



Drapers' Brookside
Infant & Junior School

Policy Title	Crisis Management Policy
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Policy Reference	
Function	For Information and Guidance
Ownership / Implementation	The Principal and the Governing Body have overall responsibility for ensuring that this policy is implemented.
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Introduction

This Policy has been written to cover risks and eventualities that may well be experienced in our locality.

1 Aims

- 1.1 The aim of this Policy is to ensure that all staff and governors are equipped with a full and concise working document to deal with any crisis that affects the school, its staff or pupils. These incidents may range from a flooded classroom; a water leak; loss of all computer data, to the death of a pupil or member of staff; tragic accident during a school trip or other off-site visit.
- 1.2 All senior members of staff and governors must be clear about their responsibilities and duties at such a time and should be able to use this document to easily identify who should be contacted and how in a number of different scenarios.
- 1.3 It is the responsibility of the Principal to ensure that the contact lists held within this document are kept up-to-date and it is the responsibility of all holders of this document to ensure that they keep the personal information that it contains as confidential.

2 The Right Response

- 2.1 Taking the correct course of action in response to incidents or threats involving school staff, pupils or property may determine whether there is a further incident, whether the school will receive the available support at the right level and, in some cases, whether justice is served. The proper response will minimise the distraction, allowing the school to get on with their real business. In addition to dealing with individual incidents, the proper response may involve the investment of staff time and resources in recording, analysing and taking preventative measures against future incidents.

3 The Impact on the School

- 3.1 The impact of incidents will vary depending upon the circumstances. Plans should be in place to cover all eventualities while making a subjective judgement on the level of support needed and the impact upon the school.

4 Intruders on School Premises

- 4.1 Possible Threats



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The school would wish to maintain an "Open Door" Policy for parents and visitors alike, but this must be balanced against the likelihood of serious threats to staff and pupils in the school. These threats may take the form of:

- 4.1.1 Theft of equipment and/or personal belongings of either staff or pupils
- 4.1.2 Vandalism of equipment and/or premises
- 4.1.3 Violent pupils threatening either fellow pupils or staff
- 4.1.4 Violent parents threatening either pupils and/or staff
- 4.1.5 Unknown intruder(s) threatening either pupils and/or staff.

4.2 Visitors

All visitors are requested to enter via the main reception, sign the visitors' book and wear a visitor's badge. This process also ensures visitors' safety if a fire evacuation or drill should take place during their visit. Any lengthy planned visit will be advised to all relevant staff by the Principal. Visitors will be escorted to their destination and introduced to the relevant member of staff in that area. All staff should feel confident in issuing a polite challenge to any visitors: "Can I help you?" or "Are you lost?" will cover most situations. If any member of staff or pupil feels uneasy about the presence or behaviour of any visitor they should report their concerns immediately to the Principal asking the visitor to accompany them to the school office. Any serious concerns or threats should follow the procedures below.

4.3 Assess the Risk

4.3.1 Try to categorise the intruder and the degree and type of threat posed. Any knowledge of the intruder, their motivation or background, will be of help for the school and possibly the emergency services should they become involved. Examples of possible categories are:

- Walk in opportunist thief
- Former pupils
- Parents
- Non-custodial parent seeking access to children or seeking to remove children from school
- Armed intruder
- Unknown quantity.

4.3.2 Look out for people who are not staff but appear to have authority to be there. Wearing an identification badge and visitors labels is essential. **N.B. All staff MUST wear an identification badge.**

4.4 Challenging the Intruder



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- 4.4.1 Do not stand too close or invade personal space, this could trigger violent confrontation
- 4.4.2 Avoid an aggressive stance such as finger wagging or folded arms
- 4.4.3 Be polite. Stay calm; speak gently, slowly and clearly
- 4.4.4 Explain your authority to challenge them if it is questioned
- 4.4.5 Always tell another person when going to speak to possible intruders
- 4.4.6 Avoid arguments
- 4.4.7 Never place your hand on a potentially aggressive intruder
- 4.4.8 Do not turn your back and, if you leave the room, do so backwards
- 4.4.9 Try to leave yourself an escape route which you have planned on entry to the area
- 4.4.10 Be on the look out for weapons
- 4.4.11 If there is more than one intruder, do not confront them on your own, seek support first or enlist the help of the police
- 4.4.12 If you do not feel sufficiently confident to challenge an intruder, do not do it. Seek help; no-one will think the less of you.

4.5 Contacting the Emergency Services

Whilst the school has a good working relationship with the local police, the emergency number should always be used in the following circumstances:

- 4.5.1 Terrorism
- 4.5.2 There is any danger to life
- 4.5.3 Actual or expected threat of violence
- 4.5.4 Threat of damage to property
- 4.5.5 A crime is in progress
- 4.5.6 A further crime may occur
- 4.5.7 There is any other incident which in your judgement requires an immediate response.

4.6 Emergency Communications

In order to reach a decision on how to deal with an intruder, you may need to contact another member of staff quickly without the intruder knowing your intention. You may also need a way of summoning help, such as calling the police.

- 4.6.1 If there is an intruder on site who may cause harm to pupils or staff, it may be necessary to instigate an 'invacuation' by which everyone in the school should remain in their classrooms until further notice. Should such a situation occur, senior staff will visit each classroom and say the code word – "Lockdown".
- 4.6.2 This code word also instigates the following procedures:



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- 4.6.2.1 All pupils to be told by staff to position themselves underneath a desk, away from windows and sight lines of corridors;
- 4.6.2.2 Staff should do the same as pupils;
- 4.6.2.3 Pupils and staff should remain in classrooms until a senior member of staff indicates the situation is over.
- 4.6.2.4 Further details can be found in the lockdown procedures.

- 4.6.3 Alternatively, if the sound of the school alarm, with the rhythm '5 short blasts' is sounded periodically, the above procedure should also be followed.

- 4.6.4 When off site, all senior staff carry mobile phones, staff will be given these numbers for use in emergencies.

- 4.6.5 If the school has a situation in which the site should be evacuated but fire alarms are not working, the senior staff will go through the corridors blowing three blasts on a whistle in succession.

- 4.7 During the Emergency Situation (e.g. terrorism, kidnap threat)
 - 4.7.1 If there is any question of a risk to pupils and/or staff, evacuate the school using normal fire evacuation procedures. There may be situations where evacuation would increase the risk or exacerbate a sensitive situation, in which case the invacuation described above should be used.

 - 4.7.2 Circumstances will dictate the action to be taken and either the Principal or individual members of staff will have to take the responsibility of making a judgement as to the right course of action. If there is a physical threat to staff or pupils always call the police using 999.

 - 4.7.3 Nobody should attempt or feel that they are expected to "have a go" if there is any question of there being a risk of injury as a result. If there is a risk of equipment being stolen it is better to lose such equipment rather than risk a violent incident. Similarly, if there is a risk of assault, an intruder could claim you used unreasonable or unjustified force on them.

 - 4.7.4 Avoid direct confrontation until the police arrive. Where staff or pupils are not in immediate danger from an intruder, try to keep track of their movements and inform the police of their whereabouts when they arrive.

 - 4.7.5 In the case of attempted abduction or direct physical threat to a pupil, you will be required to make an immediate judgement.



Consider:

- 4.7.5.1 Will the victim be in greater danger or lesser danger if the intruder is confronted?
- 4.7.5.2 Is it possible to speak to and reason with the intruder(s)?
- 4.7.5.3 Is the intruder known to you and the pupil?
- 4.7.5.4 Do you have any knowledge of the victim or intruder that may assist your judgement?

4.7.6 It is not reasonable to suggest that the Principal or other staff can do more than follow their own assessment of the situation and act accordingly. The only principles which must be followed are to take the course of action which you believe presents the least risk to the child and school staff, and summon the police as soon as possible.

4.8 After the Event

- 4.8.1 Any violent incident that takes place in a school must be reported in accordance with the Health and Safety Policy. A report form of an accident, violent incident, disease or ill-health at work must always be completed and the original sent to the School Office who hold these records.
- 4.8.2 It is possible that staff or pupils may be traumatised by intruder incidents, even if they do not display immediate signs of trauma or disturbance. It may be appropriate to arrange counselling. There may also be an ongoing need for psychological support and guidance to help the school community come to terms with the incident. For information and advice on on-going support, contact the Facilities Manager.
- 4.8.3 If the intruder has left the premises and may pose a threat to other schools, contact should be made with the local schools in the vicinity.
- 4.8.4 It may be appropriate for the Principal or Chair of Governors to brief Officers from the Local Authority about the incident, particularly if there is any media interest. No other member of staff or governor should speak to the press or broadcast media without first consulting the Principal or Chair of Governors. The first point of contact for such issues should be the Marketing and Communications Officer of the MAT.

5 Trespass, Nuisance or Disturbance on School Premises



Although trespass is not a criminal offence, a Principal may order any unwelcome or unauthorised visitors off the school premises. This right is extended by Section 547 of the Education Act 1996. Section 547 makes it a criminal offence if a person present on educational premises, without lawful authority, causes or permits nuisance or disturbance to the annoyance of persons who lawfully use those premises. It applies whether or not the lawful users are present at the time and to all school buildings, playgrounds, laying fields and other areas for outdoor recreation.

The penalty for a person convicted of the offence is a fine of up to £500.

5.1 Exercise of Section 547 and Police Involvement

- 5.1.1 The Principal can ask unauthorised persons to leave, but only a Police Officer can remove a person from the school premises provided they have reasonable cause to suspect that the person is committing or has committed an offence under Section 547.
- 5.1.2 On no account should staff attempt to remove physically from the premises a person who may be committing an offence. If a person will not comply with an instruction to leave the premises, or if in the view of the authorised person an instruction or confrontation might inflame the situation and put them or others at risk, then police assistance should be summoned by dialling 999.
- 5.1.3 Problems not requiring an immediate police response should be dealt with by contacting the local police station on 01708 371313. If there is prior knowledge of the likelihood of trouble on educational premises, the police should be contacted in advance using the above telephone number. **If there is any question of immediate risk to staff, pupils or others or damage to property, a 999 call should be made.**

5.2 Less Serious Cases

In less serious cases of nuisance or disturbance (.e.g persons allowing dogs to foul playing fields, parents persistently smoking on school premises, etc): the following steps should be taken by the authorised members of staff:

- 5.2.1 Warn the person concerned of the sanctions that Section 547 provides. Ask the person to refrain from committing an offence and/or ask them to leave the premises. Ask them for their name and address.
- 5.2.2 In cases of persistent offences, or if the offender takes no notice of a warning given as above, inform the offender that he/she may be



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prosecuted: ask for the offender's name and address; make a written report of the incident immediately after and in as much detail as possible, including any remarks made by the offender. Take a separate statement from any witnesses to the incident.

5.2.3 It is emphasised that if, at any stage of this process, an authorised person believes that they or others may be at risk, they should withdraw and summon police help by dialling 999.

5.3 Record Keeping and Warning Letters

5.3.1 The Principal should ensure that a detailed record is kept of any incidents. In more serious cases or with persistent offenders, legal advice should be sought by contacting the Chief Operating Officer of the MAT. The Chief Operating Officer will follow up the report with a letter to the offender to the effect that consideration will be given to legal proceedings. If this has no effect and the person continues to offend, the Principal will write in stronger terms. In extreme cases, the MAT may institute a prosecution.

5.3.2 It is understood that schools may have difficulty in the heat of the moment in deciding whether an incident is likely to have serious consequences, presenting danger to people or a threat to property.

5.4 Offensive Weapons Act 1996

5.4.1 Section 139A of the Offensive Weapons Act 1996 came into force on 1st September 1996. This makes it an offence to carry an article with a blade or point, or an offensive weapon, on school premises. Convictions can result in a fine, imprisonment or both.

5.4.2 If someone is carrying such an item for good reason or with lawful authority, such as:

- Use at work
- Educational purpose
- Religious reasons
- As part of a national costume

Such use is permissible and in the unlikely event of them being charged in such circumstances, they have a defence.

5.4.3 Section 139A also provides a police officer with the power to enter school premises and search for such articles if there are reasonable grounds for suspecting those articles are present.

6 Keeping Staff Safe



Violence or the threat of violence towards school staff is still comparatively rare. Nonetheless, it is advisable to consider the circumstances in which violence or threat might occur and the precautions which can be taken to minimise risk.

6.1 Be Aware of Your Own Behaviour

Violent confrontation may occur as a result of inappropriate behaviour by school staff. Whilst there is no excuse for violence, all staff should ensure that their own behaviour is assertive but controlled and reasonable.

6.2 Be Prepared

Staff may know in advance that a meeting is likely to be difficult and that certain parents are prone to over-react, or that they will strongly disagree with a school action or decision. If staff think these circumstances may apply, they should seek the advice of either the Principal or senior staff and ensure that a colleague is present throughout any such meeting.

6.3 Drink, Drugs & Stress

If it is apparent that someone you are meeting has been drinking, or if there is a suspicion that they may be under the influence of drugs, all staff should be very cautious. If it is possible to withdraw from the situation to enlist assistance then do so. People suffering from stress or over-tiredness may also be more prone to commit acts of violence.

6.4 Your Own Behaviour

6.4.1 Place yourself in a way that allows you access to help, either in person or by message. If in an office or classroom, how could you get help if it was needed?

6.4.2 You have an escape route?

6.4.3 Always position yourself between the person you're meeting and the door

6.4.4 Do not turn your back and, if leaving the room, do so backwards

6.4.5 If possible, remain behind a barrier such as a desk

6.4.6 Avoid potentially dangerous locations such as the tops of stairs, restricted spaces and areas where there is equipment which could be used as a weapon

6.4.7 Ensure there another member of staff within earshot?

6.5 Try to Remain Calm

In a confrontational situation, try to gently persuade the aggressor to back down or compromise and:



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- 6.5.1 Keep calm, speaking gently, slowly and clearly
- 6.5.2 Do not show aggression in response to aggression
- 6.5.3 Do not argue
- 6.5.4 Do not invade personal space by standing too close
- 6.5.5 Avoid wagging your finger or folding your arms
- 6.5.6 Never place your hand on an aggressive person
- 6.5.7 Be aware of the person's movements and body actions which might signal that it is time to withdraw from the situation/seek help.

6.6 Staff Working Alone

- 6.6.1 If a member of staff is working outside school hours at the school or is working alone they should:
 - 6.6.1.1 Consider whether it is really necessary to work alone
 - 6.6.1.2 Ensure that the building is secure and that no other person can enter without their knowledge
 - 6.6.1.3 Notify someone of their whereabouts and agree with them a system of checking on their safety at regular intervals
 - 6.6.1.4 Consider how they would summon help and who they would contact
 - 6.6.1.5 Consider the use of personal alarms and mobile telephones.

6.7 Fight or Flight?

- 6.7.1 If the options in a violent situation are to fight or move away, move away. Exceptions might be where there is a direct threat to a pupil or pupils, or the violence is offered by a pupil who may injure themselves. Although each situation will be unique and will require unique judgement, staff should discuss possible reactions to such situations.

6.8 Assaults on School Staff

Staff should bear in mind the following key points:

- 6.8.1 Violence does not include only physical assault but also distressing or intimidating verbal aggressions. Incidents arising from racial, sexual or religious harassment are also included. Intimidating behaviour can also include malicious damage to property, rude gestures and innuendo.
- 6.8.2 All violent incidents, including threat and abuse from whatever source (e.g. intruders, parents, other employees, pupils, etc) must be recorded and reported to the Health and Safety Manager.



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- 6.8.3 People will have differing reactions to violence, threats and abuse and differing perceptions of what constitutes such behaviour. All staff should bear in mind that what might seem trivial to one person may cause another substantial distress.
- 6.8.4 Report any violent incident to the Principal as soon as possible however minor it might seem.
- 6.8.5 Staff present at a violent incident should act to prevent further violence but must be mindful of the potential risk to themselves. If possible, try to remove the assailant from the scene or move the assaulted person to a safe place.
- 6.8.6 The Principal should interview the victim and any witnesses as soon as possible and obtain written statements. If the police have been involved, no investigation or interviews should be undertaken prior to their arrival.
- 6.8.7 Requests by the employee for legal advice should be immediately referred to the Chief Operating Officer to seek legal advice.
- 6.8.8 If an employee is injured they should obtain a medical statement about their injuries.
- 6.8.9 Any serious assault should normally be reported to the police, but the Principal should be mindful of the wishes of the employee.
- 6.8.10 Counselling support should be available for employees and may be appropriate following a violent incident.

7 Premises Emergencies and Adverse Weather Conditions

Premises emergencies may come under a number of areas:

- Fire
- Flooding
- Damage to buildings
- Loss of power and/or heating
- Loss of water and/or drainage
- Computer failure
- Adverse weather conditions

7.1 General

- 7.1.1 All decisions to close the school premises for whatever reason should be notified to the Governing Body. Media should also be notified once a decision has been made. Wherever possible,



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information relating to the closure should be recorded on the school's answerphone system, remembering to change the message if details of the re-opening change.

- 7.1.2 The aim of this plan is to minimise delay in returning to normal, thus enabling the school to continue to deliver the service it provides with as little disruption as possible.
- 7.1.3 The first response following a crisis might be to draw a quorum of the SLT (3 members) together to decide on immediate courses of action necessary to ensure the safety of staff and pupils where appropriate and property including buildings and office equipment that might be salvageable. Where the crisis involves damage to property, the school's Insurance Provider must be informed immediately and certainly prior to any attempt to salvage the situation begins.
- 7.1.4 Additional duties and responsibilities may need to be undertaken by some members of staff in times of crisis in order that a return to a normal state of working may be expedited for the school as a whole. The school must accept that in order to continue to work as a team, it may be necessary to work in an environment that is unfamiliar and possibly inconvenient from a communications point of view as there are few sites nearby that could accommodate all staff and pupils. The length of time in achieving this will be determined by the extent of the damage to the building.
- 7.1.5 It is an advantage for the purposes of this plan to have some current knowledge on the availability of other suitable accommodation or at least the details of a number of estate agents so that alternative accommodation can be quickly arranged.
- 7.1.6 Action Check List:
- 7.1.6.1 Establish extent of damage to:
- Accommodation (1 day, up to 5 days, more than 5 days, Total loss?)
 - Documentation
 - Information communication technology (recoverable? Time limited?)
 - Staff, e.g. injuries
- 7.1.7 The following systems will be needed to facilitate best possible operation during any major emergency:



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- Microsoft Outlook – electronic mail
- SIMS – School Information Management System
- Generic software systems – Microsoft Word, Excel, etc
- All personal computer information

7.1.8 Is there still access to the following essential equipment to continue service delivery:

- Telephone
- Answer machine
- Facsimile machine
- Computers (ultimately to match current inventory)
- Internet access
- Printers (ultimately to match current inventory)
- Photocopier
- Paper, envelopes, exercise books
- Desks and chairs
- Filing cupboards.

7.2 Fire

7.2.1 In the event of fire or threat of fire, staff should move all pupils to the safety of the playground or to allocated areas

7.2.2 Any adult helpers should stay with the class they are with

7.2.3 All staff should attempt to take a mobile telephone with them, but only if it is safe and quick to locate

7.2.4 The Office Manager is responsible for collecting all registers, visitors' book(s) and pupil contact files on evacuating the building, but only if safe to do so. The office is a risk area for fire because of the amount of electrical equipment held. On no account should any staff member enter this area unless it is safe to do so.

7.2.5 Teachers or LSAs are responsible for checking any toilet/cloakroom area on their way out of the building.

7.2.6 The last member of staff out of an area is responsible for closing any fire doors.

7.2.7 Registers should be checked by individual teachers and visitors' book(s) should be checked and any missing pupils or adults reported to the Principal, Vice Principals or Chief Operating Officer immediately. On no account should anyone go back into the building.



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- 7.2.8 If necessary, the emergency services should be contacted by mobile telephone use.
- 7.2.9 If fire is actually present and the SLT feel it is necessary, contact should be made with the members of the Governing Body.
- 7.2.10 If necessary SLT will advise staff members to make contact with pupils' parents to arrange collection. A full contact list is held in the contacts file which should be taken out with the registers. Address lists are also held in individual class registers.
- 7.2.11 Staff should make every effort to contact parents as soon as possible to ensure the safe delivery of pupils to their homes. If parents cannot be contacted immediately, pupils must remain with the school staff. Under no circumstances should pupils be allowed to leave the premises with anyone other than their parent/carer unless prior consent of that parent/carer has been sought.
- 7.2.12 Only the Principal, Vice Principals, Chief Operating Officer or Chair of Governors should deal with the media.
- 7.2.13 The Principal should make the necessary arrangements as soon as possible to post notices on the school entrance and contact local media, etc, with progress reports.
- 7.2.14 The school answerphone should be used if possible to relay current information. Remember to update such information as it changes.

7.3 Damage to Buildings

Procedures should be followed as above.

7.4 Loss of Power and/or Heating

The effects of loss of power to the school will much depend on the time of year. The summer months should not prove too much of a problem but the lack of electricity/gas during the winter months could mean the school becomes too dark and too cold for staff or pupils to work properly. In addition, loss of power will inevitably disrupt the ability to prepare meals in the kitchen.

- 7.4.1 All senior staff must be aware of, and have access to, the location of the main gas supply cut-off and the whereabouts of the main electrical switch box.



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- 7.4.2 It is the Principal's (or Vice Principal's in the absence of the Principal) responsibility to make the decision about whether the pupils need to be sent home and to contact parents/carers.
- 7.4.3 The Facilities Manager should report the loss of power to the electricity board.
- 7.4.4 If the power/gas failure continues for more than a day, contact should be made with a Mechanical/Electrical Engineer.

7.5 Loss of Water and/or Drainage

The loss of water to school premises can pose serious Health and Safety problems, including the inability to flush toilets and wash hands for both pupils and staff, as well as the lack of water for any food preparation activities.

- 7.5.1 All senior staff must be aware of, and have access to, the mains water cut-off tap.
- 7.5.2 The Principal and/or Facilities Manager should firstly try to establish the reason for lack of water or drainage, e.g. check for burst water pipes, overflowing drains.
- 7.5.3 If a leak is established the Facilities Manager should immediately contact the relevant utility service by telephoning their 24-hour emergency line.
- 7.5.4 If blocked drains are found, contact should be made with a suitable contractor and arrangements made for immediate attention.
- 7.5.5 The Principal is responsible for making any necessary decision about vacating the school premises and whether that action is necessary.

7.6 Computer Failure

This only applies to the administrative systems in school.

- 7.6.1 It is the responsibility of the Chief Operating Officer to ensure that weekly backups are taken of the data held on the main server. These backups should be held in the fire-proof safe or in a secure location accessible only by the administrator, the Chief Operating Officer or the Principal and taken off-site.
- 7.6.2 Complete computer failure should be reported to the Network Manager who will contact the appropriate suppliers.



- 7.6.3 It may be possible to send an email by using a laptop if the main router is not down.
- 7.6.4 The ICT Team will advise on replacement server and/or computer, if necessary, and make necessary arrangements for reinstatement of data from most current available backup tape.
- 7.7 Adverse Weather Conditions
- 7.7.1 Weather Warnings
- The LA will notify schools by use of the school portal as soon as possible and within about six hours of any expected onset of severe weather where it is thought that the assessment of risk warrants it.
- 7.7.2 The Decision to Close
- 7.7.2.1 If, for any reason, it is impossible for any teaching staff to reach the school, a cascade system of communication needs to be put into practice to ensure that children are not left at the school by parents who are unaware of the staff situation.
- 7.7.2.2 The cascade system should include the use of Governors. The communication system should include the availability of Governors or other members of staff who would be able to assist locally. Even if a closure has been authorised by the Principal, unsupervised pupils who arrive at school must be accepted onto the premises and sent home only if it is known to be safe to do so.
- 7.7.3 The Position of Staff
- 7.7.3.1 In adverse weather conditions staff are expected to make efforts to get to school, even if their arrival is delayed.
- 7.7.3.2 Even if the school is wholly or partly closed to pupils, staff are expected to report to work and undertake appropriate preparation or other duties as directed by the Principal.
- 7.7.4 In-School Measures
- Parents should be advised to keep a check on local media broadcasts and the school website during emergency conditions in case closures or changes to normal school arrangements are made. Those parents who have provided an email address will be emailed asking for acknowledgement of receipt. The remainder of



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parents, together with those who did not respond to email will be contacted by telephone. Depending on the number of outgoing lines, (a fax line, if different from the main number, can be used with a spare telephone handset) the use of mobiles and use of the cascade system will be used.

Staff should:

- 7.7.4.1 Check immediately at the onset of the emergency that the telephone is in working order and check it repeatedly, ensure availability of mobile telephone if necessary.
- 7.7.4.2 Try to keep a check on radio broadcasts. If possible keep a battery radio in school.
- 7.7.4.3 It is the responsibility of the site team to inspect the safety and accessibility of the school premises at the beginning of every day. If a closure is imminent they should contact the Principal, the Vice Principals, the Chief Operating Officer, Chair of Governors, Vice-Chair of Governors, in that order to establish authority to close the school.
- 7.7.4.4 In the event of adverse weather conditions staff should consider if they should move the pupils from any portacabin classrooms, dependent on the risk assessed from the weather event.
- 7.7.4.5 If the school buildings become unsafe, it is the Principal's responsibility to decide if the school needs to be evacuated to another building.
- 7.7.4.6 If excessively high winds or heavy snow occur during the day, the school may be informed they have to feed and possibly accommodate pupils overnight. Obviously every attempt should be made to get the pupils home by making contact with parents.
- 7.7.4.7 Staff should be effectively deployed in school to deal with the emergency, duties would typically include:
 - Moving children to a safe area at first sign of emergency in easily contacted groups for support and reassurance. Any adult helpers should stay with the class they are with.
 - The Principal to make a check of the school to ascertain all staff and pupils are clear of dangerous areas.
 - Cut off electricity/gas/water, if necessary, by site staff or the Principal. Check damage. Report situation to the Facilities Manager.
 - Keep ALL staff up-to-date on the developing situation. Reassure the children regarding brothers and sisters, etc. Provide games, videos, etc, if possible.



- Liaise with the Governing Body whether/when to contact local radio stations to broadcast school closure message.
- When situation allows, check the affected area (only if safe to do so). Spare staff to salvage belongings.
- Keep the LA informed.
- If/when parents collect, limit entry/exit points in order to ensure safe collection of children. Staff to be posted at all entry points to ensure parents report to the office and “sign out” their children before taking them home.
- When all the children have been taken home, hold a short staff meeting to assess the situation and plan for the next day.
- Ensure governors are notified of details of the emergency.
- A letter to parents should be sent home as soon as possible to give them the latest information.

8 Death of Pupil or Staff Member

- 8.1 The LA should be informed of the incident as soon as possible. Assistance for the school can then be given.
- 8.2 It is the responsibility of the police to advise the parents, or next of kin of the staff member, of the tragedy.
- 8.3 The Crisis Management Team (SLT –Senior Leadership Team) should ensure that all staff members (this must include those who may be off sick and regular supply/volunteers) and governors are made aware as quickly as possible of the situation: the Chair of Governors should ask his fellow governors to assist in this process.
- 8.4 All staff should be asked to respect the need for all communications with local community, parents, media etc to only be done through the SLT.
- 8.5 The SLT should ensure that the educational psychologist is informed.
- 8.6 The SLT should make arrangements to close the school if necessary (although as far as possible, normal practice should continue) and ensure that the Facilities Manager is notified.
- 8.7 The SLT should make arrangements to write a letter home to parents as soon as possible giving as much information as is felt appropriate.

9 Tragedy During School Trip

- 9.1 The Crisis Management Team (SLT) should be brought together.



- 9.2 The Principal should ensure that at least one telephone line is available for dedicated use only to ensure emergency contact with the school can be maintained. A fax line or mobile can be used for this purpose.
- 9.3 The leader of the trip should ensure that the Principal (or a member of SLT) is informed of the tragedy and the SLT will then make the necessary arrangements to inform the LA, other parents. Parents should only be informed once the police have given the authority to do so.
- 9.4 A member of the SLT should, if at all possible, travel to join the trip participants. It may be necessary to take other members of staff or governors depending on the number of pupils on the trip to support both staff members and pupils.
- 9.5 The leader of the trip, or a nominated person, should ensure that they are able to keep telephone communication open with the members of the SLT at all times.
- 9.6 The SLT should make arrangements to return the children from the trip as soon as possible. The Risk Assessment for the trip will contain the details of the transport used, e.g. name of coach firm.
- 9.7 The police will advise the relevant parents, or next of kin of staff member, of the tragedy. Once this has happened the police will give authority for the school to inform others.
- 9.8 The SLT should ensure that all staff members and governors are made aware as quickly as possible of the situation; the Chair of Governors should ask his fellow governors to assist in this process.
- 9.9 All staff and governors should be asked to respect the need for all communications with local community, parents, media etc to only be done through the SLT.
- 9.10 The SLT should ensure that the educational psychologist is informed.
- 9.11 The SLT should make arrangements to close the school if necessary (although as far as possible, normal practice should continue) and ensure that the LA is notified.
- 9.12 The SLT should make arrangements to write a letter home to parents as soon as possible giving as much information as is felt appropriate.

10 Infectious Diseases in Schools

Reference/further reading: Infection Control Guidelines for Schools



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Cases of infectious disease may occur from time to time in schools. Their importance depends on several factors:

- The severity of the disease
- The number of children affected
- Their mode of transmission
- The amount of fear they generate
- Whether any specific action is necessary to stop further cases, e.g. immunisation, improving food-handling practices, etc.

10.1 How do we know there might be an outbreak?

There are several ways in which schools may become aware that they have a case of infectious disease:

- Children may be ill
- There may be a sudden increase in the number of absentees
- Parents may advise the school that their children are suffering from an infectious disease
- The consultant in Health Protection may contact the school

10.2 What should the Principal do?

10.2.1 If a member of staff thinks there may be a case, he/she should refer to the Communicable Diseases list. If this does not answer the particular query, the Facilities Manager should be contacted for initial advice. In addition, the school could discuss the matter with the school nurse. It is helpful for the initial assessment of the situation if a member of staff can find out:

- How many children/staff are ill
- How the illness is being presented (symptoms, etc)
- When did each child/member of staff fall ill.

10.3 Role of the Health Protection Unit (HPU)

10.3.1 The HPU will, if required, assess the situation and decide what, if any, further action is necessary either to investigate the source of the outbreak or to stop further spread. The school should make every attempt to provide information requested by the HPU or staff working on their behalf, e.g. Environmental Health staff. The Principal or person in charge should encourage staff, parents and children to comply with requests for specimens and to follow guidance for control or spread of disease.

10.4 Role of Environmental Health



10.4.1 If an outbreak of food poisoning is suspected, the LBH Environmental Health Department will be asked to investigate. Environmental Health may also assist in the assessment and control of outbreaks of diarrhoea and/or vomiting not thought to be due to food poisoning, e.g. dysentery.

10.5 Other Action

10.5.1 For certain infectious diseases, e.g. some cases of meningitis, the HPU might deem it necessary for letters to be sent home with all children in a class or school. Arrangements for this will be made through the Principal/person in charge.

10.6 Cleaning in Outbreaks

10.6.1 Providing there are proper cleaning schedules in place, additional routine cleaning is not generally required in outbreaks. If the Environmental Health Department consider there is a need for extra cleaning this will be discussed. This might particularly be the case if children or staff have had vomiting or diarrhoea on the premises.

10.7 Exclusions from School

There are some general rules about excluding from school:

10.7.1 Children who are not well should not be at school even if they are not infectious

10.7.2 Children with diarrhoea should not be in school unless the diarrhoea is known to be due to a non-infectious disease, e.g. coeliac disease. This rule also applies to staff, including catering staff. In individual cases, children must not return to school until 24 hours after their last bout of sickness or diarrhoea. Where there are three cases or more (outbreak) in the educational setting, those children affected must not return to school until 48 hours after their last bout of sickness or diarrhoea.

10.7.3 Some children may have other illnesses that affect their immunity, e.g. leukaemia, HIV disease. The parents of these children should be warned if there are known to be cases of infectious disease in the school, especially if children are off school with chickenpox, shingles or measles.

11 Coping with Crises in Schools



11.1 Reactions of Pupils

- 11.1.1 The effect upon a school community of a tragedy, whether through violent, accidental or natural causes, will inevitably be severe and long lasting. The most immediately affected survivors will be able to return to normal school life only with a considerable degree of support and understanding on the part of other members of the school.
- 11.1.2 The reactions of pupils involved in a crisis will vary. Staff can help pupils by looking out for signs of nervousness, anxiety or depression, difficulties with concentration, memory or sleeping and anti social behaviour. Some survivors of tragedies suffer from severe feelings of guilt that they have been spared, when their friends have died.
- 11.1.3 Those most likely to be seriously affected are those whose lives were put at greatest risk, who witness injury and death and who suffer other disadvantages, e.g unstable family relationships, etc. It is not always possible to tell whether or how much children are suffering. Staff, parents and other pupils can all help by keeping a watchful eye.
- 11.1.4 The emotional, social and academic effects of a tragedy can be very long term. Minor and seemingly unconnected occurrences can trigger off emotional reactions
- 11.1.5 It is important to encourage pupils to express their feelings in an environment where they feel it is safe to do so. Children should be praised for recognising problems they may be experiencing and allowed to talk about or relive the experience – perhaps through mime, dance or other art forms. This is not a sign of ghoulish obsession with death or injury, but a repressive approach can lead to inherent dangers. Survivors should be encouraged to attend funerals, a formal farewell helps to come to terms with grief.
- 11.1.6 Pupils whose appearance has changed as a result of injuries will need to be prepared for their return to school and the likely reactions of fellow pupils. They may need home visits from teachers or the opportunity to attend part time for a while.

11.2 External Support

- 11.2.1 Regular staff meetings will be needed to keep children under review and decide upon appropriate action, including any need for specialist referral. The Principal and Vice Principals should liaise with the school psychologist. Therapists and counsellors can be



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made available to supplement (not replace) the resources of the school. It is important that the school remains in control of the situation and any supportive external guidance that may be offered. Staff should not allow themselves to be overwhelmed by well meaning but potentially intrusive assistance.

- 11.2.2 In a major incident involving the wider community outside the school, special procedures will be initiated by the Social Services Department to co-ordinate the provision of aftercare of victims.

11.3 Reactions and Roles of School Staff

- 11.3.1 The most important role of school staff after a tragedy is to observe and listen to the children. The staff need to be sensitive that pupils respond in different ways and beware of the danger of adding to the burden of children through inappropriate behaviour on their part.

- 11.3.2 The Principal should be aware of the difficulties that staff are likely to face and that they themselves have had to come to terms with the trauma. The Principal should monitor work pressures and look for any signs that staff are becoming overwhelmed with the distress of the pupils and themselves. Staff may need their own support group.

11.4 Dealing with the Media

- 11.4.1 The experience of some schools has shown the relationship with the media is not always positive. The press can be invasive to the point of rudeness and constantly looking for "an angle". This can sometimes take the form of attempts to attribute blame for the tragedy to parents, the school and other public agencies involved.

- 11.4.2 The Principal, SLT and Chair of Governors should be prepared for likely questions and should be clear what they are prepared to say and what not to say to the media. The Crisis Management Team/SLT should meet to agree this before anyone talks to the media. It is never appropriate to allow the media onto the school premises or to give them access to staff or pupils.

11.5 Reactions of Parents

- 11.5.1 There are obvious limits to the amount of support and assistance that school can offer to parents, but it is important that staff should be aware of parents' likely reactions. Evidence suggests that many are unwilling or unable to deal with the trauma faced by surviving children and they may resist their attempts to articulate their



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feelings and experiences; this will in itself place an additional burden on school staff.

- 11.5.2 Parents whose children have died will find themselves cut off from many of their usual social contacts/routines and communication networks and may welcome informal contacts from school staff and other parents.

11.6 Rebuilding

- 11.6.1 Allowing the whole community ample opportunity to try to make sense of what has happened, to express and share emotional reactions and to say farewell in an appropriate manner can all form important steps in the rebuilding process. Expressions of sympathy, visiting of the injured and attendance at funerals should not be discouraged. Special assemblies, memorial services, open days or debriefings can be therapeutic, positive events for survivors and friends, and a garden blooming at the appropriate time can be a fitting permanent memorial to those who have died.

12 War

- 12.1 London Borough of Havering will have prepared contingency plans for use in the event of war. These plans, which in general are an extension of peacetime arrangements for responding to major incidents, will be issued if the current low level threat of hostile attack should significantly increase. In the event of war, most schools would be available to be used as emergency feeding centres and rest centres.

13 First Priority – The Pupils

- 13.1 Even where schools have planned in fine detail their reaction to any emergency, circumstances may arise that cannot be anticipated. In facing such emergencies the main consideration must be the safety of the pupils. This may involve a good deal of additional work on the part of the staff, which is greatly appreciated. The following points should ensure pupils' safety and should always be observed:

- 13.1.1 If there is any doubt that pupils can return home safely in prevailing conditions, regardless of age, every attempt should be made to either convey them home or secure alternative arrangements for them. Alternative arrangements must only be made following parental/carers permission.
- 13.1.2 If the parents/carers or family members are not at home to receive them, they should not be released.



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13.1.3 Any unsupervised pupils arriving at school should be accepted onto the premises and sent home only if it is known that they can return safely to a parent or carer.

13.1.4 If a course of action includes any greater element of risk of injury to a pupil, it should not be taken.

14 Monitoring, Evaluation and Review

14.1 The Governing Body will review this policy at least every three years and assess its implementation and effectiveness. The policy will be promoted and implemented throughout the school.