

Incident Response Guidelines for School Leaders

I. Purpose

Even with strong leadership and purposeful planning, every system or organization experiences incidents in which a human or structural failure results in an event which causes loss or harm to one or more individuals. In the case that these incidents occur, it is important to have a structured approach to reviewing the incident so that remedies can be identified to repair harm and the leadership can leverage lessons learned in order to strengthen the system and mitigate future risks. These guidelines are intended to support a robust risk assessment and incident response process that will help DCPS meet these goals.

Defining Degree of Risk

Low - Impact on system, but no immediate risk of harm to student health, welfare, or safety exists (e.g. insufficient Kids Ride Free cards, window leaks, or technology challenges).

Medium - Impact on system, and potential risk of harm to student health, welfare, or safety exists, or impact is on multiple students or classrooms (e.g. group physical altercation or isolated facility issue, such as a water leak).

High - An immediate risk of harm to student health, welfare, or safety exists, significant harm has just occurred, or impact is on the entire school (e.g. alleged sexual misconduct, alleged corporal punishment, a comprehensive facilities issue, such as a full utility outage, or a missing student).

II. Taking Appropriate Action

If you see something, say something. Timely incident reporting is everybody's job. If you learn of harm or a risk of harm, immediate reporting is critical. Together we must ensure awareness, so that we can support follow up actions that repair harm, prevent future harm, and restore community well-being.

i. Routine Reporting

For low-risk challenges which inhibit optimal functioning of the organization, but do not include an immediate risk of harm, it is still important to notify an individual with the requisite expertise to resolve the matter via email. If you do not know who the right individual is, consult with your supervisor. This notification helps us be responsive as a system.

ii. High-Risk Incident Response Reporting

The incident response protocol (see page 3) should be implemented immediately for incidents which indicate a **high risk**.

Incident Reporting: School Leader Checklist

In addition to any reporting required below, initial reporting and assessment of risk should be completed immediately. High-risk response planning should occur on the same business day of problem identification, in alignment with the central office incident response protocol (see next page). ***If you are unclear on which steps to take, please consult with your supervisor.***

Part 1: Internal Reporting Requirements Regarding ALL Incidents:

- Contact your immediate supervisor. If your immediate supervisor is not available, contact your chief of schools.
- Contact your school security officer to ensure that an incident report is submitted into the system.
- Activate school crisis plan, as needed.
- If incident involves any DCPS employee, contact Labor Management and Employee Relations (LMER): dcps.lmer@dc.gov

Part 2: Additional Reporting Requirements (Fact-Specific):

A. For incidents involving:

- **VIOLENCE**
- **MEDICAL EMERGENCIES**
- **CRIME**

- Contact **911 immediately**.
- Contact DCPS Police Command Center: **(202) 576-6950**

B. For incidents involving alleged:

- **SEXUAL ABUSE, ASSAULT, or VIOLENCE**
- **SEX TRAFFICKING/SEX ACT DEPICTION/EXPLOITATION**

- Contact Metropolitan Police Department (MPD)
- Contact DCPS Police Command Center: **(202) 576- 6950**
- Contact Child and Family Services Administration (CFSA): **(202) 671-SAFE**
- Contact Central Office CARE Team: **(202) 442-5405** or email dcps.care@dc.gov

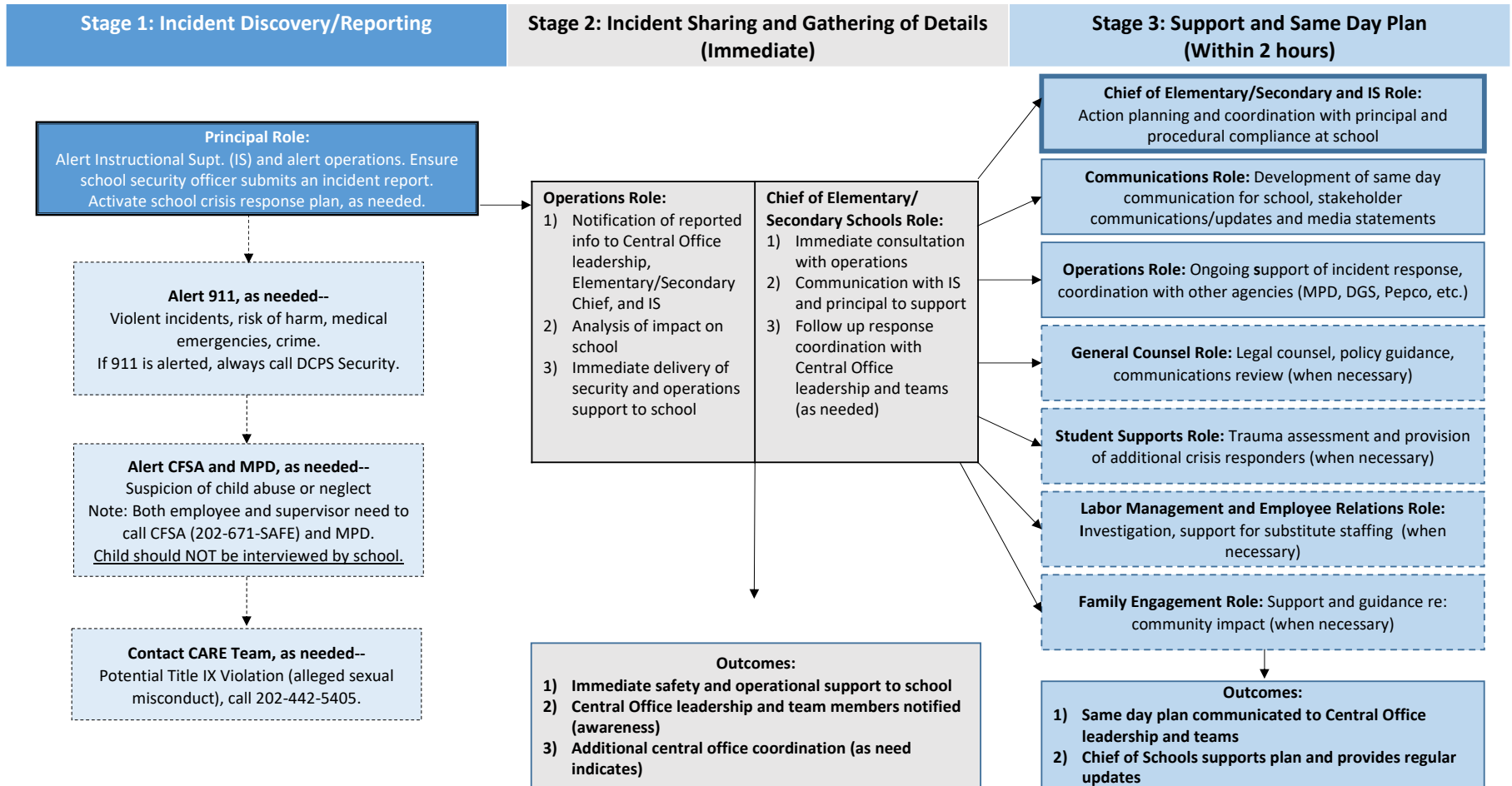
C. For incidents involving alleged:

- **BULLYING/CYBER BULLYING, GENDER-BASED HARRASSMENT**
- **HAZING, HOSTILE ENVIRONMENT, INTIMIDATION**
- **QUID-PRO-QUO HARRASMENT, RETALIATION, SEXUAL HARRASMENT**

- Contact Central Office CARE Team: **(202) 442-5405**
- Contact DCPS Police Command Center: **(202) 576- 6950**



DCPS Central Office High-Risk Incident Response Protocol





Personnel Misconduct Allegations Communications Process

- I. **Description**—This document describes communications procedures for messaging school communities when allegations of misconduct involving students are made against DC Public Schools’ personnel and/or partner or provider employees.

- II. **Purpose**—Defined communications procedures are intended to promote transparency with parents, families, and communities when serious allegations of staff misconduct are raised, while appropriately protecting the confidentiality of personnel information and the integrity of active investigations.

- III. **Messaging**
 - The following types of incidents may trigger a public communication regarding personnel matters to the community:
 - Reports of alleged use of force or corporal punishment resulting in a staff member being placed on leave;
 - Reports of alleged misconduct that is sexual in nature resulting in a staff member being placed on leave; and/or
 - Arrests made in connection with either of the above allegations, which will result in the staff member being placed on leave.

 - The following information may be included in public messaging regarding personnel misconduct allegations involving a student:
 - Position of staff member (including extracurriculars);
 - Nature of the allegation;
 - Confirmation that the staff member has been placed on leave;
 - Confirmation that the matter has been reported to the Child and Family Services Agency (CFSA); and/or
 - Confirmation that the matter has been referred to the Metropolitan Police Department (MPD) or the appropriate law enforcement agency, if permitted.
 - Name of the staff member upon arrest, if applicable.

- IV. **Process Overview**—Upon notification of allegations of staff misconduct, the Communications Team works with multiple teams and agencies to timely communicate to school communities by the next school day (same day preferred). The Communications Team will:
 - Confirm employment status (administrative leave, separation, etc.) and position;
 - Connect with the Mental Health Team to confirm and share the level of support being provided to the school, if applicable;
 - Consult with MPD or the appropriate law enforcement agency to ensure there are no flags that would prevent communicating that the incident has been referred; and
 - Confirm with MPD or the appropriate law enforcement agency whether an arrest has been made, if applicable.

The Communications Team also offers messaging distribution support to the school community via Blackboard Connect email, as needed; and principals may also distribute communication to families via backpack letter home (sealed envelope). **Principals field community concerns and inquiries with the support of their Instructional Superintendent.**