

Spaxton CofE Primary School

'Together we flourish and achieve'



Critical Incidents Policy

DATE: November 2021

POSTHOLDER RESPONSIBLE: Rebecca Skews

MONITORED BY: Local Governance Committee

DATE RATIFIED BY GOVERNORS:

AUDIENCE: Staff, parents, pupils

REVIEW DATE: November 2022

A handwritten signature in black ink, appearing to read 'Rebecca Skews'.

Approved on behalf of School:

(Head of School)

This policy should be taken and used as part of the overall strategy and implemented within the context of our vision, instrument of governance, aims and values as a member school of Quantock Education Trust.

Rationale

Whilst no amount of planning can totally prevent accidents and problems occurring, it is hoped that some can be prevented and the effects of others minimised by taking sensible precautionary measures.

Aims

The aim of this policy is to:

- outline routines and procedures to reduce the danger inherent in certain situations
- assist staff in coping with disasters if and when tragic incidents occur
- ensure that a full review is undertaken whenever a critical incident occurs to discuss any changes that can be made to reduce risk of re-occurrence

Objectives

Preventative and precautionary measures

This policy is to ensure that:

- all staff and pupils should be familiar with the school's routines for fire and the evacuation of the school building on hearing the fire alarm
- all staff should be familiar with the routines and procedures for dealing with emergencies (as detailed in this Policy)
- all staff and pupils should be familiar with the school's security procedures, in particular that all visitors not wearing a visitor's badge should be questioned and escorted to reception
- all staff organising school trips and visits follow the guidelines and checklist
- all visitors should sign in and out of the premises
- all staff are aware of pupils with health problems
- all staff are aware of school policy in dealing with violence at work

A critical incident may be defined as single incident or sequence of incidents which:

- Are sudden and unexpected
- Contain real or imagined threats to a person
- Overwhelm usual coping mechanisms
- Cause severe disruption
- Are traumatic to anyone

As such, major incidents include:

- Death of a pupil
- Abduction of a pupil
- Death of a member of staff
- Death or serious injury on a school trip
- Epidemic in school or community
- Violent incident in school
- A pupil missing from home
- Destruction or major vandalism in school
- A hostage taking
- A transport accident involving school members or the school community
- A disaster in the community
- A civil disturbance or terrorism

The TRAUMA caused by critical incidents challenges individuals mentally, physically, emotionally and spiritually

In the event of such an incident the priorities of those adults in charge of the school or trip at the time must be able to:

- **Save life**
- **Minimise personal injury**
- **Safeguard the interests of pupils and staff**
- **Minimise loss and to return to normal working quickly**

A Critical Incident Management Team will comprise the following staff:

- Head of School
- Senior Teacher
- Safeguarding Officer
- SEN Co-Ordinator
- School Secretary
- Chair of Governors

The school's reaction to a critical incident can be divided into the following categories:

- a) Immediate action
- b) Short term action
- c) Medium term action
- d) Longer term action

IMMEDIATE ACTION – i.e. within hours of the incident occurring

1. Obtain and collate information relating to the incident – uncertainty breeds rumour and accurate information is essential;
2. Gather and brief the CIMT (Critical Incident Management Team) – brief the team, allocate roles and responsibilities;
3. Trigger support from the LEA and other contacts on emergency list – establish clearly who is going to contact whom;
4. Set up an incident management room and dedicated phone line – to deal with calls from anxious parents etc. **CIMT** should agree a factual statement and avoid speculation;
5. Contact families affected – must be done quickly and with sensitivity. Consistency of information is vital. It may be appropriate for families to come to school and immediate emotional support could be a possibility;
6. Make arrangements to inform other parents – may need to take advice from LEA, especially if there is the possibility of legal liability. **CIMT** may wish to send a letter to parents, or prepare a leaflet.
7. Inform teaching and other school staff – staff will need to be cautioned about talking to the media or responding to questions from reporters. It is vital that all staff in contact with pupils are kept well informed and feel secure in handling comments or questions from pupils.
8. Inform pupils – can be done in small or large groups depending on which is most appropriate. Care needs to be exercised to protect both children or adults closely involved in the incident. It is important that children receive a consistent account of the incident allowing for differences in their ability to understand.
9. Encourage people involved to talk – the incident may need to be discussed before children go home for the day, for both pupils and adults.
10. Deal with the media – it is most important to seek advice from County Office before agreeing to speak to or be interviewed by the media. If this is not an option then an agreed text for release should be prepared by the **CIMT** and a designated spokesperson briefed and prepared to respond on the school's behalf.
11. Devise a plan for handling the reactions and feelings of people affected – the most common reactions will include denial, distress, guilt, anger and helplessness. **CIMT** need to consider outside professionals to support and debrief staff and pupils affected by the incident. Those providing support also need support. At this point the **CIMT** will need to plan their short term reaction to the incident.

SHORT TERM ACTION – the next stage

1. Reunion of children with their families – especially where the incident occurs outside the school. Mostly children will need to be brought home, but sometimes parents and families need to visit the scene of the incident to understand how they deal with repercussions in terms of children's fears etc.

2. Managing staff – support needs organising for all staff, preferably from within the school, but using outside agencies if appropriate. Staff monitoring should be a priority, even members of the **CIMT**. If a crisis persists over many hours staff will become tired, weary and upset and this affects their powers to make sensible decisions.
3. Encourage pupils to talk – activate strategies for enabling young people to talk about the incident, and their feelings, using outside agencies if appropriate. Staff will need briefing about ways to help the children affected by the incident, and how to identify patterns of behaviour etc. This may have implications for the wider curriculum i.e. training in bereavement counselling for staff, provision of a range of books, PSHE discussions etc...
4. Debriefing meeting – it probably would be appropriate for a member of the **CIMT** to offer a debriefing meeting for staff, children and parents to:
 - clarify what has happened
 - allow for sharing reactions
 - reassure people that reactions are normal
 - mobilise resources e.g. parental support groups

An experienced person, possibly someone from outside the school community, should lead this meeting, for example the educational psychologist.

5. Formal and informal recognition of rituals – it is important to remember to express sympathy to families of the hurt or bereaved. Visits to children / staff in hospital. Pupils may wish to send cards and letters. The school may also need to consider attendance at funerals, and/or the desirability of holding special assemblies or memorial services. Anniversaries are also key times when support and sensitivity are required.
6. Re-establishing routines – every attempt should be made to provide continuity for the children. The return to school of staff or pupils directly affected by the crisis will need to be managed carefully and with sensitivity but the re-establishment of routine is an important stage in emotional recovery.

MEDIUM TERM ACTION

1. Return to school for staff or pupils after long absence – reintegration will need to be planned carefully, and may involve home visits prior to return, part time attendance initially, reducing workloads, putting in place mentoring process etc.
2. Consulting professionals – consideration should be given to consulting the Educational Psychology Service for support and guidance, especially to help those showing unusual or prolonged reaction to the incident.
3. Keeping parents informed – it may be appropriate to produce a leaflet for parents giving guidance on the possible delayed reactions of pupils to an incident and making suggestions to help them deal with these.
4. Support for staff – ongoing monitoring and support for staff is a major consideration. **CIMT** especially will not be immune to reaction from their ordeal.

LONG TERM ACTION

1. Monitoring the vulnerable – the effects of a crisis can reverberate for years, and it is especially important that new staff and pupils are briefed in the school's history to help them understand and deal with potential repercussions especially at anniversary times.
2. Marking anniversaries – these difficult times need to be treated with sensitivity. Some suggestions for schools to mark anniversaries are by annual concerts, memorial services, memorial prize giving ceremonies, memorial gardens etc ...
3. Legal processes – the length of time taken over some legal processes can prolong the recovery process following a critical incident. **CIMT** may need to plan for this especially where staff may be involved attending legal processes, and facing extended emotional trauma.
4. Curriculum implications – it may be appropriate to schedule INSET training for staff in loss counselling, bereavement etc

Action Cards

The Action Cards give responsibilities for specified staff in the event of a critical incident

(a) away from the school

(b) in the school

See Below: These should be used in the event of a major incident and be carried by staff on school visits.

ACTION CARDS 1

GUIDANCE FOR GROUP LEADERS ON OUT-OF-SCHOOL ACTIVITIES

THERE HAS BEEN A MAJOR INCIDENT

INSTRUCT ALL COLLEAGUES TO RECORD THEIR ACTIONS AS SOON AS POSSIBLE

ALLOCATE KEY RESPONSIBILITIES – as outlined by the emergency action cards

<p style="text-align: center;"><u>INFORM</u></p> <p>OBTAIN FACTS AND INFORMATION</p> <p>CALL THE EMERGENCY SERVICES USING 999 SYSTEM</p> <p>RETAIN ANY RELEVANT EQUIPMENT</p> <p>INFORM SENIOR SCHOOL STAFF</p> <p>CONTACT HEALTH AND SAFETY REPRESENTATIVES</p> <p>REQUEST ASSISTANCE ON SITE AS NECESSARY</p> <p>PREPARE TO DEAL WITH THE MEDIA</p>	<p style="text-align: center;">ADULT 1 - INFORMS</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none">• Group Leader
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<p style="text-align: center;"><u>SAVE</u></p> <p>ADMINISTER FIRST AID WHERE POSSIBLE</p> <p>ESTABLISH A CONTACT POINT WITH THE EMERGENCY SERVICES</p> <p>TRAVEL WITH CASUALTIES TO HOSPITAL</p> <p>COMPLETE ACCIDENT FORMS</p>	<p style="text-align: center;">ADULT 2 - SAVES</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none">• Nominated adult first aider to be shown on risk assessment
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<p><u>CARE</u></p> <p>CALL OTHER ASSISTANCE AS NECESSARY</p> <p>KEEP A RECORD OF WITNESSES</p> <p>KEEP OTHERS INFORMED OF SITUATION</p> <p>CONSIDER ABANDONMENT OF ACTIVITY</p> <p>ARRANGE FOR NON CASUALTIES TO RETURN TO SCHOOL</p> <p>REMAIN AVAILABLE TO EMERGENCY SERVICES AND SUPERVISING COLLEAGUES</p>	<p>ADULT 3 - CARES</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Nominated adult(s) to be shown on risk assessment
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MAINTAIN VITAL COMMUNICATIONS WITH COLLEAGUES AT ALL TIMES

ACTION CARDS 2

GUIDANCE FOR SENIOR STAFF ON HEARING OF A MAJOR INCIDENT AFFECTING AN OUT-OF-SCHOOL ACTIVITY

THERE HAS BEEN A MAJOR INCIDENT

INSTRUCT ALL COLLEAGUES TO RECORD THEIR ACTIONS AS SOON AS POSSIBLE

ALLOCATE KEY RESPONSIBILITIES – as outlined by the emergency action cards

MAINTAIN VITAL COMMUNICATIONS WITH COLLEAGUES AT ALL TIMES

<u>INFORM</u>	
OBTAIN FACTS AND INFORMATION	
ENSURE EMERGENCY ASSISTANCE HAS BEEN CALLED	
CONFIRM WHO IS IN CHARGE	
CONTACT HEADTEACHER/SENIOR STAFF	ADULT 1 - INFORMS
CONTACT CHAIR OF GOVERNORS	<ul style="list-style-type: none">• Head Teacher• Senior Teacher• School Secretary
CONTACT LEA REPRESENTATIVES	
CONTACT OTHER STAFF	
PREPARE TO DEAL WITH THE MEDIA	

<u>CARE</u>	
DECIDE WHO AND HOW TO TELL PARENT OF CHILDREN ON THE VISIT	
ESTABLISH INCIDENT ROOM	
ESTABLISH ROOM FOR RELATIVES	ADULT 2 - CARES
REMAIN AVAILABLE TO SUPERVISING COLLEAGUES	<ul style="list-style-type: none">• Head Teacher

ACTION CARD 3

GUIDANCE FOR SCHOOL STAFF IN EVENT OF A MAJOR INCIDENT IN SCHOOL

INSTRUCT ALL COLLEAGUES TO RECORD THEIR ACTIONS AS SOON AS POSSIBLE

<u>INFORM</u>	
OBTAIN FACTS AND INFORMATION	
CALL THE EMERGENCY SERVICES USING 999	
RETAIN ANY RELEVANT EQUIPMENT	
INFORM REST OF SCHOOL STAFF AND CHILDREN AS APPROPRIATE	ADULT 1 - INFORMS
CONTACT DIRECTOR OF EDUCATION (or his/her representative)	<ul style="list-style-type: none">• Head Teacher
CONTACT CHAIR OF GOVERNORS	
CONTACT HEALTH AND SAFETY REPRESENTATIVES	
PREPARE TO DEAL WITH THE MEDIA	

<u>SAVE</u>	
ADMINISTER FIRST AID WHERE POSSIBLE	
ESTABLISH A CONTACT POINT WITH THE EMERGENCY SERVICES	ADULT 2 - SAVES
TRAVEL WITH CASUALTIES TO HOSPITAL	<ul style="list-style-type: none">• All qualified first aiders
COMPLETE ACCIDENT FORMS	

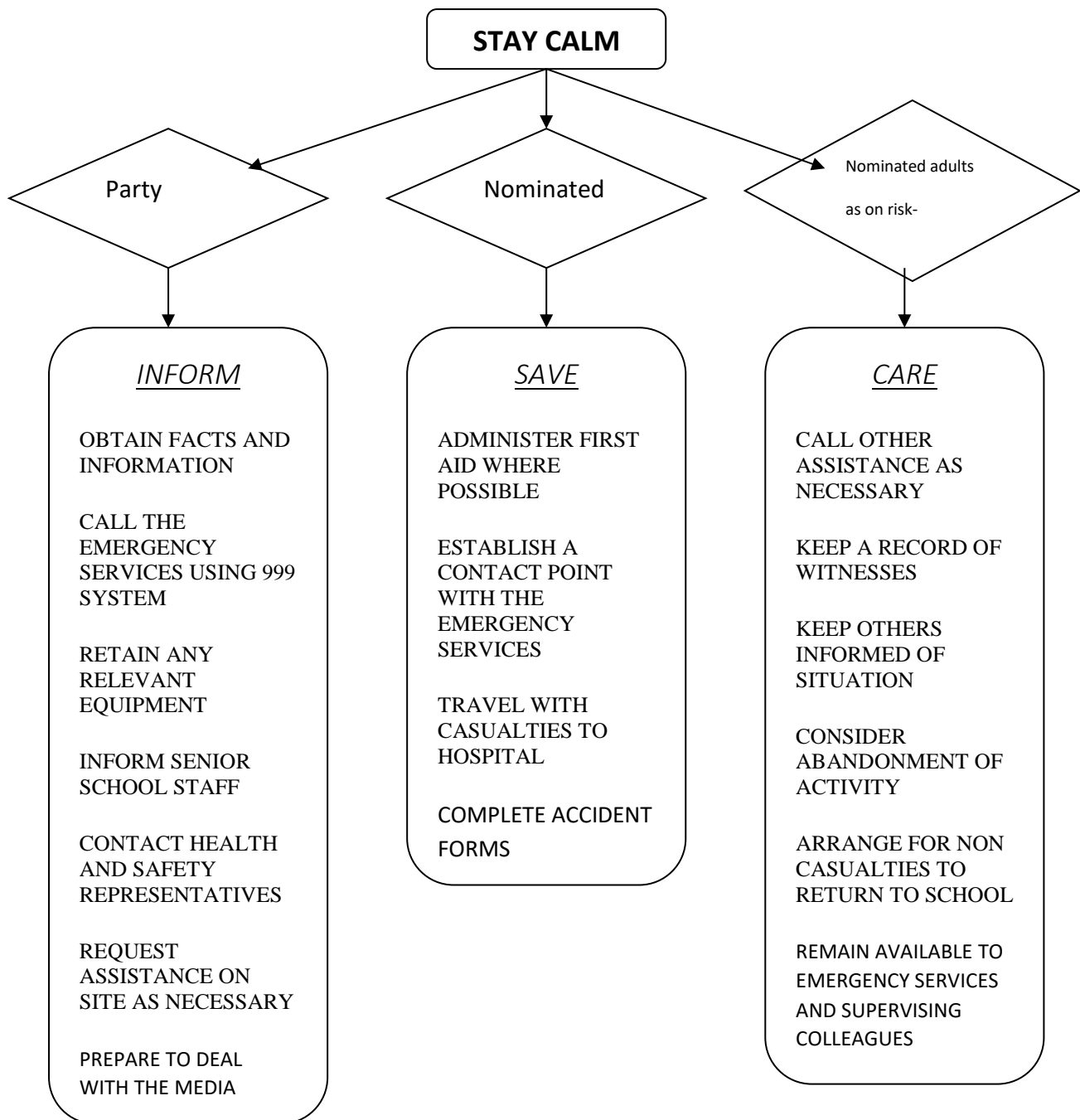
<p style="text-align: center;"><u>CARE</u></p> <p>KEEP A RECORD OF WITNESSES</p> <p>KEEP OTHERS INFORMED OF SITUATION</p> <p>ARRANGE FOR NON-CASUALTIES TO EVACUATE SCHOOL</p> <p>CARE FOR RELATIVES ARRIVING AT SCHOOL</p> <p>CONSIDER RELOCATION TO OTHER PREMISES</p> <p>REMAIN AVAILABLE TO EMERGENCY</p>	<p style="text-align: center;">ADULT 3 - CARES</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Senior Teacher
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<p style="text-align: center;"><u>ASSIST</u></p> <p>KEEP OTHERS INFORMED OF SITUATION</p> <p>ENSURE ALTERNATIVE ACCOMODATION IS AVAILABLE IF NEEDED</p> <p>HELP TO ESTABLISH INCIDENT ROOM / AREA</p>	<p style="text-align: center;">ADULT 4 - ASSISTS</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • School Secretary
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MAINTAIN VITAL COMMUNICATIONS WITH COLLEAGUES AT ALL TIMES.

DO NOT ALLOW PUPILS TO TALK TO THE MEDIA UNLESS STAFF OR PARENTS HAVE GIVEN PERMISSION

Off Site Flowchart of Emergency Action



- Ensure that all staff and young people are safe from further danger.
- Ensure that rescue, medical care and hospitalisation is provided, as necessary.
- Inform the school's CIMT who will follow the CI policy to inform relevant people and groups.
- If fatal, the police must be informed.
- Consider if further adult assistance is required.
- DO NOT speak to the press or media, other than to refer them to whoever is designated to deal with them in such circumstances.
- NEVER admit liability of any sort.
- DO NOT allow anyone to see a party member without a witness being present.
- Retain any relevant equipment (e.g. climbing harness)

DEALING WITH MAJOR INCIDENTS

OUT OF HOURS TELEPHONE NUMBERS

Contact	Name	Telephone Number
CORPORATE DIRECTOR - CHILDREN AND YOUNG PEOPLE'S DIRECTORATE		01823 356901
SRVICE DIRECTOR – LEARNING AND ACHIEVEMENT		01823 356891
CHAIR OF GOVERNORS	Andrew Watson Suzanne Traynor	07970 559821 07702 797141
HEAD OF SCHOOL	Rebecca Skews	Office Hrs: 01278 671409 Out of Hours: 07403 882388
FIRST AIDER	At School Rebecca Skews	Office Hrs: 01278 671409 Out of Hours: 07403 882388
PRESS AND MEDIA CONTACTS	Media Officer	Office Hrs: 01823 35501 Out of Hours: 07766781864 or 01823 652660
EDUCATIONAL PSYCHOLOGY SERVICE	Psychological Services Critical Incident Response	Office Hrs: 01823 334475 Emergency Officer: 07919299197
CHILD AND FAMILY THERAPEUTIC SERVICE		
LOCAL COUNTY COUNCILLOR		
CHILDLINE		0800 1111
This list was updated on:	22/11/2021	

Appendix 1 Pro-forma Letter

FOR SCHOOLS TO SEND TO PARENTS IN THE EVENT OF A TRAGIC INCIDENT

Dear Parents

You may have heard that/it is with sadness and regret that I have to inform you *(brief details of the incident, perhaps some positive remembrances of the person(s) lost, and the sense of loss).*

Explain that the pupils in the school have been told this sad news today by their teachers. And that we will/have remembered in a service/assembly.

Our thoughts are with’s parents at this sad time.

[In the event of a sudden/traumatic death in the school or local community – “During the day we have been supported by the Educational Psychology Service and this help will continue as necessary during the coming days”.]

I hope this information is helpful.

Yours Sincerely,

Head of School

Appendix 2 - SOURCES OF FURTHER INFORMATION

ACT

(Association for Children with Terminal and Life-threatening conditions and their families)

Institute of Child Health
Royal Hospital for Sick Children
St Michael's Hill
BRISTOL
BS2 8BJ
Helpline: 0845 108 2201
Web: www.act.org.uk

Child Bereavement Charity

Tel: 01494 568900
E-mail: enquiries@childhoodbereavement.org.uk
Web: www.childbereavement.org.uk

Child Death Helpline Department

Great Ormond Street Hospital
Great Ormond Street
London
WC1N 3JH
Helpline: 0800 282 986
Web: www.childdeathhelpline.org.uk

Childhood Bereavement Network

8 Wakley Street
London
EC1V 7QE
Tel: 020 7843 6309
E-mail: cbn@ncb.org.uk
Website: www.childhoodbereavementnetwork.org.uk

Childline

Freepost
NATN1111
London
E1 6BR
Helpline: 0800 282 986
Textphone: 0800 400 222
Web: www.childline.org.uk

Compass (Somerset Children's Community-Based Palliative Care and Bereavement Service)

Community Child Health Dept
Old Building
Musgrove Park Hospital
Taunton

Somerset
TA1 5DA
Tel: 01823 342693
E-mail: carly.davies@tst.nhs.uk
Web: www.compass-online.org.uk

Compassionate Friends (Self-help organisation for bereaved parents)

53 North Street
Bristol
BS3 1EN
Helpline: 0845 123 2304
E-mail: helpline@tcf.org.uk
Web: www.tcf.org.uk

Cruse Bereavement Care

Cruse House
126 Sheen Road
Richmond
Surrey
TW9 1UR
Helpline: 0844 477 9400 (Daytime)
E-mail: helpline@cruse.org.uk
Web: www.crusebereavementcare.org.uk
Local Branches:
Bristol area: 0117 926 4045
Somerset: 01458 898211

Mandala

(Groups for bereaved children and young people in Somerset)
St Margaret's Somerset Hospice
Heron Drive
Bishop's Hull
Taunton
Somerset
TA1 5HA
Tel: 07834 076717 (Ruth Garside)
E-mail: ruth.mandala@hotmail.co.uk
Web: www.somerset-hospice.org.uk

St Margaret's Hospice

Enquiry line for professionals: 01935 709497
E-mail: bereavement@st.marg-hospice.org

The Rainbow Centre

(For children affected by cancer, life threatening illness and bereavement)
27 Lilymead Avenue
Bristol
BS4 2BY

Tel: 0117 985 3343

Web: www.rainbowcentre.org.uk

The Samaritans provide a 24-hour service offering confidential emotional support to anyone who is in crisis.

Helpline: 08457 909090

E-mail: jo@samaritans.org

Web: www.samaritans.org

Winston's Wish for anyone caring for a child who has been bereaved:

Winston's Wish

4th Floor

St James Square

Cheltenham

Glos

GL50 3PR

Helpline: 08452 030405

E-mail: info@winstonwish.org.uk

Web: www.winstonwish.org.uk

The YoungMinds Parent Information Service provides information and advice on child mental health issues.

Tel: 0808 802 5544

Web: www.youngminds.org.uk