



## Advisory Note - Serious Incident Reporting (December 2020)

### 1. Context

Serious Incident Reports (SIRs) are, according to the Charity Commission (CC), alleged or actual adverse events which may lead to the following:

- a) harm to beneficiaries, staff, volunteers, or others who come into contact with an organisation through its work
- b) loss of money or assets (including data)
- c) damage to property
- d) harm to your charity's work or reputation

The bar is relatively low – schools should be aware that incidents involving any of the following factors should be considered as potential “Serious Incidents”: Reporting of a member of staff to the LADO; reporting an employee to DBS and TRA; reporting of an incident to the Police, ICO, Action Fraud, or the HSE.

Since 2017 Methodist Independent Schools Trust has operated as the Charity (number: 1142794) within which all Trust Schools are legally based. This means that when a serious incident occurs at school level **the SIR must be made to the CC on behalf of the MIST Trustees under MIST's Charity number** (above).

### 2. Reporting

Reporting an SIR is straightforward but does require a School to have all the information to hand. It is recommended that **SIRs relating to School level activity are made by the School on behalf of MIST** to ensure that the information provided to the CC is complete and timely.

The MIST Executive (General Secretary and/or Business Director) must be involved in the decision to submit an SIR, and a written summary of the incident provided (for onward circulation to MIST Trustees if appropriate). The report is made here: [Pre service guidance \(charitycommission.gov.uk\)](https://www.charitycommission.gov.uk/pre-service-guidance). If in any doubt about whether the incident might be reportable please contact the General Secretary or Business Director.

Schools must consider the following questions when preparing their submission:

- What happened?
- Which external bodies have also been informed?
- How were Trustees involved? Have they been kept up to speed? – *This means both the School Governors and the MIST Trustees.* (NB The MIST Executive team reports to Trustees that a serious incident report has been submitted. This is standing item on the termly agenda).
- What steps have been taken to protect (a) beneficiaries and others who come into contact with the School; (b) the assets; (c) the reputation of the School / MIST (as appropriate)?
- What mitigation steps have been taken? What advice has been taken?
- What lessons have been learnt / changes have been made?

A copy of the submission should be sent to the MIST Executive, together with a copy of the confirmation email and any subsequent correspondence received from the Charity Commission. If/when there are further developments **schools should update the SIR using the same original link and incident number.**

### 3. Guidance

There is further guidance available from MIST and from the Charity Commission as follows:

[How to report a serious incident in your charity - GOV.UK \(www.gov.uk\)](https://www.gov.uk/guidance/how-to-report-a-serious-incident-in-your-charity)

<https://www.gov.uk/guidance/how-to-report-a-serious-incident-in-your-charity#what-to-report>

[mist-fco-advice-on-serious-incident-reports-updated-july-2019-website.pdf \(methodistschools.org.uk\)](https://www.methodistschools.org.uk/mist-fco-advice-on-serious-incident-reports-updated-july-2019-website.pdf)

Governance Manual : Sections [1.3.3](#); [3.2.2](#); [5.2.4](#); [5.12.3](#).