

Emergency / Critical Incident Plan & Business Continuity Plan

Last Review January 2025	Next Review January 2027	Review Frequency Every 2 years	Coordinator Director	Nominated Trustee Chair of F&GP Committee
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Introduction

This emergency and critical incident plan will work in conjunction with the Oxfordshire Local Authority emergency plan, procedures and public health guidance.

Procedure

PART 1: EMERGENCY AND CRITICAL INCIDENT SCENARIOS

(A) A critical incident may be defined as a single event or sequence of incidents which:

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

(B) Emergency and critical incidents affecting the charity and any one or all of its services may include:

- An outbreak or pandemic of an infectious disease in the Oxon area, Nationally or Internationally, or the home area of a child/ren or staff. (see Part 6 and Part 8)

- Fire, flooding, severe storm damage, other severe weather, building collapse, or major vandalism which seriously affects the use of the school site, or renders the site unsafe for use.
- Serious civil disorder, an act of terrorism, or the outbreak of warfare, which puts the safety of staff and children at risk.
- Serious allegations or complaints
- Serious staff shortages
- The death of a pupil(s) or staff through sudden accident, murder, terminal illness or suicide.
- A serious accident involving pupils or school personnel on or off the site.
- A violent attack or violent intrusion onto school premises, e.g. involving an armed intruder or a bomb alert.
- A hostage situation.
- A disaster in the community, e.g. transport accident, terrorist attack.

PART 2: THE EMERGENCY PLAN

The CEO will liaise with services leads and coordinate the response at a charity level. The head of each service will coordinate and manage the response within their service with their School Leadership Team (SLT).

This policy is written for all services and so should be applied where relevant to that service.

The appropriate service lead or most senior person present at the time of the incident will:

(A) Gather information to establish:

1. What has happened?
2. Where and when the incident happened.
3. The extent of risk, damage, injuries with numbers and names.
4. The location of the injured or uninjured.

(B) If appropriate and necessary contact the emergency services.

(C) The SLT will:

- Ensure all staff are informed of the incident.
- Establish an 'incident room' either on the premises, at our L&RC (the current office is Linden House), at MB3 or at Alvescot Village Hall (see Part 4), and procedures for keeping staff up to date with incoming information.
- Agree how/when children will be informed
- Offer support to staff and children who are directly affected by the incident.
- Support the Therapies and Networks Team (or other most appropriate staff) to lead on all contact with children's families and professional networks and liaise with the admin team on this if it is at the school (see below).
- Assess risk, and if necessary, make decisions about evacuation of the site (see part 4).

(D) Managing enquiries:

The SLT will identify a lead person in the administration team. This person will coordinate the team to deal with all telephone enquiries.

1. An agreed factual statement decided by the CEO, or the relevant Service Lead, or the relevant SLT member, alongside the Marcomms Team will be made available for all telephone operators. This will include information about the action being taken at the school/incident site.
2. Those answering telephones should coordinate and keep notes about who has phoned in and those who should be contacted. They will liaise with the CEO re any contact with media/trustees etc.
3. The admin team will ensure good communication with the Therapies and Networks Team (and any other staff involved) re contact with parents/carers and professional networks.

(E) Dealing with the media:

- The CEO will inform the Chair of Trustees and the Local Authority.
- The CEO will prepare a media statement with the Head of Marcomms and liaise with the admin team to deal with all media enquiries.
- The School Director will inform Ofsted

PART 3: GUIDELINES FOR CHILDREN / STAFF AWAY FROM THE SCHOOL

The coordination of the emergency plan for children and staff on the school premises is set out in Part 2.

If the school is affected by any scenario described in 1(B) during a holiday time, the SLT will contact line managers by phone/email, letter or text regarding the risk and make decisions regarding the closure of the school, or an estimated time scale for returning to the school.

PART 4: PART OR FULL CLOSURE OF A SERVICE:

The Service Lead will make the recommendation to the CEO of a full or partial closure of a service. This may be due to national or local directive or guidance or a decision that it is safer to do so for the health and welfare of the staff and or children than to stay open.

The Services Leadership Group will support the service in enacting their plan.

PART OR FULL EVACUATION OF THE SCHOOL PREMISES

FULL EVACUATION:

- 1) In certain situations, the continuity of the services provided by the school may be severely impaired. The Director will make the decision about the impact of this on the safety and welfare of the children and staff and may, in these instances, decide if it is safer to return children to their home base rather than try to continue to provide care, treatment and education with insufficient staff cover. This decision will reflect national directives &

guidance and the importance of the relationships between known staff members and the children in providing containment, safety and welfare.

In the event of immediate danger, and the school being unable to return children to their homes and families, the school has the use of MB3 and in an emergency - Alvescot Village Hall and St Peter's School, Alvescot (as a centre for evacuation). The village hall will be used as the incident room.

- 2) The decision to evacuate the school premises will be made by the Director and the SLT, or/ in agreement with the emergency services. This decision will be made from an assessment of the immediate or anticipated threat to the safety of children and staff on site.

- 3) The School 'on call' mobile phones will be held by two identified adults leading the evacuation.

i. On Call 1: 07788 254086

ii. On Call 2: 07788 254420

The SLT will issue guidelines for other mobile phones to be used for contact.

- 4) In the case of contamination / shortage of water, food, bedding and clothing, the SLT will identify a team of staff to resource and supply these to the evacuation centre.

- 5) The SLT will identify drivers. The school vehicles will be the primary vehicles. Other transport will be identified by the SLT.

- 6) All staff should prepare themselves to work flexibly to ensure the proper evacuation and safety of the children and each other.

- 7) Once safety has been established the SLT will create a plan to return children to their homes and families.

- 8) We will follow Oxfordshire Local Authority emergency plan procedures and guidance

PART EVACUATION:

1. In certain situations, for example during a pandemic, it may be necessary to close certain aspects of the service or to reduce occupancy to enable safe and proper care for children who are not able to return to another home.
2. The Service Lead will make the decision based on the safety and welfare of the children, staff and visitors to the site rather than try to continue to provide care, treatment, education, training with insufficient staff. This decision will reflect local and national directives & guidance and in the school the importance of the relationships between known staff members and the children in providing containment, safety and welfare.
3. In the event of immediate danger we have the use of MB3 and in an emergency - Alvescot Village Hall and St Peter's School, Alvescot, as centres for evacuation. The village hall will be used as the incident room.
4. The decision to partially close the school premises will be made by the Director and the SLT, or/ in agreement with the CEO and emergency services.
5. The School 'on call' mobile phones will be held by two identified adults leading the evacuation.
 - i. On Call 1: 07788 254086
 - ii. On Call 2: 07788 254420

The SLT will issue guidelines for other mobile phones to be used for contact.

6. In the case of contamination / shortage of water, food, bedding and clothing, the SLT will identify a team of staff to resource and supply these to the evacuation centre.
7. The SLT will identify drivers. The three school people carriers, T5s and the mini bus will be the primary vehicles. Other transport will be identified by the SLT.
8. All staff should prepare themselves to work flexibly across departments / services to provide cover and ensure the safety of the children and each other.
9. We will follow Oxfordshire Local Authority emergency plan procedures and guidance

PART 5: SUPPORTING CHILDREN AND STAFF AFTER THE EVENT

Guidelines for supporting children:

This will be managed as part of the on-going therapeutic task:

- Be explicit in the acknowledgement of the event.
- Stick to the facts and do not give speculative comments.
- Act promptly to dispel rumours and misinformation which can cause unnecessary distress.
- Give children opportunities to talk through personal reactions
- Allow children to express feelings.
- Anticipate and understand children's reactions.
- Be empathic and support grief as a natural and normal reaction to loss.
- Create opportunities for children to write, draw send flowers, cards etc.
- Be aware of cultural, spiritual, and religious values.
- Establish normal routines where possible.

Supporting staff:

- All staff should be familiar with the Emergency Plan and Critical Incident and Business Continuity Plan.
- The SLT will create and manage a staff support plan using school staff and structures, or arrange for staff to access an external counsellor/outside agency/support worker, either singly or in groups.
- There should be recognition of the differing needs of each individual.
- Staff need to consider their own feelings relating to either the present incident or past event, and how these inform their current reactions and communications with the children.
- Staff should seek to support each other and create a rota of relief periods.
- All staff need to be aware of possible delayed reactions, particularly those who have been very actively involved in the event.

Supporting Mulberry Bush School Parents and Carers:

- Whether the incident has happened on or off site, parents and carers are likely to look to the school for information, advice and support. The SLT, T&NT and Administration teams will hold these functions.
- The T&NT will be available to talk to parents, carers and professional networks.
- The T&NT will lead on providing information/leaflets regarding trauma and bereavement support to parents, carers and professional networks.

PART 6: RESPONSE TO A PANDEMIC

The response of services other than the school to a Pandemic should depend on national and local guidance. Services Leads should work with the CEO to understand guidance and develop their response.

A risk assessment will be produced to support the service to remain open wherever possible, wholly or in part or an adapted offer of the service. This will

advise staff on the most appropriate way of mitigating risks and ensuring that everyone is kept as safe as possible. This acknowledges that the work of the charity is often needed even more during the stress of a pandemic.

In the case of a pandemic due to a virus, initially best hygiene practice is the default response:

Flu is a serious illness and children/ adults with suspected Flu should not come into work / school, until asymptomatic. Flu symptoms include fever, chills, cough, sore throat, headache, and muscle aches.

Symptoms of a **common cold** include: stuffy nose, sneezing, sore throat, and hacking cough. Colds often come on gradually, and are usually not serious. However, symptoms can become severe and a house adult at the school may need to keep a child off lessons to ensure they get rest and plenty of fluids to prevent worsening of symptoms.

In order to prevent the spread of flu and the common cold it is important that we all follow these simple steps.

- Remember to cover your nose and mouth with a tissue when sneezing or coughing and dispose of the tissue immediately.
- cough or sneeze into the bend of your elbow, to help keep as many germs as possible off your hands.
- wash your hands frequently with soap and warm water for at least 20 seconds.
- hands should be washed when visibly dirty, before eating, after visiting the toilet and after physical contact with a child / an adult or surfaces which you suspect have been exposed to flu / cold virus.
- Use hand sanitizer (available in communal areas and in each house) if soap and water is not available. (Always follow with soap and water as soon as it is available)
- Dry your hands using paper towels and dispose of these. Please refrain from using communal towels / tea towels to dry your hands, as they can be a breeding ground for viruses.
- Disinfect frequently touched surfaces and shared items at least once a day.

- Ensure that bathrooms in the houses are stocked with soap and paper towels
- Ensure there is access to a box of tissues and a waste bin in communal areas
- In the school if a member of staff or one of the children experiences any vomiting / diarrhoea, then they should not return to work / school for 24 hours post last episode
- In the school if a member of staff or one of the children has a high temperature, they should remain at home / in the house, until they are naturally fever free (temperature less than 40 degrees centigrade / 100 degrees Fahrenheit without Calpol / Paracetamol (as this will mask a temperature) for at least 24 hours before returning to work / school.
- Ensure hands are washed prior to eating.

PART 7: THE BUSINESS CONTINUITY PLAN

The oversight of the delivery of this policy is the responsibility of the CEO and the Services Leadership Group.

The operational management of this plan at the school is the responsibility of the Service Lead of the service. In the eventuality of this tier of management being incapacitated by any scenario, then this responsibility is passed on, as in any absence, to the next level of experienced and senior line management.

The role of the Trustees is to provide support and governance to the CEO and Services Leads, SLT and staff through the period of emergency.

The Charity is covered by 'continuity of business' insurance. This insurance, along with the managed use of reserve funds will be the main financial structures for maintaining the operation of the Charity. The impact of a decision to fully or partially close a service will vary from service to service. Services Leads should consider this for their service.

In the worst-case scenario, the closure of the school might mean that children are returned home. In this case SLT and line managers will work with their teams to instigate a weekly contact plan with children from the house and class groups. Decisions should aim to follow national guidance. This ensures that Local

Authorities understand decisions made and they support the ongoing payment of fees.

If the school site is closed and staff are unable to access it, SLT and the appropriate line managers will maintain contact with their teams through the line management system. A 'virtual' matrix for communication and continuity will be maintained.

The school's continuity of business will be maintained around this communication matrix.

In the case of deliberate sabotage of Charity service equipment or systems e.g. by a disgruntled staff member, would fall within the definition of gross misconduct as set out within the staff handbook and could lead to dismissal. Any school property e.g. keys, would be required to be immediately returned. Within the school the SLT would establish if the seriousness of the act should necessitate police intervention. If the sabotage were to IT systems, the automatic backup system should record all saved information, and passwords to all systems are held centrally in the school safe. Our IT support company would be informed and asked to rectify any system malfunction.

Appendices

APPENDIX A

CEO

07794 610263 (John Turberville)

SCHOOL TELEPHONE NUMBERS:

01865 300202

On-Call 1: 07788 254 086

On-Call 2: 07788 254 420

THE MULBERRY BUSH THIRD SPACE

01242 621200

EMERGENCY SERVICES:

999

ENVIRONMENT AGENCY:

0800 80 70 60

ST PETER'S SCHOOL, ALVESCOT:

01993 842535 (Head Teacher – Mrs Diane Axford)