through SLT or designated liaison (often the DSL or SENCo).
- Prepare key information in advance: names of affected pupils, known vulnerabilities, SEND needs.
- Ensure parents/carers are informed before outside agencies meet with pupils.

7.5 Managing Anniversaries and Triggers

Anniversaries and reminders can cause distress long after the incident.

Recognising triggers

- Anniversaries (1-week, 1-month, 1-year etc.)
- Returning to the place where the incident occurred
- Media coverage of the specific incident or other similar national / international situations
- Similar sounds or situations (e.g., alarms, loud bangs)
- Discussions in lessons (e.g., history, PSHE)
- Staff absence or changes in routine

How to manage them

- **Plan ahead:** Anticipate key dates and prepare pastoral support.
- **Remind staff** who teach affected pupils so they can plan sensitively.
- **Provide alternative arrangements** for pupils likely to be distressed (safe space, trusted adult check-in).
- **Acknowledge the date quietly** where appropriate without forcing discussion.
- **Communicate with parents** if particular pupils may need additional support.
- **Debrief staff** if there are concerns about emerging trauma reactions.

Long-term wellbeing support

- Monitor affected pupils and staff over the year that follows.
- Review safeguarding and SEND registers for pupils who may need continued pastoral input.
- Encourage healthy coping strategies — exercise, socialising, sleep, and routine.

8. Operational Continuity

Operational continuity is about keeping the school functioning safely during and after a critical incident. Depending on the nature of the incident, this may involve temporary closure, partial closure, relocation, or adapting how education and safeguarding are delivered.

8.1 Temporary Closure Considerations

A temporary closure may be required when:

- The site is unsafe (fire, structural damage, flooding).
- Emergency services take control of the premises.
- There has been significant trauma requiring recovery time.
- Utilities (water, electricity, heating) are unavailable.
- There is contamination (chemical hazard, environmental hazard).

How to decide on temporary closure

- The **Headteacher/Incident Lead**, in consultation with the **Local Authority** and emergency services, makes the decision.

Consider:

- Whether part of the site is still safe to use
- Impact on safeguarding
- Transportation and access issues
- Mental and physical wellbeing of pupils and staff
- Anticipated length of disruption

Steps to implement closure:

1. **Notify the LA via the School Closure webpage**
2. **Inform families** using established communication channels (text, email, app, website).
3. **Provide clear instructions**, including expected duration and next update time.
4. **Secure the building** (locks, alarms, restricted access).
5. **Ensure continuity of safeguarding** (see 8.4).
6. **Record the decision and rationale** in the incident log.

On-site considerations

- Emergency services may retain control of the site temporarily.
- Staff should not access damaged or unsafe areas without authorisation.

8.2 Alternative Learning Arrangements

Schools should maintain learning in a way that is safe, proportionate, and aligned with DfE expectations.

Possible arrangements

- **Partial reopening**
  Only safe buildings/areas used, vulnerable pupils prioritised.
- **Staggered return**
  Year groups return in phases as areas become usable.
- **Relocation within trust/shared sites**
  Using another local school or community building.
- **Remote learning**
  If appropriate and safe, use virtual platforms to provide short-term learning continuity.

Note: this should be realistic, trauma-sensitive, and not burdensome for staff or pupils.

How to plan alternative learning

- Identify which pupils require priority access (vulnerable/SEND).
- Establish which staff are available and well enough to work.
- Risk assess any temporary venues.
- Provide clear routines and expectations for pupils, parents, and staff.
- Ensure pupils without digital access receive paper-based learning where appropriate.

Safeguarding in alternative learning

- Maintain attendance/engagement tracking.
- Follow online safety protocols for remote work.
- DSL to continue regular check-ins for vulnerable pupils.

8.3 Maintaining Communication with Families

During operational disruption, communication must be **timely, calm, and consistent** to maintain trust and ensure safety.

How to communicate effectively

- Use **one authorised spokesperson** (Headteacher or Comms Lead).
- Provide **regular updates**, even if information has not changed ("We will update you again at 3pm").
- Use multiple channels:
    - School app
    - Text service
    - Email
    - Website banners
    - Social media (if used officially)

What families need to know

- Whether the school is open, partially open, or closed
- How long disruption may last (with caveats)
- Where pupils should go if relocating
- Transport or access changes
- How their child will continue learning
- Who to contact for wellbeing, SEND, or safeguarding questions

Handling parent anxiety

Set a clear contact window for queries to avoid overwhelming the office team.

- Ask parents to avoid speculation online and signpost them to official updates.
- Provide reassurance about safety and the school's ongoing contact with emergency services.

8.4 Continuity of Safeguarding

Safeguarding obligations continue **regardless of disruption**. Schools must ensure the safety and welfare of pupils even when operating under unusual conditions.

Key safeguarding duties during disruption:

- **DSL or Deputy DSL must remain contactable.**
- **Safeguarding systems (CPOMS/MyConcern) must still be updated** as soon as it is safe to do so.
- **Vulnerable pupils must be prioritised**, including:
  - Children with social care involvement
  - Children on Child Protection or CIN plans
  - Young carers
  - Pupils known to be at risk of exploitation, abuse, or neglect
  - Pupils with significant SEND or SEMH needs

If pupils are learning remotely

- Maintain regular check-ins with vulnerable pupils and families.
- Ensure staff follow **online safety protocols** (camera rules, approved platforms, professional conduct).
- Monitor attendance/engagement and follow absence procedures.
- Be alert to changes in presentation, concerning comments, or signs of neglect.

If pupils are temporarily relocated

- Conduct a **safeguarding risk assessment** of the temporary site.
- Ensure staff supervising pupils are DBS-checked.
- Maintain secure registration, toilets supervision, and movement systems.

Staff wellbeing and safeguarding

- Staff may also be affected emotionally — maintaining safeguarding vigilance may require:
  - Reduced administrative load
  - Buddy systems
  - Adjusted duties

Record-keeping

- Any safeguarding concern or disclosure **must still be recorded** and passed to the DSL.
- Incident logs should reflect safeguarding decisions and actions.

9. Post-Incident Review

A thorough post-incident review ensures the school learns from the event, improves future responses, and supports the emotional recovery of staff and pupils. It is a critical part of safeguarding, leadership accountability, and continuous improvement.

The review process should be **supportive, evidence-based, and blame-free**, focussing on learning rather than fault-finding.

Please involve appropriate LA Officers, such as Educational Support, and your

SHaW Advisor.

9.1 Debriefing with Staff

A staff debrief should take place **as soon as reasonably possible** once the incident has stabilised and the immediate risks have been addressed.

Purpose of the staff debrief

- Share factual information about what happened.
- Allow staff to express concerns, observations, or practical difficulties.
- Identify immediate wellbeing needs.
- Begin capturing learning for the review process.

How to run a staff debrief

1. **Choose a safe, private location**
   Ensure staff can speak openly without interruption.
2. **Lead with reassurance and clarity**
   Acknowledge the emotional impact of the incident and thank staff for their professionalism.
3. **Share verified facts only**
   Provide a clear, concise timeline of the incident. Avoid speculation or unconfirmed details.
4. **Invite staff reflections**
   Encourage practical observations such as:
   - "What worked well?"
   - "What didn't work or was unclear?"
   - "Were there barriers to carrying out procedures?"
5. **Avoid pressuring staff to discuss emotional reactions**
   This is not a counselling session. Staff should share only what they feel comfortable sharing.
6. **Identify staff who may need additional support**
   Signpost to occupational health, EAP, or SLT pastoral support.
7. **Record key points**
   Notes should feed directly into the formal review of both your plan and your Site Security Risk Assessment.

9.2 Review of Actions and Decision-Making

The Incident Lead, SLT, and any relevant LA/Trust representatives should conduct a structured review to understand what happened, why, and how to improve future responses.

Components of the review

1. Timeline Reconstruction

Rebuild a clear, minute-by-minute account of the incident using:

- Incident logs
- Staff statements
- Communication records
- Emergency services records (if available)

2. Analysis of Key Decisions

Examine decisions made during the incident, considering:

- Who made the decision
- What information they had at the time
- Whether procedures were followed
- Whether procedures were adequate
- Whether additional support or resources were needed

REMEMBER: This is **not about blame** but identifying whether processes worked as intended.

3. Evaluation of Response Procedures

Assess the effectiveness of:

- Evacuation, invacuation, and lockdown procedures
- Communication systems
- Staff supervision
- Safeguarding responses
- Pupil management and pastoral systems
- Coordination with emergency services

4. Identification of Barriers

Note any obstacles that staff encountered, such as:

- Inaccessible exits
- Faulty radios/alarms
- Confusing instructions
- Lack of clarity around roles
- Pupils with high distress or mobility needs

These should inform future improvements.

5. Celebrating Good Practice

Identify what went well — this can easily be forgotten amongst all the other issues that have to be considered. Reinforcing strengths helps build confidence and organisational resilience.

9.3 Updating Procedures

Following the review, the school should make clear, documented changes to improve future readiness.

How to update procedures

1. **Update the Critical Incident Policy and Procedures**
   Amend evacuation/invacuation/lockdown processes, communication guidance, or roles as needed.

2. **Update Safeguarding and SEND Plans**
   Some pupils may require revised risk assessments following the incident.
3. **Revise training materials**
   Ensure staff CPD, induction packs, and drills include the new learning.
4. **Plan additional drills**
   If the incident revealed weaknesses, schedule targeted drills to practise improved procedures.
5. **Update resources** Replace or repair:
   - Radios
   - Signage
   - Grab bags
   - First aid supplies
   - Door locks or access systems
6. **Inform the Governing Body**
   Provide a clear summary of updates and actions taken.

9.4 Reporting Requirements
Certain incidents require formal reporting to external bodies. This ensures accountability and supports wider safeguarding and safety responsibilities.

Internal Reporting
- **Headteacher** reports to the Governing Body.
- **DSL** records any safeguarding concerns or disclosures on CPOMS / MyConcern.
- **Incident Lead** completes the full incident log and review report.
- **The Headteacher or Incident Lead** must report the incident to the SHaW Advisor via the GOSS portal

External Reporting
Reporting requirements depend on the nature of the incident and may include:

1. Local Authority

- All critical incidents should be reported in line with LA protocols.
- SCC will provide additional support (psychology, communications, etc) as required

2. Health and Safety Executive (HSE) – RIDDOR Regulations

Reportable if:

- There are specified serious injuries
- A specified dangerous occurrence,
- An incident and work-related event resulting in hospital treatment.

***** PLEASE NOTE – The SHaW Advisor must carry out the RIDDOR report, which is why it is crucial to ensure that the GOSS report is carried out as soon as reasonably practical. Schools should NOT report to RIDDOR directly. *****

3. Police

If the incident involved criminal activity, threats, violence, or serious safeguarding concerns.

4. Social Care

Where, as a result of the incident, or subsequent concerns arising from the incident:

- A pupil is harmed,
- A disclosure is made,
- There is reason to suspect abuse or neglect.

5. Ofsted (in certain circumstances)

For example:

- A child is seriously injured on site,
- A safeguarding failure is identified.

Suffolk County Council will direct this process.

End note regarding document retention:

Keep all incident documentation securely for the required statutory period.
Ensure restricted access due to confidentiality and safeguarding sensitivities.

Appendix A: Types of Critical Incidents

1. Threats to Life or Serious Harm

- A violent intruder or weapon on site
- A targeted attack or threat of attack
- A suspicious package or bomb threat
- A chemical, biological, or hazardous substance incident
- A nearby major incident affecting the school (e.g., terrorism, police operation)

2. Death or Serious Injury

- Death or serious injury of a pupil or staff member (on or off site)
- A medical emergency involving multiple casualties
- A suicide or suspected suicide
- A serious assault on school premises
- A child going missing during the school day or on a trip

3. Fires, Explosions, and Structural Failures

- Fire or explosion on site
- Structural damage to buildings (roof collapse, unsafe buildings, major flooding)
- Gas leaks or electrical failures that create danger
- Asbestos disturbance (if relevant to the building)

4. Environmental or Weather-Related Incidents

- Severe storms, high winds, or lightning strikes causing damage
- Extreme heat or cold leading to unsafe conditions
- Flooding on or around school premises
- Loss of utilities (water, heating, electricity) impacting safety

5. Transport-Related Incidents

- A school bus crash or accident on route
- A road traffic accident involving pupils or staff
- A serious incident during an educational visit, trip, or residential

6. Safeguarding and Welfare Incidents

- Abduction or attempted abduction
- Allegations of serious abuse involving staff or students
- Dangerous behaviour from a student placing others at risk
- Pupils affected by serious crime (e.g., gang-related violence)

7. Public Health and Contamination

- Infectious disease outbreak
- Food contamination
- Chemical spill on or near the site
- Environmental contamination (e.g., nearby industrial incident)

8. School Community Crises

- A sudden death of a member of the school community
- A community incident that deeply affects pupils or staff
- Vandalism or arson targeting the school
- A major IT security breach affecting safety, safeguarding, or operations

9. Reputational or Operational Incidents

(These may not be life-threatening but can still trigger a crisis response.)

- Significant media intrusion or public allegations
- Major data breach
- Cyber-attack on school systems
- Loss of communications during a critical event

10. External Incidents with School Impact

- Police chase or armed incident near the school
- Dangerous animal on or near the site
- Local industrial accident affecting air quality or safety
- Major incident affecting transport routes that traps pupils or staff

Appendix B: First Hour 'Easy-read'

PRINT THIS AS A DOUBLE-SIDED DOCUMENT AND LAMINATE. HAVE READY IN THE SCHOOL OFFICE AND COMMUNICATE ITS LOCATION

FIRST HOUR RESPONSE SHEET AND LOG

1. PROTECT LIFE (IMMEDIATELY)

- ☐ Assess the immediate danger.
- ☐ **Decide quickly: Evacuate, Invacuate, or Lockdown.**
- ☐ Move pupils and staff to the safest location.
- ☐ Provide first aid only when safe to do so.
- ☐ Do not allow pupils or staff to re-enter dangerous areas.

2. CALL EMERGENCY SERVICES (999)

- ☐ State the nature of the incident.
- ☐ Provide exact location and safe access route.
- ☐ Report number of injured persons.
- ☐ Explain actions already taken (e.g., lockdown).
- ☐ Assign a staff member to meet responders at the gate IF SAFE

3. ALERT HEADTEACHER / INCIDENT LEAD

- ☐ Notify the Headteacher or Incident Lead immediately.
- ☐ Escalate to next senior leader if they are unavailable.
- ☐ Incident Lead activates the Critical Incident Plan.

4. SECURE THE SCENE

- ☐ Keep people away from danger areas.
- ☐ Restrict access to preserve evidence.
- ☐ Secure doors and gates as appropriate.
- ☐ Support emergency services with access control.

5. ISSUE INITIAL STAFF INSTRUCTIONS

- ☐ Use the agreed communication method.
- ☐ Give clear commands: "Initiate lockdown", "Evacuate", etc.
- ☐ Staff supervise pupils and keep communication lines free.
- ☐ Do not release pupils unless instructed.

6. START AN INCIDENT LOG (TEMPLATE ON NEXT PAGE)

- ☐ Record start time of incident.
- ☐ Note who was notified and when.
- ☐ Record all decisions and actions taken.
- ☐ Assign a dedicated person to maintain the log.

7. SUPPORT & ACCOUNT FOR PUPILS

- ☐ Keep pupils calm and supervised.
- ☐ Check registers when safe.
- ☐ Report missing pupils immediately.
- ☐ Support vulnerable or distressed pupils.

8. MANAGE PRACTICAL NEEDS

- ☐ Assign roles (first aid, door security, communications).
- ☐ Ensure radios, grab bags, and first aid kits are accessible.
- ☐ Monitor staff wellbeing.

9. PREPARE FOR NEXT PHASE

- ☐ Gather SLT in a safe location.
- ☐ Prepare next communication to staff and families.
- ☐ Coordinate with emergency services on next steps.
- ☐ Prepare evacuation or reunification processes if required.

First Hour Incident Log

Time Incident Reported	
Reported by (name / role)	
Nature of Incident	
Initial Response (Evacuate / Invacuate / Lockdown)	
Incident Lead Notified (Time/Name)	
Location of Incident	

Immediate Actions Log

Time	Action Taken	By Whom	Communication Made

Pupil & Staff Status

Group / Class	Accounted for? (Y/N)	Missing / extra persons	Notes

Emergency Services Contact

Service	Time called	Information given	Notes
Police			
Fire and Rescue			
Ambulance			

Issues & Resource Needs

Time	Issue identified	Resources required	Action taken

Additional Information

Appendix C:

THREAT CHECKLIST

ACTIONS TO BE TAKEN ON RECEIPT OF ANY THREAT

1. **REMAIN CALM** and talk to the caller
2. **NOTE THE CALLER'S NUMBER** if displayed on your phone
3. **THREATS VIA EMAIL / LETTER / SOCIAL MEDIA** – notes at the end of the checklist
4. **IF POSSIBLE, RECORD THE CALL**
5. **WRITE DOWN THE EXACT WORDING OF THE THREAT (continue on further sheets if needed and ensure all sheets are retained)**

ASK THESE QUESTIONS AS APPROPRIATE AND RECORD ANSWERS AS ACCURATELY AS POSSIBLE:

Where is the bomb / threat right now?	**When is it going to explode / event will happen?**
What does the bomb / person look like?	**What does the bomb contain / what weapons will be used?**
How will the bomb be detonated / what will make the violence happen?	**Did you place the bomb / are you the person who is going to commit the violence? If not, who?**
What is your name?	**What is your address?**
What is your phone number?	**Do you represent a group or are you acting alone?**
Why are you / is the person doing this?	***(Record the time the call ends here):***

NOW INFORM THE HEADTEACHER OR INCIDENT LEADER AND DIAL 999 TO INFORM THE POLICE

Name and telephone no. of Headteacher	Time the police were informed

Complete the following sections once the caller has hung up, and when the Headteacher and Police have been informed:

Date and time of call:	Duration of call:	The telephone number that received the call:

About the caller:

☐ Male ☐ Female ☐ Age

Suspected or admitted nationality	

Threat language:

☐	Well spoken	☐	Irrational	☐	Taped message
☐	Foul	☐	Incoherent	☐	Message read by caller

Caller's voice:

						Familiar? If so, who did it sound like?
☐	Calm	☐	Slurred	☐	Lisp	
☐	Crying	☐	Excited	☐	Rapid	
☐	Clearing throat	☐	Stutter	☐	Deep	**Accent (If so what accent?)**
☐	Angry	☐	Disguised	☐	Laughter	
☐	Nasal	☐	Slow	☐	Hoarse	

Other (please specify)

Other sounds:

☐	Street noises	☐	Car noise	☐	PA system	☐	Office machinery
☐	House noises	☐	Clear	☐	Booth	Other (please specify)	
☐	Animal noises	☐	Voices / crowds	☐	Music		
☐	Crockery / kitchen noises	☐	Static	☐	Factory machinery		

Remarks:

Additional notes:

Signature:	
Print name:	
Date:	

ACTIONS TO BE TAKEN ON RECEIPT OF ANY THREAT SENT VIA EMAIL OR SOCIAL MEDIA

- Do not reply to, forward or delete the message
- If sent via email, note the address
- If sent via social media, what application has been used and what is the username/ID?
- Dial 999 and follow police guidance
- Preserve all web log files for your organisation to help the police investigation (as a guide, seven days prior to the threat message and 48 hours after)

ACTIONS TO BE TAKEN ON RECEIPT OF A HANDWRITTEN / PRINTED LETTER:

- Contact the Police on 999
- Handle the paper as minimally as possible and preserve for the Police

SAVE / SCAN AND PRINT – HAND COPY TO POLICE AND HEADTEACHER

Retention period: 7 years

APPENDIX D: Martyn's Law – Easy Read for Schools – Staff Version

Martyn's Law is the informal name for the Terrorism (Protection of Premises) Act 2025. It was created to help keep people safe by making sure organisations think ahead about how they would respond if a violent attack happened. It became law on 3 April 2025, and there is an implementation period of at least 24 months, so schools have time to prepare.
It is named after Martyn Hett, who died in the 2017 Manchester Arena attack. His mother campaigned for better public protection.

1. Who it applies to
Martyn's Law applies to places ("premises") where 200 or more people could reasonably be expected to be present at the same time.
For schools, this includes normal school activity where large numbers of people are on site.

However, all early years, primary, secondary and further education settings are automatically placed in the "Standard Tier", even if more than 800 people are present. They are *not* moved into the Enhanced Tier.
This is a special consideration for education settings.

It is important to note that irrespective of the fact that schools with fewer than 200 people are out of the legislation's mandatory scope, Suffolk County Council's Joint Emergency Planning Unit and the SHaW Team requests that all schools conduct a Critical Incident Policy including the elements of Martyn's Law including lockdown, evacuation and invacuation procedures.

2. The two tiers - only one applies to schools
The Standard Tier applies to all schools, even large ones, where there are normally 200–799 people present. Schools stay in this tier even if they have 800+ on site (e.g., a large secondary school).
Requirements are practical, low-cost and staff-led.

3. What schools must do

- Appoint a Responsible Person
- Each school must nominate a Responsible Person who will oversee compliance. For maintained schools this is usually the Local Authority; for Academies, the Trust.
- Schools must also register with the SIA (Security Industry Authority), the regulator, when the system goes live in 2027.

4. What schools *don't* need to do

Under Martyn's Law, schools are NOT required to:

- Bring in bag searches
- Install CCTV
- Buy expensive equipment
- Make major building changes

The focus is on simple preparedness, not turning schools into high-security environments.

5. What practical actions ARE required

Schools must develop proportionate, realistic emergency procedures for:

- Evacuation – getting everyone safely out
- Invacuation – bringing people into a safer internal area
- Lockdown – securing the site
- Communication – clear messaging in an emergency

These should build on what schools already do in safeguarding and emergency / Business Continuity planning.

6. Support and guidance

The SIA will:

- Provide guidance
- Support schools
- Investigate non-compliance where needed

The Department for Education and Home Office will also publish detailed guidance before enforcement begins.

7. When it comes into force

The law is live, but enforcement will only begin after the 24-month implementation period, likely by April 2027.

Schools are encouraged to start preparing now (2025 – 2026)

APPENDIX D CONTINUED: Martyn's Law – Easy Read for Schools – Secondary School Student version

What is Martyn's Law?

Martyn's Law is a new rule created to help keep people safe if something dangerous ever happens, such as a violent attack. It's named after Martyn Hett, who died in the 2017 Manchester Arena attack. His family campaigned to make public places safer.

The government has chosen the Security Industry Authority (SIA) to help schools and other public places prepare and stay safe.

Why does it matter for schools?

Schools already have safety procedures like fire drills and lockdown drills.
Martyn's Law simply makes sure every school has clear plans and that staff know how to respond in an emergency.
It's *not* about making school feel scary — it's about being prepared.

What schools have to do

Your school must:

- Have simple, practical safety plans (for evacuation, invacuation, lockdown, and communication).
- Make sure staff know what to do if something dangerous happens.
- Register with the SIA when the new government system opens.
- Keep everyone as safe as possible until emergency services arrive.

These are actions staff take — not students.

What this means for you as a student

You won't see big changes. Your school will still feel the same, and staff will continue looking after you as usual.

You might notice:

- Practice drills (like lockdown or invacuation)
- Staff being extra clear about where to go during emergencies
- Adults reminding you to follow instructions calmly

These help everyone stay safe — just like fire drills.

What you should do in an emergency

1. Listen carefully to staff.
They will tell you exactly what to do.

2. Follow instructions straight away.
Move calmly and stay with your group.

3. Stay quiet and calm.
This helps adults make good decisions.

4. Don't use your phone unless asked.
Sending messages can spread confusion or worry families.

Does Martyn's Law mean school is unsafe?

No.
The government says public places must be prepared because emergencies can happen anywhere — not because they expect anything to happen. It is about being ready, just like we prepare for fires even though most schools never have one.

In simple terms

Martyn's Law is about making sure schools have strong safety plans, so pupils and staff are protected.

You don't need to do anything differently — the adults are responsible for the plans.

APPENDIX E:
School Lockdown / Invacuation / Evacuation Procedures — Adaptable templates

LOCKDOWN PROCEDURE

SCHOOL NAME:

SLT LEAD:

1.Received threat and Lockdown Signal

- Listen carefully to the threat notification if this is by telephone and complete the threat log at the time of the call.
- Activate the agreed lockdown signal which is:.....
- Communicate the lockdown message using (your school's chosen method):.....
- Notify the Emergency Services (999).

2. Staff Immediate Actions

- Bring all pupils into the nearest safe room (identified through local planning).
- Close and lock the classroom / office door.
- Cover internal door windows if possible.
- Close blinds/curtains.
- Turn off lights if required.
- Move pupils to the pre-identified safe area out of sight.
- Keep pupils quiet.
- Silence all mobile phones.

3. Securing the Room

- Lock or secure all entry points.
- Block doors with furniture if they cannot be locked.
- Keep windows closed.
- Maintain low visibility from outside.

4. Accounting for Pupils

- Take a register when safe.
- Report missing or extra pupils using the pre-agreed silent method (if safe) which is: .....
- Keep pupils together and supervised.

5. Internal Communication

- Only use the agreed silent or minimal-noise communication method which is.....

- Do not respond to door knocks or attempts to enter unless the all-clear protocol is used, which is.....
- Await further instructions from the Incident Lead.

6. Movement Restrictions

- Do not allow anyone to leave the room.
- Do not open doors for any reason until instructed.
- Ignore fire alarms unless there are visible signs of fire.

7. Pupils and Staff Conduct

- Maintain silence.
- Keep low and away from sightlines.
- Use calming strategies if needed (which will have been identified as per class)
- Keep pupils off devices unless instructed otherwise.

8. All-Clear Procedure

- Follow the agreed all-clear signal, which is: .....
- Unlock doors only when instructed.
- Supervise pupils as they transition back to normal activity or move to the next directed location.

9. Post-Lockdown Actions

- Report any issues or injuries to SLT.
- Complete incident logs as required.
- Await further instructions before dismissing pupils.

******* DO NOT UNDER ANY CIRCUMSTANCE SHARE THIS INFORMATION WITH ANYONE OUTSIDE OF THE SCHOOL*******

INVACUATION PROCEDURE

SCHOOL NAME:

SLT LEAD:

1. Invacuation Signal

- After a threat has been notified, activate the agreed invacuation signal which is:.....
- Communicate the invacuation message using the school's chosen method which is:.....

2. Staff Immediate Actions

- Bring all pupils inside the nearest safe building, identified through drills.
- Move pupils to the pre-identified safe internal area, identified through drills.
- Close external doors behind the last group entering.
- Keep pupils calm and together.

3. Securing the Building

- Close and secure all external doors.
- Close windows.
- Close blinds/curtains if required.
- Restrict access to the building as directed.

4. Movement to Safe Internal Areas

- Guide pupils using the pre-agreed routes.
- Move quickly but calmly.
- Avoid congested areas where possible.
- Do not allow pupils to leave the group.

5. Accounting for Pupils

- Take a register when safe.
- Report missing or extra pupils using the agreed communication method which is:
  .....
- Maintain supervision at all times.

6. Internal Communication

- Use the agreed silent or low-noise communication method which is:.....
- Await further instructions from the Incident Lead.
- Relay updates to pupils as directed.

7. Pupils and Staff Conduct

- Keep pupils settled and quiet.
- Maintain normal routines where possible.
- Provide reassurance if needed.
- Prevent pupils from using mobile phones unless instructed.

8. Area Security

- Keep pupils within the designated internal safe area which will have been identified through drills.
- Do not allow movement between rooms unless authorised.
- Maintain clear access routes for emergency services if required.

9. All-Clear Procedure

- Follow the agreed all-clear signal.
- Return pupils to normal timetabled locations or follow further instructions.
- Resume normal movement only when authorised.

10. Post-Invacuation Actions

- Report any issues or injuries to SLT.
- Record actions and observations in the incident log.
- Await further direction before dismissing pupils.

******* DO NOT UNDER ANY CIRCUMSTANCE SHARE THIS INFORMATION WITH ANYONE OUTSIDE OF THE SCHOOL*******

EVACUATION PROCEDURE:

SCHOOL NAME:

SLT LEAD:

DO NOT depend on the fire assembly point unless this is a fire evacuation or drill

1. Evacuation Signal

- Activate the agreed evacuation signal which is: .....
- Communicate the evacuation message using the school's chosen method:.....

2. Staff Immediate Actions

- Instruct pupils to leave belongings behind.
- Lead pupils out of the building immediately.
- Use the nearest safe exit (room / area dependent)
- Switch to an alternative route if the usual route is unsafe.
- Support pupils needing assistance.

3. Movement from the Building

- Move pupils quickly and calmly.
- Avoid blocked, hazardous, or risk-exposed areas.
- Follow pre-identified evacuation routes practised during drills.
- Redirect to secondary routes if required.

4. Assembly Location

- Take pupils to the **designated safe assembly area** for this type of incident.
- Use the **alternative assembly point** if the main area is unsafe or inaccessible.
- Keep pupils together in their class or group.
- Prevent pupils from wandering or leaving the group.

5. Accounting for Pupils

- Take a register when safe.
- Report any missing or extra pupils using the agreed communication method which is:.....
- Maintain continuous supervision.

6. Site Security and Safety

- Keep evacuation routes clear.
- Keep assembly areas organised and controlled.
- Restrict movement until authorised.
- Maintain access for emergency services.

7. Internal Communication

- Await further instructions from the Incident Lead.
- Communicate updates to pupils only as directed.
- Relay any urgent concerns through the agreed communication method which is:.....

8. Pupils and Staff Conduct

- Keep pupils calm and quiet.
- Keep pupils together and supervised.
- Prevent pupils from using mobile phones unless instructed.
- Follow all further instructions promptly.

9. Next Phase Actions

- Move pupils to a secondary location if instructed – this school's alternatives are:.....
- Prepare for possible relocation, invacuation, or controlled re-entry.
- Do not re-enter the building until authorised.

10. Post-Evacuation Actions

- Report issues or injuries to SLT.
- Record actions and observations in the incident log.
- Await further direction before dismissing pupils.

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Appendix F:

Some ideas for posters in education settings to remind children and young people of the importance of following emergency instructions. Please note, these are AI generated (Microsoft CoPilot) and you can design and generate your own. Remember that they need to be age appropriate and should be designed to minimise fear or panic.

EYFS / KS1:



KS2:

Slightly more ‘grown up’ font with a strap line, plus a red border to signify alertness is required.



KS3 and above:

Different wording, more adult based icons, and much plainer in terms of its urgency to follow instructions in a critical incident.



SEND cohort:

In this instance I generated a base SEND template which can be customised for different pupils and students. This way, schools can meet the needs of CYP with a range of challenges. It is clearly important to ensure that students are not overwhelmed with a generic version.
You may want to create personalised versions with photographs next to the instructions, i.e.,:

- 'Your teacher is [with a photo]'
- 'Your safe space is [with a photo]'
- 'Your signal for quiet is [a picture or relevant photo]'

You can add options for different sensory needs, or consistent symbols for those who use PECS cards, Widgit symbols, or Makaton-friendly visuals. Additionally you might want to have a digital version for communication devices, or even single icon cards.



Appendix G: Registering with the SIA

How Schools Register with the SIA (Security Industry Authority)

Under Martyn's Law, all education settings in scope (200+ people onsite) must **notify/register their premises with the SIA**, which has been appointed as the regulator.

However, the **actual registration platform is not yet live**. The government has confirmed that formal guidance from the Home Office, DfE, and SIA will be published during the implementation period **before 2027**, when enforcement begins. [gov.uk]

Until the system opens, this is the information Suffolk County Council has:

What schools *will* need to do

1. Appoint their Responsible Person

Every school must identify its *Responsible Person* — usually the:

- Local authority (for maintained schools), or
- Academy Trust (for academies)

This person will be the one who completes the SIA registration.

2. Notify the SIA that the premises is in scope

Martyn's Law requires the Responsible Person to **notify the SIA** that the school is a Standard Tier premises.
This notification/registration step is explicitly stated in multiple guidance sources.
The SIA will keep a **national register of qualifying premises**.

3. Register via the *new SIA system* (coming before the law is enforced in 2027)

The official GOV.UK policy paper confirms that the Home Office and SIA will publish statutory guidance before the law is enforced. This will include the registration process, which is expected to be an online system.

This means schools should expect:

- An **online SIA portal**
- Submission of basic information such as:
    - School name
    - Address
    - Number of people on site
    - Contact details for Responsible Person
    - Confirmation the school is in the Standard Tier

- Possibly uploading or confirming emergency procedures (evacuation, lockdown, invacuation) — as these are part of Standard Duty requirements.[4]

4. Maintain compliance & keep details updated

Once registered, the SIA will:

- Provide guidance
- Support the school in meeting duties
- Be able to investigate serious non-compliance

Schools will need to keep their registration information updated (e.g., change of Headteacher/Responsible Person).

Until the SIA portal goes live, schools should prepare by doing the following:

- Appoint a Responsible Person (LA or Trust usually).
- Ensure emergency procedures (evacuation, invacuation, lockdown, communication) are documented and practised.
- Keep an eye on SIA/Home Office updates and DfE briefings.
- Begin creating a file with relevant documents for when registration opens.

Schools are not yet required to register, because enforcement will not begin until 2027 after the 24-month implementation period.

Everything indicates the process will be **simple, online, and administrative**, focused on formal notification rather than complex security requirements for schools.

[4] Empowering UK Schools to Comply with Martyn's Law – published by CoSafe (2025)