

Disaster, Response and Recovery Plan

West Heath School



Approved by:	Board of Trustees	Date: April 2025
Creation date/ Version Date:	April 2023	
Last reviewed on:	April 2025	
Next review due by:	April 2027	
Lead Person	The Principal	
Policy Audience:	Staff/ Volunteers/ Trustees/ Contractors/ Parents/ Students	

Contents

1.	Aims & Objectives.....	3
2.	Legislation and Guidance	3
3.	Definitions	3
4.	Introduction	3
5.	Procedures & Practices	4
6.	Persons with Particular Responsibilities.....	6
7.	Monitoring and Evaluation	6
8.	Links with other Policies.....	6
9.	Consultees	6

Copies of this policy are available on the School Website - <http://www.westheathschool.com/policies-and-procedures> or as a hard copy on request from the School Office.

1. Aims & Objectives

To facilitate the school running in a safe and secure manner should there be an incident that compromises part of the building. In the event of mass destruction of property to facilitate the prompt management of student and staff relocation.

To support staff whilst on a school outing or trip should disaster or emergency occur.

- Protect the safety and welfare of students, school staff, and visitors.
- Provide for a safe and coordinated response to emergencies.
- Protect the school's facilities and properties.
- Enable the school to restore normal conditions with minimal confusion in the shortest time possible.
- Provide for the coordination between different parts of the school site to maximise use of viable buildings.
- Provide for coordination between the school and emergency services.
- Provide for the orderly provision of accurate information to all parties regarding the management of the situation and the function of the school during that time.
- To provide a plan should disaster occur abroad during a school trip or visit

2. Legislation and Guidance

Health and Safety at Work Act 1974

Management of Health & Safety at Work Regulations 1999

This plan has been written in conjunction with the school's SORP and risk assessments

3. Definitions

Disaster – The total destruction of part of the fabric of the school or loss of data such that the usual life and work of the school is compromised.

4. Introduction

West Heath School is committed to providing a caring, friendly and safe environment for all students so that they can learn in a relaxed and secure atmosphere. The same commitment is held for staff and visitors to our school. This policy is designed to ensure in the event of a disaster, the provision described above is maintained so far as possible and where it cannot be that arrangements are in hand to manage the situation calmly and effectively.

This disaster plan is formulated for use in the event of any type of incident which requires a large-scale evacuation of the school buildings or boarding environment or in the event of an emergency which is defined as follows:

“An event or situation which threatens serious damage to human welfare”

Examples of such disasters, whilst not exclusive might include: fire; explosion; flooding; bomb threat; building structural collapse; gas leak; emission of toxic or harmful fumes or vapours; terrorist acts, extreme weather, large scale staff absence or nationwide illnesses where the school is requested to or forced to close under government guidance.

This plan also covers guidance that the school should follow if a disaster or emergency takes place on a school trip or outing both at home or abroad.

5. Procedures & Practices

5.1 Communication

5.1.1 Internal

Rumours can spread quickly within a school community and can cause additional stress in a crisis. To prevent this, it is a priority that all members of staff are informed quickly, simply and factually of the event and the response to it.

Briefing notes and agreed statements will be formulated and distributed as quickly as possible. If internal communications are disrupted the two-way radios will be used. In addition, mobile phones for key staff will be used as will the text messaging service that contacts all staff. Staff should ensure that they notify HR and their line managers if any changes to their personal circumstance, address or contact number has changed

5.1.2 External

Communications systems are put under enormous pressure in the immediate aftermath of an emergency but are vital in ensuring a well-managed response. Should the main telephone system be disrupted, school mobile phones will be used. Call divert will be set up for designated school mobile phones. An early decision must be made about providing information to parents and carers, other agencies, and transport providers to ensure students are collected from school in a timely manner. SEN transport will also be informed at the earliest possible convenience of any changes to student's transport.

5.2 Media Management

All communications with the press will be managed by the Principal.

5.3 Emergency Actions

The school emergency management team (SEMT) (see persons with particular responsibilities) will meet immediately to determine the extent of the emergency and decide on the immediate course of action which may comprise:

Calling emergency services – should one or more of the emergency services be required they will be summoned by a member of the SEMT and similarly be met by someone from that team. Ideally it will be the Estates Manager who will be able to provide information regarding location of services into the school i.e. gas electricity etc.

5.4 Evacuation

If the emergency requires evacuation of the premises the fire alarm will be used and normal evacuation procedures will apply. If the evacuation is required for an extended period of time and shelter is required, the Sports Hall will be used provided it is safe to do so. All members of SLT have key access for the Sports Hall and to turn off the alarm within the Sports Hall.

Fire wardens will check all areas of the school are clear if it is safe to do so. All parties will be accounted for at the muster point. Missing persons will be sought provided it is safe to do so. Information regarding missing people will be relayed to emergency services upon their arrival.

5.5 First Aid and Pastoral Support

The SEMT will ensure that anyone requiring first aid is attended to by a qualified First Aider or the School Nurse. In all instances, the accident book will be completed as soon as possible after the emergency is over. All staff have a pastoral responsibility and in extreme cases the school counsellor will assist in a planned way.

5.6 Secondary Actions

The nature and location of the emergency will determine where the SEMT will meet to coordinate the response. Four locations have been identified because they are in separate buildings. The Principal's Study in main school building, the post 16 staff office, the Sports Hall and finally in the event of total destruction of main school buildings, Gate Lodge.

Once all facts and responses to the emergency are known the following may be appropriate:

- Inform the Chair of Trustees and agree onward communication to Local Authorities, the founding patron, all other interested parties. Any press statement should be agreed at this time together with who takes responsibility for communication.
- Briefing statement prepared for staff and parents\carers, local authorities.
- In event of students being sent home usual procedures to ensure it is safe for them to do so will be followed.
- Local taxi companies may need to be used for some journeys where parents / carers cannot assist with collection of students and LA are unable to respond.
- The school grounds may need to be closed to all traffic bar emergency vehicles and those collecting students.
- Emergency repair companies will be contacted by the estates and facilities manager or a designated member of the facilities team.
- If parts of the building are rendered unsafe to use in the short or the medium-term alternative measures to provide some continuity of provision will be established.
- The Head of Finance will contact the School's insurers.
- Notes recording decisions and actions will be taken at all SEMT meetings (see template in the Emergency Management & Business Continuity Plan).

5.7 Post Disaster Actions for Recovery and Business Continuity

The executive SLT will meet as soon as possible after the emergency to establish a disaster recovery team comprising:

- Estates & Facilities Manager
- Principal
- Deputy Principal
- Chair of Trustees
- Network Manager
- Head of Finance
- Head of HR

The above will formulate a recovery plan that may involve:

- Conduct an internal investigation into the emergency to develop preventative measures.
- Inform Local Authorities of current situation and also of the measures taken to resolve it.
- Securing the premises to prevent entry into unsafe areas.
- Preserve forensic evidence where possible.
- Implement any actions required to prevent further damage, water ingress or deterioration of IT systems for example.
- Check the building unaffected by the emergency remains safe and has adequate services including alarms.

- Identifying and retrieving salvageable materials.
 - Determining the need for post-traumatic stress counselling.
 - Arranging temporary accommodation on site to ensure continued delivery of curriculum.
 - Reviewing damage to files and records and reconstituting where necessary.
 - Organising communication to all parties regarding progress of recovery.
 - Determine alternative provision if parts of the school preclude student attendance.
- Establishing if the kitchen can provide mid-day meals and plan accordingly.

6. Persons with Particular Responsibilities

The Principal or in their absence the Deputy Principal is responsible for the school's response to an emergency. The school has an emergency management team (SEMT) which will convene as soon as possible after an emergency has occurred.

The SEMT will comprise: Principal, Deputy Principal, Head of Finance, Estates & Facilities Manager, H&S Officer, Network Manager, Head of HR, Chair of Trustees, PA to Principal.

7. Monitoring and Evaluation

SMT
 Student Services Committee
 Health and Safety Committee
 Governance Committee
 Trustees

8. Links with other Policies

- Emergency Management & Business Continuity Plan
- Health & Safety Policy
- Lockdown Procedures
- Evacuation Procedures
- Gas Emergency Procedures
- School Trips Risk Assessments

9. Consultees

The Principal, Senior Management Team, Student Services Committee and Health & Safety Officer