

	Policy Title:	Critical Incident Alert Policy			
	Policy Number:	Pre-Custody Policy 003	Version:	1	Effective Date:

Approved By: YFS Operations Team

Date: 06/25/2021

Overview

Description: The Mecklenburg County Department of Social Services-Youth & Family Services Division (DSS-YFS) Critical Incident Alert Policy seeks to promote timeliness, consistency and accuracy around the process by which Child Welfare Specialists (CWS), Supervisors and Managers communicate around the occurrence of critical incidents.

Purpose/Rationale: Mecklenburg County DSS-YFS believes that how we do our work is as important as the work that we do. As such, all aspects of the Division’s casework must be timely, efficient, and effective to promote the achievement of positive child safety, permanence, and well-being outcomes. This policy aims to enhance the process by which YFS staff communicate across the Division, and with community stakeholders, around the occurrence of critical incidents.

Applicability: Frontline, supervisory, and managerial staff within pre- and post-custody service areas; Director, Deputy Directors.

Definition(s):

Critical Incidents

- Active cases within YFS involving:
 - A child's death that occurs as a result of suspected abuse/neglect.
 - A child's death that occurs due to other causes, such as illness or an accident.
 - A child who commits a violent act that results in the death of another person.
 - A child who is directly involved or whose family is involved in a high-profile case or situation that is receiving media attention.
 - Any other situation where there may be questions or concerns directed to the DSS Director, DSS Deputy Director or YFS Director and YFS Deputy Director.
- Cases for children in YFS custody involving:
 - A child's death.
 - A child who commits a violent act that results in the death or serious injury of another person.
 - A child who is kidnapped.
 - A child who is hospitalized due to a serious accident or life-threatening illness.
 - A child who receives negative media attention.
 - A child named as a victim in a substantiated case when allegations are against the current placement provider--either foster parent or non-relative placement provider. *(Cases will be referred to the Conflict of Interest Unit.)*

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- A child whose current foster parent or non-relative placement provider is arrested for charges involving abuse/neglect toward children, sex offenses, kidnapping, or any other crimes that would question the appropriateness of being a caretaker. *(Cases will be referred to the Conflict of Interest Unit.)*
- Any other situation where there may be questions or concerns directed to the DSS Director, Deputy Director, or YFS Director and YFS Deputy Director.
- Maltreatment reports involving a child fatality

Failure to Comply: Failure to comply with this policy can lead to gaps in information that adversely impact the Division’s ability to meet the safety, permanence, and well-being needs of children and youth, as well as detract from the Division’s ability to effectively engage community stakeholders around this cause.

Policy

All maltreatment reports must be reviewed by the receiving Intake/After Hours Child Welfare Specialist (CWS) and Supervisor to determine if they meet the criteria for being defined as a critical incident. Notification of all critical incidents must occur in accordance with the procedures outlined below.

Procedure(s) that apply:

When a critical incident occurs involving a family with an open YFS case and is brought to the agency’s attention during standard business hours, the supervisor of the assigned Child Welfare Specialist is responsible for contacting the Intake Unit to complete a report regarding the incident. Upon receipt of this or any other type of report involving a critical incident, the Intake or After Hours Supervisor receiving the report is responsible for completing the YFS/Multi-Agency Critical Incident Alert form and ensuring that the form is distributed to the following parties via email within 24 hours:

- Assistant County Manager
- DSS Director
- DSS Deputy Director
- YFS Director
- YFS Deputy Directors & Administrative Assistant
- District Managers
- Managing Attorney
- YFS Continuous Quality Improvement (CQI) Supervisor
- YFS Nursing Supervisor
- Public Information Specialist

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As a cover letter to the Critical Incident Alert form, the Intake/After Hours Supervisor receiving the report, must compose an email to the aforementioned parties that includes the following details:

- Name and Date of Birth for:
 - Case Head
 - All Children in the Home
- Brief Description of the Critical Incident
- Screening Decision
- Overview of the Family’s Child Protective Services (CPS) History
 - This section must include a description of the case decision along with what services were recommended to, or completed by, the family.
- Update Regarding the Child(ren)’s Current Status

Due to the nature of the information and the broad audience with whom it is being shared, emails related to critical incidents must be reviewed to ensure that they are free of:

- Spelling and/or grammatical errors
- Acronyms and jargon, using language that all recipients can understand

All critical incident alerts will be documented within a master log to be maintained by the Assistant to the Deputy Directors of Pre and Post-Custody Services.

Form(s) that apply:

YFS/Multi-Agency Critical Incident Alert Form

Reference(s):

Contact(s):

Deputy Directors of Pre and Post-Custody Services
 Senior Social Services Managers-Intake & After Hours
 Policy & Practice Model Supervisor

Policy History:

Developed 5/11/21