

## Disaster, Response and Recovery Plan

<b>This policy has been written for...</b>	All staff and students at West Heath School
<b>Copies of this policy may be obtained from...</b>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• The School <b>web site</b> - <a href="http://www.westheathschool.com">http://www.westheathschool.com</a></li> <li>• It is available as a hard copy on request from the <b>school office</b></li> <li>• Hard copies for reference are filed in the <b>staff room</b></li> </ul>
<b>This policy links with the following policies</b>	<p>This policy should be read in conjunction with:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Emergency Management &amp; Business Continuity Plan</li> <li>• Health and Safety Policy</li> <li>• Lockdown Procedures</li> <li>• Evacuation Procedures</li> <li>• Gas Emergency Procedures</li> <li>• School Trips Risk Assessments</li> </ul>
<b>Participants and consultees in the formulation of this policy were...</b>	The Principal, Senior Leadership Team, Student Services Committee, Health & Safety Officer
<b>Edition, Review frequency and dates</b>	<p>This is Edition 4</p> <p>This policy will be reviewed every two years</p> <p>It is due for review in April 2025</p>
<b>Relevant statutory guidance, circulars, legislation &amp; other sources of information are...</b>	<p>Health and Safety at Work Act 1974</p> <p>Management of Health &amp; Safety at Work Regulations 1999</p> <p>This plan has been written in conjunction with the school's SORP and risk assessments.</p>
<b>The Lead Member of staff is</b>	Principal
<b>Definitions and key terms used in this policy...</b>	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.
<b>The Rationale and Purpose of this policy</b>	<p>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.</p>

## Appendices

### Copying

No school policy is ever written in isolation. Acknowledgement of sources of advice and significant influence in the development and recording of policies at the New School are noted on the front page. We request that any schools or organisations incorporating large sections of this policy without alteration should make similar appropriate acknowledgement.

## Introduction

### What is a Disaster Plan?

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.

### The Aim of this Policy

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.

### The Objectives of this Policy

- 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

## Procedures & Practices

### Communication

## **Internal**

Rumours can spread quickly within a school community and can cause additional stress in a crisis situation. In order 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.

## **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.

## **Media Management**

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

## **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.

## **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 as long as 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.

## **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.

## **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).

## **Procedures & Practices**

### **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
- Vice 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.

### Persons with Particular Responsibilities

The Principal or in her absence the Vice 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, Vice Principal, Company Secretary, Head of Finance, Estates & Facilities Manager, Network Manager, PA to Principal, Head of HR, Chair of Trustees.

### Other Participants & Stakeholders

Parents and carers.  
Students, visitors.

### Monitoring & Evaluation

Student Council  
SMT  
Student Services Committee  
Health and Safety Committee  
Governance Committee  
Trustees

## In the Event of Extraordinary Closure

In the event that the school has to close due to nationwide illness/epidemic, the government will offer guidance that schools should follow. In this instance, West Heath will contact parents and carers, Local Authorities and SEN transport to ensure that they are kept abreast of changes as they happen. Government guidance and guidelines will

be followed to ensure that staff and students are appropriately catered for whilst in school and will endeavour to provide work should the school need to close for a period of time.

## **Emergency or Disaster Offsite**

In the event of an emergency or disaster offsite during a trip or visit the trip leader will follow the emergency protocols outlined below:

1. Stay calm.
2. Assess the situation (establish the nature and extent of the emergency as quickly as possible and check for further danger).
3. Ensure you are safe (you are the priority at this stage, if you become injured you will not be in a position to help others).
4. Ensure the rest of the group are safe, and let everyone know you are taking charge.
5. Establish the names of any casualties and get immediate medical attention for them. Monitor casualties' conditions at all times.
6. Ensure that all group members who need to know are aware of the situation and are following the emergency procedures.
7. If possible ensure that the casualty is accompanied to the hospital and that the rest of the group are kept together. Monitor the rest of the group at all times.
8. Notify the emergency services as appropriate.
9. Inform the contact person within the organisation.
10. Keep a record of all details of the accident. This should include nature, date and time; location of incident; names of casualties and details of their injury; names of others involved; action taken so far; action yet to be taken.
11. Ascertain names and telephone numbers for future calls- eg. witnesses, police, hospitals etc.
12. Refer media enquiries to a designated media contact base- eg. the Vice Principal.
13. Complete an accident report form as soon as possible after the event.
14. The school will notify insurers and solicitors, if appropriate, as soon as possible.

## **First Contact Emergency Response**

### **On Receiving a Call**

In the event of receiving an emergency call from a group on a visit, the first responder needs to remember they will be very stressed. Responder needs to remain calm to be able to take down some key information without missing anything. Emergency responders should carry out the following actions, as appropriate:

1. Take down the following information:

Who is calling?
What is their role in the group (visit leader, assistant leader, participant)?
What number can they be called back on should the call disconnect?
What has happened? What is the nature of the emergency?
What is the number and status of the casualties?
What is their current location?
What is the total number of people in the party?
Are they staying where they are or moving? If they are moving where to?

What help do they require?
What time did the accident happen?
What time is it now? What is the time difference if outside the UK?
What services have been called or are in attendance?

2. Reassure them and tell them they will be called back once you have contacted a senior manager/ the Principal (within 30 minutes if possible).
3. Contact staff in the following priority order and give them the information you have noted.

Name	Telephone Number
Principal	
Vice Principal (if not home contact)	

### Long Term Crisis Management Plan

Task	Timescale
Obtain factual information at start of crisis	Within Hours
SEMT meet with support personnel	Within Hours
Establish a plan of action and media response	Within Hours
Contact families until all informed	Within Hours
Call a staff meeting to give information	Same Day
Inform students in small groups ensuring therapy teams or relevant trained staff are available to support	Same Day
Debriefing for staff involved in disaster	Same Day
Debriefing for students involved in disaster	ASAP
Identify high risk staff and students	Next few days
Promote discussion in class/meeting	Next few days
Identify need for group/individual treatment	Days/weeks
Organise treatment	Days/weeks

### In Cases of Terrorism

The current global situation means that the possibility of being close to, or caught up in, a terrorist attack is a risk we all face. Like all risks this needs to be kept in perspective and managed in a thoughtful and proportionate way. The UK government identifies five levels of threat from low to critical. Since 2006 when the level was first published, the UK has never been below 'substantial'- the middle level. The following guidance should be followed to ensure that trip leaders can be vigilant and reduce the vulnerability of our students whilst carrying on as normally as possible.

When planning any visit, the school will consider the likelihood of the destination, venue and transport being subject to terrorist attack and risk assess accordingly.

### Critical Incidents

A critical incident is defined as an incident or situation involving trauma, fatality or serious injury to an individual or serious damage to property. By its very nature such an incident

is sudden, unpredictable and outside the range of normal human experience. Such events are normally very distressing to pupils and school staff.

Infrequently, a serious crisis may affect your school. It can happen on the premises or may involve pupils and/or staff when they are away. Sometimes, an incident affecting the wider community may have a significant effect on your school.

Examples of some of the critical incidents that have occurred include:

- A death of a pupil on site
- Deaths of pupils as a result of long-term illness
- The sudden, unexpected death of a pupil or a member of staff
- The death of parents of school age children
- A serious, accidental injury of a pupil on school premises during the school day

If such incidents occur the SEMT team will gather to put a plan in place, this will be led by the Principal.