



Extend Learning
Academies Network

Business Continuity Policy

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1. Introduction

1.1 This strategy sets out the Trust's policy for planning and responding to major incidents which affect the continuity of its business and the safety of its staff, pupils and stakeholders. The Academy Trust Handbook states that Trust's must recognise and manage present and future risks, including contingency and business continuity planning, to ensure continued and effective operations.

1.2 The Trust will ensure that business continuity management is embedded within its culture and that all those connected with the delivery of services, including partners and key suppliers are fully aware of their roles and responsibilities in ensuring business continuity.

1.3 Whilst no amount of planning can totally prevent accidents and problems occurring, it is recognised that some can be prevented and the effects of others minimised by taking sensible precautionary measures. The Trust expects that all staff will be familiar with the routines and procedures for dealing with emergencies. It is not possible, or desirable, to write a plan for every possible disruption. No matter what the cause of the incident, the effect can generally be summarised as:

- An inability to carry out daily and/or critical activities
- Loss of life or serious injury to Trust staff and students/pupils or members of the public
- Loss of buildings, or part of or access to them
- Loss or failure of ICT systems
- Loss/shortage of staff
- Loss of critical suppliers or partners
- Adverse publicity and/or reputational impact

1.4 In the event of a critical incident the priorities of those in charge of the school or trip will be to:

- Preserve life
- Minimise personal injury
- Safeguard the interests of all pupils and staff
- Minimise any loss to property and to return to normal working as quickly as possible.

2. Planning for and Managing Emergencies or Critical Incidents

2.1 Each school and the Trust central team will carry out an "Assessment of Critical Activities" to identify key risks to its operations and the safety of its pupils, staff and stakeholders. This assessment will be led by the respective Headteacher (and CEO) and will inform the business continuity planning process.

2.2 Each school and the Trust central team will maintain its own Business Continuity / Emergency Plan to address and respond to the key risks identified.

2.3 This plan will be activated in the event of a critical incident or an emergency i.e. when an incident occurs that impacts on the delivery of our critical activities or the safety and well-being of our pupils, staff and other stakeholders; and when normal responses, procedures and coping strategies are deemed insufficient to deal with the circumstances.

2.4 Planning should be based on the principle that in the first instance and where possible other staff, sites and premises within the Trust should be utilised to support immediate responses and the return to normal operations.

2.5 As a minimum the plan will include:

- Stakeholder information and key contact details
- Business continuity response team membership and their responsibilities.
- Business impact analysis on essential services and the impact of disruption.
- Communications plan (where an incident involves the closure of a school then the Chair of the Trust's Board should be informed as part of this response)
- Contingency plans and strategies for possible risk scenarios such as a loss of site or loss of staff.
- Alternative premises plans if access to the school site is prevented focused on both the short and medium term
- Any documents that will assist in dealing with the situation, such as media advice, IT recovery plans, location of emergency shut-off valves etc.
- Somewhere to record all decisions and actions (to protect against litigation post-incident).

2.6 A copy of the respective plan for each school and the Trust central team should be maintained by the Headteacher (and CEO) in an electronic format that is accessible remotely out of normal working hours. The latest version of each plan should be forwarded to the Trust central team who will maintain a central record of all plans.

3. ICT Disaster Recovery

3.1 Headteachers in each school and the CEO for the Trust central team will be responsible for establishing an ICT Disaster Recovery Procedure in line with the school's "Assessment of Critical Activities" for inclusion in each respective plan.

3.2 This plan will identify actions to take in the event of loss of ICT hardware, software, infrastructure or connectivity; or the loss of key ICT related staff.

4. Testing and Review

4.1 It is the responsibility of each school's Headteacher and the CEO for the Trust central team to ensure that plans are reviewed on a regular basis and always reviewed and appraised upon the conclusion of an incident. As a minimum, all plans must be subject to some form of testing at least once in every 12 month period.

5. Risk Management

5.1 The approach to business continuity planning recognises the links with the Trust's Risk Management Strategy and the risks arising from critical incidents will be included when developing and monitoring both the strategic risk register and individual operational risk registers.