




'Christ at the centre, children at the heart'

**Our Lady of Walsingham Catholic MAT Company No:**

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<b>Signed by Trust CEO:</b>	
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## **Business Continuity Policy**

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## Statement of intent

Our Lady of Walsingham Catholic Multi Academy Trust\_(the Trust) 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 procedures in this policy aim 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.

## Legal Framework

This policy has due regard to all relevant legislation and statutory 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 2002;
- DfE (2015) "Emergency planning and response"; and
- DfE (2019) "School and College Security".

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

- Health and Safety Policy;
- Educational Trips and Visits Policy;
- First Aid Policy;
- Complaints Procedures Policy;
- Child Protection and Safeguarding Policy;
- Fire Evacuation Plans; and
- Personal Emergency Evacuation Plans.

## Definitions

For the purpose of this policy, a "critical incident" is an emergency which affects pupils, staff, visitors or property and requires immediate responsive action which is beyond that reasonably 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, eg 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; and
- exposure to hazardous substances near, or on, the school premises.

## **Roles and Responsibilities**

The Headteacher/Head of School is responsible for:

- the overall implementation of the Critical Incident Business Continuity Policy and procedures ensuring all members of staff are aware of their responsibilities;
- appointing designated staff members to the critical incident management team;
- working alongside the critical incident management team to ensure that critical incidents are managed effectively;
- ensuring that an appropriate ratio of first aiders to pupils is always sustained;
- ensuring that a simple and straightforward, but effective, critical incident management plan is in place;
- ensuring that all staff members are aware of the school's critical incident management plan and associated procedures;
- reviewing the critical incident plan at regular intervals, ensuring that it is kept up to date with developments at the school, such as changes to evacuation procedures;
- keeping a duplicate copy of the critical incident management plan off the school premises in case of a fire, flood or explosion;
- 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 all the school premises;
- liaising with the press, or appointment a designated member of staff to do so;
- reviewing allocations of responsibilities considering staff absence;
- compiling an emergency contact list and ensuring all members of staff hold a copy of this;
- informing parents and the school community about the critical incident management plan; and
- maintaining the welfare of all staff, pupils, and visitors.

All staff members are responsible for:

- acting in accordance with this policy and procedures at all times;
- effectively implementing the critical incident management 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 critical incident management plan and procedures;
- understanding how to effectively carry out the school's emergency evacuation procedures;
- understanding their role in the execution of the school's emergency plans, including evacuation procedures and the critical incident management plan;

- ensuring that pupils are aware of the school's emergency evacuation procedures;
- ensuring that their own contact details are kept up to date on school records; and
- reporting and recording minor and critical incidents in line with the school's agreed practice.

## **Critical Incident Management Team**

The Headteacher/Head of School will appoint identified members of staff to form the school's critical incident management team. 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 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; and
- organising memorial services, including the sending of flowers.

In the event of a critical incident, the critical incident management team will work alongside the Headteacher/Head of School in order to effectively fulfil their role, as outlined above.

Where possible, an appropriate area along with any necessary equipment and information will be allocated to the critical incident management team, and any records will be stored here.

With prior agreement, an identified area to be used as a reserve off-site location for the critical incident team 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.

## **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 critical incident management team will ascertain the details of the incident.

All initial information regarding the incident will be logged using the Critical Incident and Business Continuity Procedures (Appendix 1).

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 the Trust First Aid Policy.

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

- the emergency services required;
- exact location of the incident;
- number of casualties;
- number of injuries;
- location and phone number of where the call is being made from; and
- any hazards which the emergency services may encounter on site.

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

Contact details for key stakeholders who require to be notified will be found in the Critical Incident and Business Continuity Procedures.

## **Emergency Procedures**

All staff members and pupils are aware of the school's emergency procedures, including those outlined in the Invacuation, Lockdown, and Evacuation Policy.

The school's designated emergency assembly points are 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, to ensure that pupils and staff members fully understand what is involved in the procedure, and that it is implemented effectively.

In the event of an evacuation, staff members and pupils will be alerted by a previously agreed signal.

In the event of an external hazard, including an intruder, staff members will be signaled of the need for shelter by a previously agreed signal, indicating to staff that the school's invacuation and lockdown procedure should be followed.

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

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

Staff members are aware of any relevant Personal Emergency Evacuation Plans in place.

All staff members will receive training regarding the school's emergency evacuation procedures, and will be aware of:

- the appropriate route to take;
- what assembly point to use in the event of different scenarios;
- security arrangements that are in place, such as the locking of the school gates; and
- access arrangements for emergency services.

## **Emergencies during educational visits**

All staff members will act in accordance with the Trust Educational Trips and 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 school premises.

The named trip leader is 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 is responsible for reporting the critical incident to the Headteacher/Head of School 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.

## **Internal Communications**

To aid communication within the school community, the school will collate with 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, Chair and Vice Chair of the local governing body;
- emergency contact details for the key stakeholders, including Trust Executive;
- phone numbers for relevant travel companies;
- phone numbers for regular supply staff; and
- pupil and staff movement data, including class itinerary.

The Headteacher/Head of School is responsible for ensuring 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/Parent Mail, as soon as is reasonably practicable.

Members of the school's local governing board and Trust Executive (Chief Executive Officer) 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.

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

## **After a critical incident**

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

- contacting those directly involved;
- informing the Trust Chief Executive Officer;
- 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; and
- identifying vulnerable staff and pupils, ensuring they are aware of the support available to them.

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

- planning 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; and
- Keeping parents updated and informed.

In the longer term, the school's aims 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; and
- ensuring pupils and staff members know how to obtain further help, including via external support services.

## **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.

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

The critical incident management team 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. deadlines for coursework or additional duties, are appropriate or amended if necessary.

Arrangements will be made for an identified 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.

More support following a critical incident can be accessed by accessing contact details of support available.

## **Media relations**

All communication between the school and the media will be conducted in accordance with the School's Media Relations Policy.

Where possible, press interest will be managed as a first point of contact by the identified schools' communication lead or central Trust executive team.

All statements will be agreed by the school Critical Incident Management Team and central Trust Executive team 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 Trust 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/Head of School or critical incident management team.

The Trust and individual schools 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 procedures will be used.

The critical incident management team will ensure that any media access to the site, staff and pupils is controlled.

## **Handling complaints**

The Trust recognises that the occurrence of a critical incident is a sensitive subject.

The school's critical incident arrangements should be made in accordance with the Trust Complaints Procedure Policy.

The Trust will continuously work to address and resolve concerns, ensuring that critical incidents are dealt with in line with the law, as well as in a sensitive and supportive manner.

## **Monitoring and review**

This policy will be reviewed on a regular basis (every 2 years) and the supporting schools' Critical Incident and Business Continuity Procedures by the Headteacher/Head of School and local governing bodies annually.