



ASHMORE PARK

AND

PHOENIX NURSERY SCHOOLS
FEDERATION

CRITICAL INCIDENT
POLICY

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| Senior Leadership Team/Compliance Governor(s) Review Date | 07.05.2024 |
| Governing Board Approved/Adopted | 14.05.2024 |
| Signed on behalf of the Governing Board/Committee | <i>C.A. Lingard-Jones</i> |
| Policy to be Reviewed Date | 31.05.2025 |

INTRODUCTION

The purpose of this policy is to set out protocols and procedures to enable each School to deal with a number of emergency situations so that the needs of the children, staff and parents/carers may be met, and so that the respective school may continue to operate as normally as it can, for as long as possible, and return to normal operation as quickly as possible. The policy consists of a core plan applicable to a number of different emergency scenarios, all of which are followed by specific advice related to each individual circumstance.

The aim of the policy is to manage the effects of any emergency, which might occur within each school so that every reasonable step is taken to:

- prevent or minimise the loss of life and/or injury to children and staff;
- alert relevant parties and stakeholders, e.g. the emergency services, the Local Authority, parents/carers, and Governors;
- take control at the scene until the emergency services arrive;
- minimise disruption to the normal daily routine of the staff and children; and
- ensure effective communication with the media.

We recognise that planning is essential if emergencies are to be managed effectively. We cannot plan in detail for every possible scenario, but the generic emergency plan ensures that those involved in the initial stages have a firm basis from which to develop their response.

Each school maintains an up-to-date contact directory for both the School and Local Authority (LA) staff. This includes out of hours' information. This is reviewed annually, and staff have responsibility for updating contact information as and when necessary.

1. CORE EMERGENCY PLAN

The Crisis Management Team

In the event of a serious emergency situation, a Crisis Management Team (CMT) will take charge of the situation. The CMT will consist of:

- The Headteacher
 - will have overall responsibility for communications with the media.
- The Senior Leadership Team (SLT)
 - Will act as co-ordinators of the plan and will be responsible for all operational matters in respect of either school in the event of an emergency.

The following staff make up an 'emergency team' to advise and assist the CMT depending on the nature of the emergency:

- Senior Administrator
- Site Manager
- Representatives from the LA.

The main tasks of the CMT will be:

- Gathering information about the nature and extent of the emergency and establishing who has been informed about it;
- Liaising with emergency services where appropriate;
- Recording all information pertaining to the emergency;

- Controlling all links with the media (see below);
- Controlling all links with parents/carers (see below);
- Producing a daily briefing sheet, where appropriate, summarising the current situation, support systems available, and the short and long term plans
 - This will be issued to staff and possibly parents/carers, and
- Taking advice from Trade Unions.

2. MAINTAINING NORMAL SCHOOL ROUTINE AS FAR AS POSSIBLE

a) Locations

Should a situation arise in which some of the school building is rendered unusable, the CMT would base itself in:

Ashmore Park Nursery

- The School Office dependent upon which part of the building was unusable;
- Corpus Christi Catholic Primary School, Ashmore Avenue, Wolverhampton, WV11 2LT, 01902 866840
 - If the School site was deemed unusable and/or unsafe, staff and children would be evacuated to the above-named site.

Phoenix Nursery School

- The School Office dependent upon which part of the building was unusable;
- St Teresa's Catholic Primary Academy, Malins Road, Parkfields, Wolverhampton, WV4 6AW, 01902 558862
 - If the School site was deemed unusable and/or unsafe, staff and children would be evacuated to the above-named site.

b) Communication

Information about any emergency situation should be relayed to the Headteacher as quickly as possible. The Headteacher will summon a meeting with as many members of the CMT as soon as possible after this information is received. Having established the nature of the problem and the names, nature, and extent of any casualties, the CMT will inform:

The Emergency Services

- This will be carried out by the Senior Administrator, once the Headteacher or members of the CMT have decided that such a course of action is appropriate.

Parents/Carers

- Prompt contact will be made with parents/carers of children affected by the emergency. Where children have been seriously injured or killed, such contact will be made either personally by the Headteacher, possibly accompanied by a member of the Police Force or directly by the Police. If contact with a parent/carer is made out of school, then care should be taken to ensure that the parent/carer is not left alone in distress. Useful numbers e.g. local support groups may also be provided. A brief record of all such meetings will be noted and retained;
- Other parents/carers should be informed of the nature of the incident by letter, sent home with the children containing details of the emergency and, if appropriate, a

return to school date. It may be appropriate to inform the local media e.g. local radio stations to assist in the dissemination of information. Where the emergency incident occurs before normal school hours and involves a school closure, the LA procedure for the closure of schools would be adhered to at all times; and

- All briefings given to parents/carers should be clear and appropriate.

Staff

- A meeting of all staff should be convened as soon as possible after the incident has taken place. Where this is not possible e.g. where staff are involved in the supervision of children, then smaller groups may be briefed separately; and
- There should be a debriefing of all staff at the end of the day on which the incident occurred, as and when possible. A daily briefing sheet may also be used to keep staff informed of developments. The priority will be to share appropriate information, with staff on a regular basis.

Media Including Social Media

- The Headteacher is personally responsible for all contact with the media. No other member of staff should contact the media and parents/carers will be discouraged from doing so. Where the media contacts other members of staff, they should refer them to the Headteacher;
- The CMT will be responsible for briefing staff on avoiding contact with the media and for ensuring that representatives of the media do not gain unauthorised access to staff by waiting at the school gates etc.;
- A briefing sheet for the local media will be produced and consideration will be given to organising a briefing session for the media; and
- Where a school routine has been damaged by the emergency and the children have, consequently, had to return to school after a period of time, their return will be managed carefully, and steps will be taken to ensure that media attention at this stage is not intrusive. Police protection may be requested to safeguard families against intrusion if necessary.

Children

- Information about an emergency should be given to children in simple, clear terms, appropriate to their age and level of understanding. Care should be taken at all times to minimise the distress to the children and sensitive handling by experienced staff will be needed to minimise the impact upon the emotional well-being of the children.

Other Stakeholders

- Governors should be informed of any emergency by the Headteacher, following prior contact with the Chair of Governors or Vice Chair;
- Associated schools, especially those where children affected by the emergency have siblings, should be informed and information passed to them clearly and concisely;
- Royal Mail and any other suppliers should be informed of any emergency involving the loss/change of buildings and therefore any changes to delivery arrangements;
- Care agencies e.g. local social services and religious groups might be informed in situations where children have been killed or seriously injured; and

- The local community e.g. local residents and neighbours of either school should be informed as soon as possible, especially where the nature of the incident is likely to cause problems with vehicular access to the school and/or parking.

3. HUMAN SITUATIONS

a) Incident during an off-site school visit

In the event of a serious incident whilst on a school trip, supervising staff should follow the guidelines in the Federation's Health and Safety Policy and also the LA guidelines for off site visits. Where the off-site leader is not a member of the CMT, they should contact the Headteacher immediately and pass on the relevant information as soon as possible.

Once informed of the nature and extent of the emergency, the CMT will act as detailed above.

b) Emergency involving the use of a vehicle for school purposes

In the event of a serious accident, especially any accident involving serious injury or loss of life, in which a vehicle is involved, the driver of the vehicle or any accompanying member of staff must:

- Ensure the safety and security of all individuals present;
- Notify the emergency services of the nature of the incident;
- Not admit blame or liability for any accident; and
- Notify the appropriate school of the nature of the incident and the names, nature, and extent of any casualties.

Once in possession of this information, the CMT will act as detailed above.

c) Incident involving terrorism or other threat to children's lives or physical safety in school

Where a member of staff becomes aware of such a threat indirectly e.g. by a telephone call, they should inform the Headteacher as soon as possible giving all the information they have. The CMT will then be contacted, and they will assess the situation.

Where a member of staff becomes directly aware of a threat to the children's safety on or at the perimeter of either school site, then the member of staff should:

- Immediately take action to ensure the safety of the children; and
- Ensure that the Headteacher is informed immediately who will then sanction any further action.

The CMT will then contact the Police, giving as many details of the incident as possible and meet representatives from the Police Force on arrival in school.

d) Outbreak of an infectious illness in school

Human Influenza Pandemic/Norovirus

- The applicable school would continue operating as normally as possible during a pandemic, but would plan for much higher than usual levels of staff absence;
- Children are highly efficient 'spreaders' of respiratory infections; when more is known about the nature of the pandemic strain of the virus, the Health Protection Agency (HPA), LA or Government may advise the school to close;
- The Federation would, therefore, plan for remaining open during a pandemic and for possible closure. Relevant, up to date, Information, Advice and Guidance will be sought and followed at all times;
- If either school were to close, to the children, staff would be expected to attend as normal unless ill or directed otherwise by the Headteacher;
- If Government advice stated that schools should close, the Headteacher would consult the Chair of Governors and a final decision on whether to close either/both of the school(s) would be taken;
- If either school remained open during a pandemic, the Headteacher would ensure sick children were separated from other children, and their contact with staff would be minimised, until their parent/carer could collect the child. Systems would be in place to minimise the spread of infection, e.g. handwashing, disposal of tissues, disinfectant on door handles etc.;
- Any staff or child showing signs of infection would be sent home as soon as possible. Flu-like symptoms include the sudden onset of fever, headache, muscle pains and feeling ill, with or without sore throat, cough or difficulty breathing;
- The Federation would provide any information requested by the local health authority or any other Government agency; and

Meningitis

This is an illness, which is rare but can be life threatening and the disease remains very media attractive. A case in school would raise the problem of not only anxious parents/carers but also the inquisitive press.

A case of meningitis would be confirmed by the Department of Communicable Disease, which deals with all cases of infectious illnesses in the area. The department would issue clear guidelines to the applicable school, to issue, in turn to parents/carers of children who might be affected. The illness is spread by droplet infection through sneezing, coughing, and kissing, so the people most at risk from catching it are those closest to the patient. Follow up treatment will depend on what strain the meningitis is and whether there will be a need for mass vaccination or the distribution of oral antibiotics or both.

Information that one of the children has contracted the illness must be immediately communicated to the Headteacher who will call a meeting of the CMT as soon as is practically possible to discuss the course of action to take. Immediate action should include:

- The establishment of an emergency telephone line for anxious relatives, which will disseminate as much appropriate information as is available to the

affected school. The Senior Administrator's office line would be suitable but would need to be manned constantly;

- The drafting of a letter to all parents/carers informing them of the situation and how the affected school is dealing with the outbreak;
- Staff must be informed of what is happening (including cleaning staff) and reassured that there is not likely to be a risk to their personal health even if they were involved in teaching the child;
- The Headteacher will deal with all enquiries from the media; and
- Communication with the Department of Communicable Disease would remain an urgent priority.

Meningitis is a rare illness but is likely to cause a panic reaction as there may be fatalities and the illness itself is difficult to diagnose quickly, as it can mimic flu. Meningitis is curable with antibiotics but can also lead to blood poisoning if not detected quickly.

e) Incident involving the death of a member of the school community

Such situations may involve the death of a child or a member of staff. Where such an incident occurs during school activities, then members of staff must notify the Headteacher immediately so that this policy can be put into effect. Where such an incident occurs outside school activities and is reported to either school, the information must be verified before action is taken, e.g. by confirmation of the next of kin. As much information should be gathered from parents/carers, emergency services etc. before any announcement is made.

Parents/Carers, children and staff should be informed as detailed above, though the following points should be considered:

- It may be appropriate to inform close colleagues of the deceased before passing information on to the wider school community;
- Consideration will need to be given to the young age of the children and advice taken on how best to inform such young children of a tragic event;
- Support for staff and children should be made available e.g. LA counselling service(s); and
- Consideration may be given to the use of resources e.g. books/puppets to help staff deal with any questions/worries the children may have.

4. PHYSICAL SITUATIONS

a) Incident requiring evacuation of either School and/or loss of building

For circumstances where evacuation of the building is required, procedures set out in the Federation 'Health and Safety Policy' document should be followed. Where fire has rendered the building unfit for use, accommodation for the CMT, staff and children will be taken as detailed above.

Where the building is disabled for prolonged periods, the Headteacher would seek advice from the LA about the provision of temporary accommodation.

b) Closure of the school due to adverse weather conditions

Each school adheres to the specific guidance issued by the LA in relation to school closures caused by severe weather conditions. Information to parents/carers about procedures for dealing with adverse weather conditions is distributed at the appropriate time of the year. The affected school will inform parents/carers, usually by text, as soon as possible of any likelihood of closure due to severe weather or if the affected school is to close early. Parents/Carers are advised to listen to the local radio stations or check the LA website at regular intervals.

c) ICT Systems failure

Procedures are in place to minimise the effect of a breakdown in ICT Systems. Information stored electronically is 'backed up' daily by the server. Important information e.g. contact details for children are also stored in paper form. In the event of an emergency the Federation's external ICT Service Level Agreement provider, eServices are able to loan equipment to either school and have systems in place to restore data. In the event of an emergency, representatives from eServices are confident that they can have systems up and running again within four hours.

d) Monitoring and review

Each School's procedures for dealing with emergencies will be monitored by the Headteacher and the policy will be formally reviewed annually.