



**St John's C of E Primary School**

# **Critical Incident Management and Business Continuity Policy**

School Policy	<b>Spring 2025</b>
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# St John's C of E Primary School

## Business Continuity and Critical Incident Management Policy

### Our Vision

Learn Together • Achieve Together • Celebrate Together  
“and let your light shine” Matthew 5:16

### Our Mission Statement

To enable all children to achieve their true potential in a caring and inclusive community based on Christian values.

### Our Values

Respect • Responsibility • Kindness • Truthfulness • Perseverance

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## **1. Statement of intent**

St. John's Primary School recognises that whilst the safety of pupils, staff members and visitors on the school premises is paramount, it is not always under our control.

In an emergency, staff members will endeavour to take all reasonable actions to ensure the safety of all those on site.

The aim of this policy is to minimise disruption to the learning environment whilst ensuring the safety of all pupils, staff members and visitors, by responding to critical incidents as quickly and efficiently as possible.

## **2. Legal framework**

This policy has due regard to all relevant legislation and guidance including, but not limited to, the following:

- Workplace (Health, Safety and Welfare) Regulations 1992
- The Management of Health and Safety at Work Regulations 1999
- Health and Safety at Work etc. Act 1974
- The Regulatory Reform (Fire Safety) Order 2005
- DfE (2022) Emergency planning and response for education, childcare and children's social care settings
- DfE (2019) School and college security

This policy operates in conjunction with the following school policies and documents:

- Health, Safety and Wellbeing Policy
- Invacuation, Lockdown and Evacuation Policy
- Educational Visits Policy
- Safeguarding and Child Protection Policy
- Data Protection Policy
- Remote Learning Policy
- Emergency Plan

## **3. Definitions**

For this policy, a "critical incident" is an emergency which affects pupils, staff, visitors or property and requires immediate responsive action which is beyond that reasonable expected from the school's own management team.

Critical incidents include, but are not limited to, the following:

- The death of a pupil, staff member or governor
- A serious incident involving a pupil or staff member on, or off, the school premises
- An incident of serious violent crime
- A violent intrusion onto the premises, e.g. a bomb alert
- Extensive damage to school property
- A fire, flood or explosion
- The effects of disasters in the wider community
- Incidents whilst on educational visits
- Epidemics
- Exposure to hazardous substances near, or on, the school premises

#### **4. Roles and responsibilities**

The headteacher is responsible for:

- The overall implementation of this policy and the associated plan and ensuring all members of staff are aware of their responsibilities.
- Appointing designated staff members to the School Emergency Management Team (SEMT).
- Working alongside the SEMT to ensure that critical incidents are managed effectively.
- Ensuring that an appropriate ratio of first aiders to pupils is always sustained.
- Ensuring that an effective Emergency Plan is in place.
- Ensuring that all staff members are aware of this policy and the associated Emergency Plan.
- Reviewing the Emergency Plan at regular intervals, ensuring that it is kept up-to-date with developments at the school, such as changes to evacuation procedures.
- Ensuring that vital information is not lost in the event of a fire, flood or explosion, by keeping a copy of up-to-date pupil and personnel records off the school premises.
- Liaising with the press or appointing a designated member of staff to do so.
- Reviewing allocations of responsibilities considering staff absence.
- Compiling an emergency contact list and ensuring that all members of staff hold a copy of this.
- Informing parents and the school community about the critical incident.
- Maintaining the welfare of all staff, pupils and visitors.

All staff members are responsible for:

- Acting in accordance with this policy at all times.
- Effectively implementing the Emergency Plan, when necessary.
- Maintaining up-to-date records of critical incidents at the school.
- Maintaining their own records of events, as well as keeping copies of notes made by other colleagues.
- Ensuring that they effectively understand the school's Emergency Plan.
- Understanding how to effectively carry out the school's emergency procedures.
- Understanding their role in the execution of the school's emergency plans, including evacuation, lockdown and evacuation procedures.
- Ensuring that pupils are aware of the school's emergency procedures.
- Ensuring that their own contact details are kept up-to-date on school records.
- Reporting and recording minor and critical incidents.

#### **5. School Emergency Management Team**

The headteacher will appoint five members of staff to form the School Emergency Management Team (SEMT). This team will be responsible for:

- Ensuring that parents are kept informed about the situation.
- Deciding when and how to re-open the school.
- Organising and providing support for staff, pupils and others who have been directly affected.
- Providing support for the families of those hurt or bereaved.
- Ensuring the school effectively cooperates and liaises with the relevant bodies during investigations into critical incidents.
- Dealing with continued interest from the media.
- Ensuring the appropriate attendance of school members at funerals.
- Organising memorial services, including the sending of flowers.

In the event of a critical incident, the SEMT will work alongside the headteacher to effectively fulfil their role, as outlined above.

Where possible, the Emerald Room will be allocated to the SEMT, and any necessary equipment and information will be stored here.

With prior agreement, Danbury Mission will be used as a reserve off-site location for the SEMT when the on-site location is not usable.

The team will collate and retain any records regarding the planning of, and response to, critical incidents, including written records and any recordings made via CCTV.

The team will ensure that each member of staff involved in dealing with a critical incident has recorded all decisions that were made, any communication that was received and all tasks that were carried out.

## **6. Initial Action**

Immediate action will be taken to safeguard pupils and staff, using the relevant emergency procedure signal to alert staff members. The alarm will be raised by the first adult at the scene of the incident.

Members of the SEMT will ascertain the details of the incident. All initial information regarding the incident will be logged using the Notification of Incident form within section 2.1 of the Emergency Plan.

Initial action will be undertaken in line with section 2.2 of the Emergency Plan.

If necessary, first aid will be administered by the first trained first aider at the scene of the incident. All first aid and medical treatment will be administered and recorded in line with school policies.

If necessary, the emergency services will be contacted, and the following information will be given:

- The emergency services required
- Exact location of incident
- Number of casualties
- Number of injuries
- Location and phone number of where the call is being made from
- Any hazards which the emergency services may encounter on site

Where possible, the school will remain open and normal routine will be maintained.

## **7. Emergency Procedures**

### **a) Preparation**

The school will prepare for emergencies on an ongoing basis which will include the following:

- Risk assessment
- Planning
- Training
- Exercises
- Reviewing

The school will consult members of staff and governors to gain their involvement and support for the emergency planning process.

All staff members and pupils will be aware of the school's emergency procedures, including those outlined in the school's Emergency Plan.

The school's designated emergency assembly points will be clearly indicated and known by all staff members and pupils.

The school will carry out a practice drill of the school's evacuation procedure at least once a term, and invacuation and lockdown annually, to ensure that pupils and staff members fully understand what is involved in the procedure, and that it is implemented effectively.

All staff members will be aware of the evacuation routes and assembly points in the case of a bomb threat, as outlined in the school's Bomb Threat Procedure (as laid out in Appendix 9 in the Emergency Plan).

All staff members will be aware of the school's designated first aiders and the locations of first aid boxes within the school.

Staff members will be aware of any Personal Emergency Evacuation Plans (PEEPs) in place.

### **b) Implementation**

Following Initial Action and if deemed necessary, emergency procedures in line with the Emergency Plan will be carried out.

In the event of an evacuation, staff members and pupils will be alerted by the continuous sounding of the school bell.

In the event of an external hazard, staff members will be signalled of the need for shelter by the sound of ascending chimes, indicating to staff that the school's invacuation procedure should be followed.

In the event of an intruder, staff members will be signalled to commence the lockdown procedure by three sharp blasts of the school bell.

In the event of severe weather, the procedures outlined in the school's Adverse Weather Policy (Appendix 1) will be followed.

If first aid or medical treatment is necessary, the procedures outlined in the school's First Aid Policy will be followed.

## **8. Emergencies during Educational Visits**

All staff members will act in accordance with the Educational Visits Policy, following the outlined procedures in the event of an emergency.

Critical incidents that occur on school trips will be managed in the same way as those that occur on the school premises.

The trip leader will be responsible for maintaining written records of any critical incidents that occur whilst on a trip, as well as the action which was taken and by whom.

The trip leader will be responsible for reporting the critical incident to the headteacher immediately.

Any critical incident that occurs on a school trip will be communicated to all staff members, ensuring that they are aware of any pupils who may suffer from shock.

## **9. Internal Communications**

To aid communication within the school community, the school will collate an emergency contacts information sheet, copies of which will be kept in the school office. This will include the following information:

- Pupils' emergency contact details
- Staff members' emergency contact details
- Contact details of members of the governing board
- Emergency contact details for the LA
- Phone numbers for relevant travel companies
- Phone numbers for regular supply staff
- Pupil and staff movement data, including class itinerary

The headteacher will ensure that this information is reviewed on a regular basis and is updated to reflect changes in staffing details.

The school's internal communication systems will be used to alert staff members to a critical incident in the first instance, without alarming pupils unnecessarily.

Staff members, pupils and parents will be informed of critical incidents in the most sensitive way possible.

The parents of pupils who are directly involved in the incident will be contacted immediately using the emergency contact details provided to the school.

Pupils will be informed of a critical incident in groups as small as practicable.

Parents of pupils not directly involved in the incident will be contacted quickly and efficiently, via email, as soon as is reasonably practicable.

Members of the school's governing board will be informed about the critical incident as soon as possible and will be briefed about speaking to the press.

During an emergency, staff members will use mobile phones to stay in contact with one another and communicate key messages.

Staff briefings will be conducted following the occurrence of a critical incident, to further investigate the event and provide staff members with any updates.

Weekly staff meetings will provide an opportunity for staff members to raise any concerns about the school, including those in relation to emergency procedures and critical incidents.

## **10. After a Critical Incident**

Following the occurrence of a critical incident, the school's short-term aims will include the following:

- Contacting those directly involved
- Inform the Governing Body and the Local Authority
- Appropriately debriefing the school community
- Attempting to maintain normal school routines
- Making appropriate plans for attendance at funerals and memorials
- Monitoring the wellbeing of staff and pupils, particularly those directly involved in the incident
- Expressing sympathy to the families of those involved
- Identifying vulnerable staff and pupils, ensuring they are aware of the support available to them

In the medium term, the school's aims will include the following:

- Making arrangements for pupils involved to return to school
- Arranging alternative teaching, where necessary

- Providing support to staff members and pupils affected
- Arranging consultations with educational psychologists, where necessary
- Clarifying support arrangements and referring pupils for individual help, if appropriate
- Keeping parents updated and informed

In the longer term, the school's aim will include the following:

- Introducing support systems to continuously monitor vulnerable pupils and staff members
- Discussing how to mark anniversaries
- Ensuring all staff members, including new staff, are aware of pupils affected by the incident
- Acting sensitively to pupils' needs
- Ensuring pupils and staff members know how to obtain further help, including via external support services

### **11. Post-Incident Support**

Staff members will strive to create a welcoming atmosphere in which pupils can openly discuss life events, including when critical incidents occur.

Following a critical incident, staff members will consult with the parents of pupils involved regarding how best to support the pupil, ensuring that their needs are considered.

Counselling will be offered to pupils and staff who were involved in, or witnessed, a critical incident.

Topics including bereavement, stress and safety will be covered as part of the curriculum.

Pupils and staff will be provided with safe areas where they can take a timeout if necessary.

Absences will be authorised by the headteacher for pupils attending events following the incident, including funerals and counselling sessions.

Strategies will be implemented for managing any distress that could be caused by ongoing police enquiries, legal proceedings or media attention.

The SEMT will lead debriefing meetings for staff members, pupils and parents, as well as for the wider community where appropriate.

The need for individual or group support will be assessed by class teachers in the period following a critical incident.

The school will ensure the demands on pupils and staff, e.g. homework or additional duties, are appropriate or deferred/cancelled if necessary.

The school will consider alternative arrangements in line with the relevant guidance from the DfE should a pupil miss a statutory assessment.

Arrangements will be made for a member of staff to visit those affected, whether at home or at hospital – consent will be sought from parents before visits take place.

Where necessary, the school will liaise with parents regarding a phased return to school for pupils involved in a critical incident.

Information regarding the support being accessed by staff members and pupils will be treated as personal data and processed in line with the school's Data Protection Policy, transferring information to external agencies where necessary.

Following an emergency, the school will work collaboratively with pupils, staff and parents who are anxious to reassure them and to respond to concerns.

The school will provide remote education to enable pupils to keep pace with their education when in-person attendance in school is not possible due to a critical incident or emergency. Remote education will be delivered in line with the school's Remote Education Policy and the school will take steps to ensure all pupils can access it and receive quality support.

## **12. Media Relations**

All communication between the school and the media will be conducted by the headteacher.

Where possible, press interest will be managed by the LA's press office.

All information given to the media is done so through a single reliable source.

All statements will be agreed by the headteacher and SEMT before going to the press.

Pupils will not be named during communication with the press unless parental consent has been sought.

Personal information regarding staff members, pupils and visitors will be kept confidential and treated in accordance with the school's Data Protection Policy.

Details of the critical incident which may be harmful to investigations into the incident, or which reveal personal information will be treated as confidential.

Staff members will not talk off the record to the media and will refer all enquiries to the headteacher, SEMT or designated staff member.

The school will strive to liaise and co-operate with the media by answering any queries, as appropriate.

All statements given to the press will be factual.

The school will aim to reassure the public and demonstrate control of the situation, as well as counter any dangerous rumours or gossip.

Child protection and safeguarding measures will be taken when reporting about pupils.

Parental permission will be sought prior to any press interviews with pupils.

Times of press releases will be pre-agreed to avoid continuous pressure.

Where appropriate, a pre-prepared statement containing basic information about the school and the school's procedures will be used.

The SEMT will ensure that any media access to the site, staff and pupils is controlled.

## APPENDIX 1 –

## Adverse Weather Policy

### Aims

Severe weather is classified as weather conditions which have an impact on service delivery. The weather may be heavy snow, black ice, fog, floods or strong winds.

In the event of disruption caused by severe weather the prime concern of the school must always be the safety of the pupils and staff.

The decision to close the school will take account of the safety of all our pupils and staff, some of whom travel a great distance to school each day. We will always endeavour to open the school in the event of bad weather, if it is safe to do so.

Head teachers are authorised to make an emergency closure when the state of the weather or any other exceptional circumstance would put the health, safety or welfare of pupils and/ or staff at risk.

The school will only be closed if one or more of the following conditions apply:

1. Insufficient staff are able to come in to keep the school running safely.
2. Conditions on site are dangerous
3. Conditions are considered to be or are anticipated to become too hazardous for travel later in the day.

### ***If the school is to close in the morning:***

- A school app notification will be sent out to all parents/carers
- The closure will be recorded on the front screen on the school's website
- Staff who can get into school to answer any queries
- Staff will be posted outside school to inform parents/ carers as they arrive at school

### ***Closure during the school day***

The safety and well-being of pupils is paramount. Safe and speedy dismissal of pupils in the event of an emergency closure depends on the school and parents/carers working in partnership.

***Parent/ carers responsibilities- It is the responsibility of parents/carers to ensure that school has up to date emergency contact details.***

Parents are expected to check the website, the school app when the weather is extreme and it is clear that a closure is a possibility.

The school appreciates that during bad weather children may arrive later than normal; parents should endeavour to contact the school to let them know they are on their way if likely to be delayed.

Staff will always make every reasonable effort to undertake the journey to school. It is appreciated that the journey may take longer than normal and therefore some staff may not be able to arrive before the normal start of the school day.

Where the school is officially closed, all absence is counted as authorised absence.

If the weather forecast gets worse, then the Headteacher may make the decision to close school early and ask for parents/carers to collect children before the end of the day - this is to elevate the number of parents/carers coming up the lane at the same time in bad weathers and to ensure most pupils are home before the bad weather sets in.

### **School premises**

In the event of snow some pathways will be cleared and salted. Parents, children and visitors will be made aware that pathways, even where cleared, do remain dangerous. Children will also be reminded of this in assembly.

Before and after school opening hours parents are responsible for ensuring their children do not slide or throw the snow/ice on the school playground.

In icy conditions the caretaker will salt wide pathways

Areas affected by ice will be covered in grit and/ or rock salt

Where necessary, essential pathways will be maintained as clear as possible throughout the day.

On school days where the school is closed to pupils, where possible routes will still be maintained during snow and ice weather daily by the caretaker, so as to keep the pathways clear and prevent buildup of ice and snow.

During adverse weather conditions, the playground may be out of bounds to children at break times.

In the Head teacher's absence, the deputy Headteacher/senior teacher on site will assume responsibility for making all decisions relating to the Adverse Weather Policy during the school day in correspondence with the Headteacher.

School will offer remote learning through the online platforms of Tapestry and TEAMS.

Reviewed Spring 2025

