



**BICKLEY PARK
SCHOOL**

Disaster & Emergency Crisis Policy

Procedure Details

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General:

The school has adopted policies and procedures to minimise risks to pupils and staff, and has a Health and Safety policy and procedures that are regularly reviewed. The governing body recognises that not all circumstances are under the control of the school and that emergencies and disasters may happen. This policy has been adopted by the governing body after consultation with the Head and senior staff.

Sources of Advice

The DofE website offers general advice. Calouste Gulbenkian Foundation publishes ‘*Wise Before the Event: Coping with Emergencies in Schools*’ by William Yule and Anne Gold which offers comprehensive advice on planning for and dealing with emergencies.

Aims

The aims of this policy are:

- To prepare governors, staff, parents and pupils for any disasters that may occur.
- To ensure that there is a plan that can be implemented quickly in the case of an emergency caused by a disaster.
- To be a guide to actions in circumstances that are liable to strain the capacity of those handling the situation to think clearly.

What can happen?

By ‘disaster’ and “Crisis” we mean an incident that has caused death or serious injury to a member or members of the school community, an event or events that lead to the partial or full closure of the school, or an event which may lead to extremely negative publicity. Examples are:

In School or in Our Community:

- the death of a pupil or member of staff from natural causes
- a traffic accident involving staff or pupils
- a deliberate act of violence against staff or pupils
- a school fire or major incident in a laboratory or workshop
- a serious accident of any sort involving death or mutilation
- Loss of systems/hacking
- Loss of premises
- Medical pandemic
- Revelation of current or historical abuse

Out- of -School or our immediate community:

- deaths or injuries on school journeys.
- tragedies involving children with many others

Most aspects of disasters are self-evident but two are important to emphasise for the purpose of planning:

Feelings of grief, guilt and insecurity caused by the disaster.

These are felt by survivors, parents and staff alike (not only by those directly involved) and may strike at any time over a long period after the disaster. (See Post-traumatic stress disorder below).

Inevitable media interest.

This will focus on the ‘human interest’ and on discovering ‘who is to blame’. To the media there is no such thing as an accident. Whether intended or not, the result can be to persuade people to say things in haste that they will bitterly regret at leisure. The media can sow discord and prevent healing. In the immediate aftermath the media may interfere with communications and distract people from coping with the emergency.

The following procedures are designed to deal with the problems in the early stages. It is assumed in what follows that our first duty is to support and help pupils, parents and staff involved. We are also concerned to ensure that the handling of the disaster does not result in damage to the school which will then cause all pupils and staff to lose in the long term.

It is essential that everybody knows:

- the roles to be performed by each person
- the communications strategy
- the basic principles we will follow with the pupils and parents

Roles and Responsibilities

In term time, other things being equal, the crisis will be managed by a Disaster Recovery Team (DRT) that will include:

- Head
- Chairman of Governors
- Bursar
- Assistant Heads (Pastoral/Academic)
- Site Manager
- IT Manager
- Marketing Manager

Overall charge should be taken by the highest listed person named above who has not been disabled by the disaster.

The Head, if not disabled in the disaster, will be first contact for the Media. It is probable that as things develop the Chair of Governors will need to make a statement and written statements may be issued by others.

The Bursar will be responsible for arranging the necessary communications network including allotting duties to other support staff for typing statements etc. He will also be responsible for liaising with insurers and to assist the Head in liaison with the schools’ public relations consultants, whose costs are insured by the school to a maximum limit of £10,000. Insurers have appointed DWF Solicitors as PR consultants.

The exact roles of others will have to be decided at the time as any crisis will undoubtedly have its own particular character and need a different reaction but among the roles necessary will be:

- contact with parents
- support for staff directly involved
- liaison with remainder of staff and pupils
- finding assistance for the school e.g., legal etc; and

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- liaison with relevant authorities e.g. police /Health and Safety Executive.

Out of Term, the **first** thing for the person in charge on site to do will be to contact as many members of the Disaster Recovery Team as possible, in order of seniority as set out above.

Precautionary Rules for Trips off Site

Careful planning and assessment always takes place before any off site trip to ensure the safety of all. A disaster, however, may occur caused by events outside of those anticipated.

When a disaster occurs off site it is critical to know quickly who has been involved, therefore:

- all trip leaders will make sure that there is a list in the School Office with the names of all pupils and a contact number/s for parents
- every member of staff on the trip (not only the leader) will keep with them at all times a list of pupils on the trip. This may be the only starting point for identifying pupils and the leader may be incapacitated or dead.

It is also vital that information is passed to the school as soon as possible so that support can be given to the staff on the ground and parents and that accurate information can be given to the media etc.

All the staff on a trip will:

- know how an alarm is to be raised
- will have to hand a number to contact to report any disaster. This will not be the school number in case the media jam the phone lines. (Any such number must be kept confidential).

As soon as the injured are properly looked after and in the hands of competent assistance then communicating the news is the priority.

Once that has been done the priority of those on the ground becomes to look after pupils and each other. Dealing with the media, with parents and all other issues then becomes the job of the Disaster Team.

Immediate Action in the Case of Disaster or Crisis

The Chair of Governors will be contacted immediately or in his absence, the Vice Chair. Failing either, another nominated governor will be contacted. The relevant governor will be asked to join the team at the school.

- The police will be contacted immediately to ask for help in controlling access to the School.
- The Disaster Team will convene at an appropriate headquarters.
- Roles will be allotted.
- If the disaster is abroad then a contact will be opened up to authorities in the foreign country through the appropriate embassy or the Foreign Office and arrangements made to get a senior member of staff and someone familiar with the language (if possible) out to the scene of the disaster as a matter of urgency to take charge from the staff involved.
- Parents will be contacted by mobile phone. It may be sensible to send someone off-site to phone from an exchange that will not be blocked or overheard by the media.

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- Depending on the situation, headquarters will either be in the Heads Office or another suitable building on or near the School depending on the circumstances.
- If children are off-site parents should be re-united with them as fast as possible. It is the duty of the Head (or Head's delegated representative) to determine in the circumstances whether it may be helpful for parents to view the accident site so they can share the situation with their children.
- In the event of allegations made concerning historic or more recent sexual abuse, the Head and Chairman of Governors must immediately be informed and will decide whether to convene a meeting of the crisis management team.

Communicating with Parents

Only nominated members of staff/governors have the authority to contact parents. Such persons, when answering or contacting parents will have a written list of known facts issued by the Head (or Head's delegated representative). The nominated person will only say:

- what is known for a fact?
- how parents will be updated as information becomes more complete
- how parents should contact hospitals etc
- check whether any help is needed with transport.

While the school's main responsibility is to parents whose children are involved, there will be other parents who, for one reason or another, will want to know what has happened from us. Depending on the circumstances it may be appropriate to:

- send an account that is written
- post information on the School web-site
- use the media to communicate with parents.

The Head (or Head's delegated representative) will make the decision.

Communicating with Pupils

If the disaster occurs during term a lot again will depend on whether information is available while pupils are in school.

The first priority will be to make sure that pupils know what is true.

The second priority will be, as appropriate, for the School/College community to share its shock and/or grief.

The procedure will be:

- pupils will be given in tutor groups by selected staff or through an assembly:
- the plain facts - no speculation; and
- absolutely honest responses to questions that cannot be answered.

Normally the school will use the following strategy:

- hold an assembly to give out information;
- return pupils to tutor group bases; and
- selected staff to go round the tutor groups and answer questions.

If a disaster occurs during the holiday there may have to be special arrangements to allow families, friends and others to come into school, and for an appropriate member of staff to be available to inform and support. This will be determined by the Head (or the Head's representative) and put into place by the Disaster Team.

Communicating with the Media.

Media interest will seem intrusive and unhelpful. It is important to realise, however, that their interest is legitimate. Used properly the media can help to communicate important messages to parents and the community. It is important to do everything to be helpful short of compromising the essential interests of the school.

The Public relations consultants will explain to the press what is happening but will stress that pupils' and parents' interests must come first for us. They will ask for the press's co-operation in achieving this aim.

- All statements to the media will be made after discussion with the Head (or representative). In ideal circumstances he will liaise with the PR company. If he is not present, he should be contacted if possible.
- The Chair of Governors will make a statement at the earliest but appropriate moment.
- Governors and staff will refer all questions to the PR company and must refuse to make any comment or react to any statement put to them by the media.

It should be remembered that the media will be looking for a story and headlines. A 'story' only lasts for a short time in media terms so they will be looking for a quick result, grief to dramatize or blame to allot. They only polarise. However, there are possible stereotypes which we can help to get sympathetic treatment, such as:

- Close-knit school devastated by disaster.
- Staff trying to hold things together under impossible circumstances;
- Caring school trying to do what it can.

The media will normally not be invited onto the school site and if they do make their way into the site uninvited, they should be referred to the Head, who will normally ask them to leave, and will explain why. The assistance of the police could be sought if necessary.

It is the responsibility of the Head in consultation with the PR company and Disaster Team to determine whether a Press Conference should be arranged in a place away from the children. If there are signs of devastation on the school site, it may be inevitable that they will have to be allowed to take pictures, but the Disaster Team will attempt to ensure that these do not add to the grief of parents and others.

Pupils will be kept away from the media and the importance of this will be explained to the pupils.

No addresses will be given to the media.

Appendix A

Guidance to the Head (or representative) on dealing with the media

The PR company will say that the school will:

- tell them everything known definitely as soon as we have told parents
- tell them what we do not know at this stage
- tell them when further information will be available
- not speculate or go along with their speculation
- not be giving any names or confirming any names until all the members of a trip are accounted for.

Generally, the school will be saying over and over again that the school will turn its attention to causes and lessons to be learned when we have done what we can do for pupils and parents.

Appendix B

Short and Medium Term Actions

Short Term Action

The Governing Body will meet as soon as practicable to be briefed by the Head and Disaster Team, and to decide how any inquiry should be forwarded. The Disaster Team will seek advice on this as appropriate.

It will be the responsibility of the PR company in liaison with the Head to make an announcement about any inquiry. The Head will ensure that included in any public statement will be the Governors' resolve to co-operate fully with any external inquiry.

The Disaster Team will determine in the circumstances how to help the school community come to terms with the shock and grief, and which appropriate agencies to use.

The Disaster Team will bear in mind in all its decisions the importance of enabling normal life to be resumed as soon as possible without denying or minimising what has happened.

Immediate steps should be taken to restore the situation in the case of fire etc. and lessons should be as normal as possible as soon as possible.

Legal advice will be sought as appropriate.

Medium Term

The Disaster Team will determine how best to ease the return of young people involved and what support they will need.

Normally appropriate consultancy/counselling will be sought (see Appendix C).

Appendix C

Note on Post-Traumatic Stress Disorder and the Role of Counselling

It must be expected that some of those involved in the disaster will suffer from post-traumatic stress disorder. This may involve panic attacks, flashbacks, feelings of depression and guilt. They may be deeply disabling and often affect adults more than children. Expert advice should be sought on this and part of the longer term plan must include plans to support both pupils and staff members who may be unable to return to school.

It was generally thought in the past that immediate access to counselling was helpful in the aftermath of a disaster. This has been shown to be counter-productive and in some cases damaging.

Advice now suggests that counselling should be postponed until at least a month after the event and then brought in for those who have been unable to 'move on.' The main thrust of the school's policy must be not to deny the events but to emphasise that 'life goes on' and that 'we have the strength to cope with even this.' It is vital that children and adults are not disempowered in dealing with the trauma of the disaster by the suggestion that they cannot cope without help or that they must relive the disaster to come to terms with it.

This policy will be kept under regular review in the light of developments and best practice.

This policy also broadly applies to the Early Years Department.

Appendix D

Disaster minimisation:

Minimisation action	In place
The location of gas and electricity isolation points, fire hydrants and locations of storage of hazardous chemicals is known-have a small scale site plan available	Yes
Staff are instructed in the use of fire extinguishers	Some
Extinguishers are serviced and inspected annually	Yes
Fire emergency drills are practiced each term	Yes
Back-ups of all computer records are kept offsite	Yes (Prep and Pre Prep)
A copy of the asset register is kept offsite	Yes
All fire doors are kept closed but not locked	Yes
Site plans are available to the fire brigade	Yes
Safety on school trips policy is understood by all staff	Yes
Visitors, staff and pupils are signed in without exception.	Yes
Copy of school timetable held on systems offsite	Yes

Plan for 24 hours after disaster

Sufficient space in grounds for mobile classrooms	Yes
Sufficient existing spare classrooms to relocate lessons	Yes
Can we make reciprocal arrangements with another school	Unlikely
Church hall available	Maybe
Do we have a supply of mobile telephones	Yes

Disaster Plan-Damage to property

Responsibility	Responsible member	Deputy
Contact Insurers	Bursar	Head
Inform emergency services	Bursar	Site manager
Arrange for evacuation of buildings	Bursar	Site manager
Immobilise gas and electric	Site manager	Bursar
Liaise with emergency services	Head	Bursar
Take a roll call to confirm evacuation	Assistant Head pastoral	Assistant head academic
Decide the next step-possible school closure or isolation of an area	Head	Bursar
Have a prepared media statement for differing scenarios	PR consultants	Head
Liaise with PR consultants or plan statements to media, staff parents.	Head	Chair of Governors
Contact staff	Assistant Heads	Assistant Heads
Contact parents	Head	Chair of Governors
Contact services and suppliers	Site Manager	Bursar
Recover IT network	IT manager	Assistant Head academic

Emergency telephone numbers

List of school staff and telephone numbers	With Head, Bursar and COG
List of governors and telephone numbers	With Head, Bursar and COG
List of parents and telephone numbers	With Head, Bursar and COG
Bankers: Nat West	0208 253 4173
Builder: consult site manager dependent on event	Site manager
Caterers: Holroyd Howe	07795 683304
DFE	0370 000 2288
Electricity supplier; UK power networks	0800 783 8838
Electrician: Blu-Lite	01689 890690
Gas supplier; See Bursar	
Glazier; John Chance	Site manager
Insurers Marsh Ltd-24 hours claims line	01444 335170
Insurance manager Marie Finnerty	07392 122090
Local authority	0208 461 7669
Local schools; Bromley High	0208 781 7000
Portable classroom supplier; Portakabin	0845 3225947
Public relations co - DWF Solicitors	0330 1024201
Roofing contractors	Site manager
Water authorities: Thames	0208 876 4497
Tech support company: '360ICT'	0208 663 4000

Distribution and storage of the disaster recovery plan

- Copies must be held at home by each member of the recovery management team
- The master copy should be held on the school premises within a fireproof safe.
- A duplicate should be kept in a separate building on site
- One copy to be deposited with the insurers-Marsh Ltd Education practice

The plan will be subject to testing every 3 years, the next to take place by 30th June 2021. The plan will be reviewed annually for data accuracy.

Scenarios are prioritised as follows:

- Minibus incident offsite with staff and pupil fatalities
- Fire in Pre Prep making sight inoperable
- Loss of systems
- Medical pandemic-Ebola scare
- Major accident in school grounds-scenario to be decided

See below for test and if necessary, an action template:

Disaster recovery action planner-School trip	Actions
A disaster situation is uncovered.	
There is a realisation that a school trip is taking place to that location.	
The Head is immediately advised, and the Bursar is to join the Head in his office or a suitable location. The Head who is the most senior person and if he has not been disabled in the incident, takes overall charge of the situation.	Head
The Bursar or designate will collect the dedicated “disaster” mobile phone from the secretary’s office. This to be fully charged at all times. This also to be loaded with all staff mobile numbers and key contact numbers.	Bursar
<p>The Bursar calls the members of the DRT who are asked to urgently muster in the HM’s office bringing their DRP with them, these are Assistant Head academic (RC) Assistant Head pastoral (SM), Assistant Head (SP), IT manager (JS) and Site manager (IW). Assistant Heads in Pre Prep (JP and AW) will replace the Assistant Heads in Prep if the incident affects those pupils or that site. They must all bring their mobile phones with them.</p> <p>In general responsibilities will be allocated as follows:</p> <p><u>Head</u>: Decisions, direction and PR, lead and parent contact, police.</p> <p><u>Chairman of Governors</u>: Decisions, direction and PR, governor contact.</p> <p><u>Bursar</u>: Insurance, PR, disaster phone, risk assessment, initial chair of governor contact.</p> <p><u>Assistant Heads</u>: staff email, parent liaison, pupil organisation, room management.</p> <p><u>IT Manager</u>: Sims report, situation monitoring, update social media.</p> <p><u>Maintenance Manager</u>: Site security, press directions.</p> <p><u>School Secretaries</u>: disaster phone, risk assessment, press queries.</p> <p>Substitutes if not available:</p> <p>Head-Deputy Head or Bursar Chairman of Governors-Deputy Chairman or another governor Bursar-Head or Assistant Head (RC) Deputy Heads-Other Assistant Heads IT Manager- Assistant Heads, Bursar Maintenance Manager-Bursar, IT Manager</p>	

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<p>The Head will immediately call the lead staff member on the trip, if his name and contact details are known, from the disaster phone. He asks for an accurate assessment of the situation. Are all accounted for, any casualties or injuries?</p>	<p>Head</p>
<p>The Bursar is dispatched to ask the school secretary to locate the school trip risk assessment. Five copies are needed which she takes. These are examined and must contain contact numbers for all adults on the trip as well as a list of all children. This must be completely accurate before the trip departs.</p>	<p>Bursar</p>
<p>The Bursar calls the Chair of Governors who will be asked to join the team at school. If they cannot make contact then the deputy chair of governors is contacted, one of whom should make their way to the school. Both are unnecessary at this time. However, the chair and deputy chair should liaise as necessary.</p>	<p>Bursar</p>
<p>The Head calls the police on the disaster phone to advise them, seek clarity of the incident and guidance as to how to manage the current situation, as well as asking them for help in controlling access to the school (which should be for concerned parents only), as media interest will potentially be high. The police must be advised of our disaster phone number.</p>	<p>Head</p>
<p>All staff on the trip should have mobile phone numbers of DRT in their phone as well as the disaster number. Their phones must be fully charged before departure. The school phone will be very busy. Staff on the trip should keep their phone lines clear and available at all times and not make outgoing calls unless necessary.</p>	
<p>The Chair of Governors as a matter of course should immediately advise the deputy chair if possible that he will be the governor contact if indeed he is able to. Other Governors should be contacted in this order should the Chair or deputy chair not be contactable or available immediately, or for specialist advice:</p> <p>Geraldine Nuijens John Tiley Claire Almond Don Percival James Priory</p> <p>Their phone numbers will stored in the Head's and Bursar's mobile phone.</p>	<p>MH</p>
<p>The IT manager is asked to run a report from SIMS which will show the contact phone and home addresses for all the staff, pupils and others in attendance. Next of kin details are on SIMS for all staff.</p>	<p>JS</p>

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Following discussion, the parents are to be called and advised of the latest status that we have, and they will also start to arrive at and call the school.	Head
The Head will be responsible for this communication to parents and delegate to other senior staff depending on the number of pupils involved.	Head
If updates of the Website and twitter are needed, then this to be done by the IT Manager. A school phone message will be recorded.	JS
Parents to be told to muster in the library, 2 x Assistant Heads will be the hosts and focal point both inside and outside of the building. The kitchens will be asked to provide a stream of refreshments. Matrons to be advised.	AH's
The Bursar to call the insurers Marsh –the number is in his mobile phone and in the contact details. The Bursar advises he is going to call the PR company and asks for any other advice	Bursar
The school secretary is advised of the situation and asked to tell the school front desk staff not to comment to the press, but simply to advise that the school will be issuing a statement in approximately one hour.	JW
Assistant Heads construct an all staff email advising staff of the situation and the holding statement and that there will be a whole school assembly briefing in the school theatre immediately after school finishes. This dependent on the severity and of the situation and perceived necessity. School secretaries will be asked to ensure that all staff are aware of this briefing which is mandatory if needed. A decision to be made as to whether other pupils to be briefed.	AH's
The Bursar calls the PR company, DWF, whose phone number is in the contact sheet and also in the Head and Bursar's phone and the school disaster phone. The Bursar hands over to the Head to discuss media statements and dealings with the press. Head communicates to the DRT the advice given to him by the PR company. The school proceeds as instructed.	Bursar Head
As the disaster does not immediately affect the premises, an Assistant Head familiar with school parents will be asked to ensure that only school parents access the school. The maintenance manager will direct the media to a designated area like the school pens and ensure no press people or anybody else enter the school premises.	AH's

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The Head and the Chairman of Governors write a statement, to be approved by the PR company for press release.	Head/MH
The IT Manager is asked to watch the nearest TV to monitor or live stream of events and advise the group of anything significant	JS
Dependent on the outcome two staff from the school will be asked to travel to the location and accompany the trip home. This in agreement with the police.	
If the outcome is more serious, liaison with police and parents is paramount. The committee will decide this dependent on the situation which could be fluid for a long period of time. However, the immediate actions following notification of a disaster incident are now established.	
The school seeks advice on counselling for those involved within 24 hours.	