

St Thomas Becket Catholic Primary School

Emergency Policy and Plan

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- Emergency Planning Team
- School Closure
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- Bomb Threat
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Emergency Planning Policy

Introduction

The aim of a school emergency plan is to help staff respond effectively to an emergency at school or on an educational visit.

Definition of an Emergency

An event – or events – usually sudden, which involve experiencing significant personal distress, to a level which potentially overwhelms normal responses and procedures and which is likely to have emotional and organisational consequences.

For example

Off site incidents such as

- A health and safety incident
- Accident or major breakdown of transport being used
- The death or serious injury of a pupil or member of staff
- Assault or attack of pupil or member of staff
- Terrorist activities

On site incidents (on school premises or in the immediate vicinity) such as

- The death or serious injury of a pupil, member of staff or visitor
- A direct threat to the safety of pupils or staff e.g. fire or gas leak, requiring evacuation of the building, an intruder with a lethal weapon etc.
- A direct threat to the health of pupils or staff e.g. outbreak of a serious infectious disease, flu pandemic etc.
- Disruption to the fabric of the school which will result in long-term displacement of the pupils and staff.

The plan covers procedures for incidents occurring during school hours and outside school hours, including week-ends and holiday.

All the staff on the Emergency Planning Management Team have the authority to take critical decisions in the absence of the Head.

Checklist for School Emergency Planning Team

Preparation for emergencies is an on-going process which involves:

- Maintenance of a robust Emergency Plan along with the training schedule for all members of the Emergency Planning Team and key staff and governors
- School has log of tests of routines eg. Fire drills, water testing, infestations, lock down procedures etc

Throughout each stage of this process the school consults members of staff, governors, parents and LA, as required, to gain their involvement and support.

Links with other areas of work

Many aspects of work carried out by school have some relation to emergency planning.

Examples include, first aid training and procedures, PEEPs, medical policies, risk assessments for trips, school security procedures and health and safety procedures.

Plan distribution

All staff and governors have access to the plan which can be referenced during school hours and outside school hours (including holidays and when on educational visits).

The Emergency Plan contain sensitive information (e.g. contact details) so it is important to keep them secure at all times.

Grab Box

These have the necessary resources available during the onset of an emergency:

- A first aid kit
- A loud hailer
- A disposable camera
- high-visibility tabards
- Important documents: Emergency Plan, Pupil Contacts List
- Registers (up-dated daily)
- Signing out/in registers

Roles and Responsibilities (See Appendix 1a/1b/1c)

The Headteacher or nominated representative has the delegated power and responsibility to determine the appropriate course of action in the event of an emergency. In their absence, the Deputy Headteacher will have overall responsibility together with the assistant heads. Any other teaching staff available at the time of the emergency will support the Emergency Co-ordinators. Many staff have been trained in First Aid so in a scenario requiring immediate First Aid.

A member of the Local Authority (named on the Contact Details List) will be contacted as a matter of course. The chair of governors will be informed as soon as is practically possible.

Briefings during the emergency will be held in the Headteacher's office or Becket Room if possible.

Emergency Co-ordinators will wear high-visibility tabards to identify them as the lead.

Risk Assessments

Schools routinely risk assess all routine activities. These are kept in school and up-dated with all staff annually, however, they are potentially susceptible to a variety of unexpected risks and these may vary in severity and likelihood.

Emergencies on Educational Visits (See Appendix 2)

Leaders of educational visits have a legal duty of care for the people under their charge. Procedures are in place for educational visits and all staff should be aware of the policy and procedures PRIOR to the visit taking place. SEE **EDUCATIONAL TRIPS POLICY**

Buddy Schools

We have an agreement with **Woodside Academy School** that in the event of an emergency they will provide assistance e.g. acting as an additional place of safety. In turn, we offer them the same shelter if they are faced with an emergency. As an additional 400+ children would put serious tensions on both settings, this would be considered a venue for holding children until parents could pick up. It is not a long-term solution.

Communications

During an emergency it is likely that concerned parents/carers will contact the school for further information and the general school telephone number may quickly become jammed with incoming calls. The school mobile phones will also be used where necessary. As much information as possible will be sent out to parents through the teachers2parents texting system. During an emergency, Emergency Co-ordinators may find it appropriate to consult the emergency services or local authority about what information can be provided to pupils and parent/carers.

Media Management

Any significant emergency is likely to attract media attention. The scale of the interest will depend on the incident and could vary from telephone enquiries from the local media to national and international television crews arriving at the school asking for interviews.

- Ensure those answering the phone pass on the call immediately to SLT and give out no details
- Try to postpone media comment until you have sought support from the Croydon LA press team

Raising Awareness with Parents/Carers

Methods of informing parents/carers about preparing for emergencies are:

- Up-dates within the school newsletter
- School website
- Distributing information at Parents/Carer open Evenings
- Sending a letter home via pupils

Post Incident Support

The effects of a traumatic event upon a school can be profound, particularly the serious injury or the death of a pupil and they can have significant long term effects. After such an incident, the school will work with the Local Authority to ensure that there is co-ordinated support for pupils, staff parents/carers. Staff will play an important role in supporting pupils but professional help may be needed for all concerned. Local authorities may be able to offer support from educational professionals trained in bereavement counselling or trauma management. The use of external counselling service may also be needed (e.g. Cruse Bereavement care, Samaritans etc). The effect on staff is not underestimated as in some cases it may be more significant than the impact on pupils.

Assets

School has an inventory of important equipment and items (e.g, asset register, equipment inventory)- PARAGO SYSTEM- for calculating losses for insurance purposes.

Electronic Records

St Thomas Becket Catholic Primary School has all electronic information stored on curriculum and admin servers backed up online. This is monitored by Openair Systems.

Closing the School

Schools are expected to remain open in all but the most extreme circumstances as disruption to the school routine can have an adverse effect on pupils' education. The decision to close a school will usually be taken by the Headteacher. Occasionally, local and central government may also recommend this course of action (e.g. in the event of a public health incident).When to take the decision to close is important as it must not be taken too early i.e. the situation is not as bad as was feared or too late i.e.

leaving parents enough time to be able to get to school safely for their child.

It is important that:

- Pupils and parents are notified of a school closure as soon as possible
- In some instances it is possible for a school to remain partially open (e.g. while awaiting children to be picked up during bad weather).

Determine Period of Interruption or Disruption

The length of disruption or interruption will determine the level of impact. The Business Continuity Working group (H& S committee in liaison with SMT) has developed guidelines as to the potential length of impact that is deemed acceptable before any disruption or loss becomes significant or very significant. See **Business Continuity Plan.**

Lockdown and Shelter

Evacuation, shelter and lock down procedures outline the initial actions that should be taken to safeguard pupils and staff, both from internal and external hazards. The purpose of an evacuation is to move people away from danger to a safe place. This is likely to involve withdrawal from a hazard within a specific part of the school building but in some circumstances could require evacuation of the whole site. The school already has evacuation procedures in place. Some emergencies may require staff and pupils to shelter within the school building e.g. an environmental hazard such as smoke plumes, toxic alert.

The purpose of a lockdown is to prevent an intruder from causing harm to pupils and staff. The signal for a lockdown is the code word **Trojan Horse**

See **ST THOMAS BECKET CATHOLIC PRIMARY SCHOOL LOCK DOWN POLICY AND PROCEDURES**

Bomb Threats

Bomb threats are always to be taken seriously, even though the majority of them turn out to be hoaxes. All staff need to be aware of the actions to take if they receive a call from someone claiming to have information about a bomb.

Bomb threats can come from a variety of sources:

- A codeword is used that is known to the Police
- The Police are aware of potential terrorist activity in the area
- The threat is specific rather than general
- The threat is credible

Whilst it is not reasonable for staff to assess the accuracy or validity of a threat, employees should record as much detail about the call as possible; this information will prove useful to the Police. A bomb threat is a crime so even if employees are confident the call is a hoax they must still report the incident to the Police.

Suspicious Packages

Any suspicious package is treated as a threat until proved otherwise. When a package is believed to be suspicious, the school will follow Stockton BC guidelines as follows:

- Do not touch any suspicious items
- Move everyone away to a safe distance
- Prevent others from approaching
- Communicate safely to staff, students and the public
- Notify the police
- Ensure whoever found the item or witnessed the incident remains on hand to brief the police.

Activation

Printed copies of the plan will be kept in:

- The Administrator's office
- Head and Deputy's office
- Premises Manger's office

All members of the Senior Management Team will have a copy of this Emergency Plan at home as well as in school.

When an incident occurs the priority is to safeguard those on site (i.e. pupils, staff, parents/carers, visitors) and alert the emergency services if necessary. Other organisations, such as the local authority, should then be informed as appropriate. The chair of governors will be informed as soon as is practically possible.

Evacuation

The purpose of an evacuation is to move people away from danger to a safe place. This may be withdrawal from a hazard within one part of our school building but in some circumstances could require evacuation of the whole site. School will use Fire Evacuation procedures in place.

See **FIRE AND EMERGENCY EVACUATION POLICY AND PROCEDURE**

If the entire site has to be evacuated, pupils and staff may need to move from an initial assembly point to alternative premises located at **Woodside Academy School**.

School does not have the power to prevent parents taking children at this point – school must try to persuade parents to take the safest course and complete an exit register for all children.

1a Roles and Responsibilities – Co-ordination

Co-ordination - Initial Response	Tick/sign/time
Establish a basic overview of the incident.	
If the incident has occurred on an educational visit: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Liaise with the educational visit leader on a regular basis • Consider sending extra staff to support the educational visit leader • Discuss with the educational visit leader the arrangements for notifying parents / carers • Consider how parents / carers and pupils will be reunited. 	
Wherever possible, assign members of staff to key roles <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Communications • Log-keeping • Media management Resources Welfare. 	
Remember to: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Allocate tasks amongst the key staff • Ensure that staff are clear about their designated responsibilities • Establish the location and frequency of staff briefings • Ask staff to maintain a log of actions made and decisions taken 	
Inform all other staff of the incident. Ensure staff are briefed (and given tasks) on a regular basis.	
Take action to protect property.	
Work closely with other organisations (e.g. emergency services, local authority) as required. Provide accurate and factual information to those arriving on-scene.	

<p>Ascertain the whereabouts of all pupils, staff and visitors (using timetables, registers and visitor books may help). Ensure the emergency services are aware of anyone who is unaccounted for.</p>	
<p>Inform governors as appropriate.</p>	
<p>Decide the most appropriate method of contacting relatives of pupils / staff affected by the incident. If the matter is very serious (such as a fatality) liaise with the Police about informing next of kin.</p>	
<p>Act as the main contact for co-ordination of the response. Continue to liaise with the emergency services and other organisations.</p>	<p>Tick/sign/time</p>
<p>Continue to allocate tasks amongst the key staff. Work closely with them to co-ordinate their actions and help to resolve any complications or difficulties that arise.</p>	
<p>If the response is likely to last for a significant amount of time, consider staff rotation / shift patterns.</p>	
<p>Ensure that regular briefings are given to:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Staff • Pupils • Parents / carers • Governors • Extended services. 	
<p>Work closely with the 'media management' role to provide regular briefings to the media. Seek support from other organisations if necessary.</p>	
<p>Check that everyone who should have been notified of the incident has been informed.</p>	

<p>In the event of a serious injury or fatality, report the incident to the Health and Safety Executive (HSE) as soon as possible.</p>	
<p>Seek advice on legal and insurance issues, if appropriate.</p>	
<p>If the incident is a crime scene (or subject to a fire investigation) seek advice from the Police and / or Fire & Rescue Service.</p>	
<p>Co-ordination - Recovery</p>	<p>Tick/sign/time</p>
<p>Act as the main contact for the recovery process. Continue to allocate tasks amongst the staff.</p>	
<p>Ensure that post incident support is available to all who may require it</p>	
<p>Work closely with the 'resources' role in organising remedial work to property and liaise with insurance companies, salvage specialists and loss adjusters as appropriate.</p>	

Complete any necessary forms / paperwork.	
Arrange a debrief for school staff involved in the response.	
Represent the school at other debriefs which may take place (e.g. one organised by the local authority or Local Resilience Forum).	
Initiate a review of the school emergency plan.	
Inform neighbouring schools if issues relate to them	

Appendix 1b

Roles and Responsibilities – Resources

Resources - initial response	Tick/sign/time
Take action to protect property. Consider turning off utility supplies.	
Ensure the emergency services can access / egress the school without hindrance. Consider sending a member of staff to the school entrance to prevent people restricting access by parking in unsuitable places.	

<p>Advise the emergency services of any property related issues / hazards (e.g. asbestos, chemical stores). Consider providing personnel with a site map.</p>	
<p>Work with other staff and the emergency services to control access to the school:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Advise staff and governors that they might have to prove their identity before the emergency services will grant them access. • Provide authorised visitors with identification badges and ensure they sign-in and sign-out. • Ensure that media access to the site is controlled. 	
<p>Resources - ongoing response</p>	<p>Tick/sign/time</p>
<p>Liaise with utility suppliers as required.</p>	
<p>Work closely with staff and other organisations to provide access to facilities and resources as required. This may involve opening or closing parts of the school.</p>	
<p>Ensure the school site is secure (e.g. provide temporary fencing around damaged areas, arrange for broken windows to be boarded).</p>	
<p>Resources - recovery</p>	<p>Tick/sign/time</p>

Work closely with the 'co-ordination' role in organising remedial work to property and liaise with insurance companies, salvage specialists and loss adjusters as appropriate.	
Arrange a site visit with relevant personnel (e.g. emergency services, utility suppliers, local authority) involved in the recovery phase.	
Procure temporary classrooms if appropriate.	

Appendix 1c

Roles and responsibilities – Welfare

Welfare - Initial Response	Tick/sign/time
Establish arrangements to meet the welfare needs of pupils, staff, parents / carers, visitors and responders.	
Identify pupils who may require additional support: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Those with Special Educational Needs (SEN) • Those with medical needs • Those with Personal Emergency Evacuation Plans (PEEPs) Anyone who may be particularly vulnerable or badly affected (e.g. those who were involved in, or witnessed, the incident). 	
Welfare - Ongoing Response	Tick/sign/time
Assess the welfare and emotional needs of all those involved. Continue to monitor and support those who may be particularly affected by the incident.	

<p>Make arrangements for reuniting pupils with their parents / carers. Ensure that a member of staff is present to meet and greet them.</p>	
<p>In groups as small as practicable, inform pupils about the incident. Consider the best way to convey bad news. In the event of a tragic incident, consider seeking support from educational psychologists about the best way to inform and support pupils.</p>	
<p>Where possible, every child should to be spoken to, and asked if they are alright, before they leave school.</p>	
<p>Ensure that staff take regular rest periods.</p>	

<p>Welfare - recovery</p>	<p>Tick / sign / time</p>
<p>Please refer to appendix 1 for information on welfare arrangements and post incident support after the emergency response.</p>	

Appendix 2

Roles and responsibilities – Educational Visits

<p>Ascertain the whereabouts of all pupils and staff. Ensure the emergency services are aware of anyone who is unaccounted for.</p>	
<p>Contact the headteacher (or nominated emergency contact) to ask for support. Remember to clarify international dialling codes if abroad.</p>	
<p>Establish a basic overview of the incident. Ensure that accurate, factual information is available for those arriving on-scene.</p>	
<p>Establish arrangements to meet the immediate welfare needs of pupils and staff.</p>	
<p>Identify pupils with Special Educational Needs (SEN) and anyone who may be particularly vulnerable. Inform the emergency services of any pupils or staff with known medical conditions or requirements.</p>	
<p>Ensure that a member of staff accompanies any pupils to hospital but remember the safety of everyone else, even if unharmed. Do not leave anybody on their own and try to maintain an adequate adult / pupil ratio.</p>	

<p>Ensure other staff are briefed (and given tasks) on a regular basis. Ask staff to maintain a log of actions taken and decisions made.</p>	
<p>Keep a log of important information, actions taken and decisions made.</p>	

<p>Remember to retain any important items / documents. E.g.:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Contact details • Consent forms (including medical and next-of-kin details) • Maps • Tickets • Insurance policies <input type="checkbox"/> Proof of identity • Passports (if abroad). 	
<p>Avoid making comments to the media until parents / carers have been informed.</p>	
<p>Do not discuss legal liability with others.</p>	

<p>Educational visit leader - ongoing response</p>	<p>Tick/sign/time</p>
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<p>Continue to assess any risks to pupils and staff. Take action to prevent further harm if necessary.</p>	
<p>Act as the main contact for co-ordination of the response and work closely with the headteacher / nominated emergency contact. Continue to liaise with the emergency services and other organisations.</p>	
<p>Continue to brief staff and allocate tasks on a regular basis.</p>	

<p>Monitor and reassure pupils. Make arrangements for the longerterm welfare needs of pupils and staff.</p>	
<p>Consult the headteacher (or nominated emergency contact) about arrangements for notifying parents / carers and reuniting them with their children.</p>	
<p>Liaise with the tour operator / provider, if appropriate.</p>	

<p>Try to obtain the names and contact details of any witnesses to the incident. If possible, obtain a written account from them.</p>	
<p>If abroad, contact the Foreign & Commonwealth Office for support.</p>	
<p>If abroad, check your insurance policy and seek insurance / legal advice before incurring any substantial expense (e.g. medical treatment).</p>	
<p>Retain any receipts / documentation for insurance purposes. E.g.:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> Records of expenditure Medical certificates / hospital admission forms Police incident number. 	
<p>Check that everyone who should have been notified of the incident has been informed. Remember that information given must be limited until the facts are clear and all parents / carers have been notified.</p>	
<p>Ask the headteacher (or nominated emergency contact) to assist with developing a media statement, with support from other organisations as appropriate. Devise an ongoing strategy for dealing with media requests.</p>	

<p>Ask pupils and staff to avoid speculation when talking to the media. Try to prevent the spread of misinformation (especially through the use of mobile phones).</p>	
<p>Educational visit leader - recovery</p>	<p>Tick/sign/time</p>
<p>Please refer to appendix 1 for providing welfare arrangements and post incident support after the initial emergency response.</p>	
<p>Complete any necessary forms / paperwork.</p>	