



**THIS POLICY COVERS ALL ACADEMIES/SCHOOLS WITHIN
ARDEN MULTI-ACADEMY TRUST**

Name of Policy	Business Continuity Plan (for disaster recovery in the event of a critical incident)	
Lead	Martin Murphy, CEO	
Governor Committee	Audit & Risk Committee	
Policy Status	Draft	July 2019
	Awaiting Approval	No
	Trustee Approved	12 th December 2023
Version No.	2	
Next Review	Autumn Term 2024	
Amendments		



Introduction

Arden Multi-Academy Trust Business Continuity Plan (BCP) has been written for those who will be involved in re-establishing the operational delivery of services following a major incident. It should be read in conjunction with the Emergency Plans for individual academies, which should conform to the arrangements covered in this document.

Reputation

The reputation of Arden Multi-Academy Trust and of the individual schools/academies within it are of paramount importance. As such any decisions to implement the BCP, to close one or more schools, or other actions taken to protect pupils and staff will always be made with the welfare and safety as the foremost consideration.

Definitions

An emergency is any event which causes, or has the potential to cause, injury, loss of life, damage to property or significant business disruption.

A disaster is the escalation of an emergency to the point where normal conditions are not expected to be recovered for at least 24 hours.

General information

Review and training

This document should be reviewed annually by the CEO and the MAT Board of Trustees. Briefings will be provided to all staff at the start of the school year and will form part of the Induction Pack for all staff joining the organisation.

Associated documents/information

Associated Documents include:

- Emergency Plans
- Fire Evacuation Plans
- Fire risk assessment
- Snow Procedure

These documents are held locally at each school and are available on staff noticeboards and via the school office.

Emergency Contact Information

An emergency information pack is kept at the main/reception office at each school within the MAT and includes:

- Copies of this document
- All associated documents (listed above)
- Class lists (including pupil telephone numbers)
- Site plans

Access to staff and student data with home phone numbers can be accessed on-line by the Associate Headteacher or Office Manager.

Strategy

If a disaster is declared by the CEO, Executive Headteacher or any Associate Headteacher, the Business Continuity Plan will be activated.

Staff communication will be via email and the website if this is operable, or by use of the snow plan telephone lists if not.

The following organisations may need to be advised of the implementation of the Business Continuity Plan as soon as possible:

- Director of Children's Services
- Buildings Services
- Press Office (Local Authority)
- Local radio stations
- Health and Safety Executive (HSE) (injuries only)
- Insurance advisors
- Local police
- Local fire service
- CSW Resilience Team

Roles and Responsibilities

CEO

The CEO is responsible for the implementation and co-ordination of the BCP, including:

- Immediately contacting the police if the disaster relates to the built environment or the ICT infrastructure to establish if the building can be re-occupied and/or service delivery reinstated;
- Co-ordination of status reports/communication for the benefit of all audiences (including staff, pupils, parents, LA, Academies Team at DFE, press);
- Maintaining the BCP in an up-to-date format by delegating responsibility to the Trust Executive Headteacher or Finance Director for updates.

Incident Management Team (IMT)

Lead by the CEO (or their nominated deputy), the Incident Management Team may include the Executive Headteacher, Trust Finance Director, Headteachers, the Senior Premises Manager, H&S Officer and the Site Service Officer of the school. Additional members of the team will be recruited to match the specific needs of the incident.

The IMT is responsible for acting under the direction of the CEO (or Deputy) to restore normal conditions as soon as possible.

Class teachers should ensure that all medical equipment for the children in their class is taken to place of safety.

If school is inaccessible the CEO/Deputy will determine which of the other schools to meet in.

Staff

Staff are required to co-operate with the IMT in support of the BCP.

In the event that staff are sent home, they should remain available during normal working hours to assist with necessary tasks. Staff should refrain from using social media to report or discuss any incident where the BCP has been activated.

Procedure for closing a school/academy within the Arden Multi-Academy Trust

Closure in advance of a school day

The school can be closed in advance of a normal school day using the following system:

- Closure authorised by the CEO/Executive Headteacher or school's Associate Headteacher
- Notification of a school closure using the MAT and/or Local Authority online website (actioned by the Associate Headteacher)
- Implementing the school staff 'snow procedure' (actioned by leadership team)
- Recording the closure on the home page of the school website (actioned by Office Manager)
- Sending out messages via parent mail to all parents (actioned by Office Manager)

Closure during a school day

It is never a preferred option to close the school during a school day but it can be done using the following procedures:

Closure authorised by the CEO/Executive Headteacher or Associate Headteacher on the basis that pupils with parental authorisation may make their way home by themselves. Pupils will continue to be supervised by staff until parents authorise them to leave or they are collected.

- Parental authorisation can be provided by text message or email from a parental phone number.
- Consider use of Places of Safety (as described below).
- Notification of the school closure using the website (actioned by – Office Manager).
- Recording the closure on the home page of the school website (actioned by – Office Manager). Contact local media and local authority to ensure that messages are posted/broadcast.
- Sending out text messages to all parents (actioned by – Office Manager).

Immediate places of safety

In the event of a major incident on site requiring the school to be closed, pupils will initially assemble at identified assembly points. If these are not useable, or if the incident has made the school grounds unsafe, staff will escort pupils to the secondary assembly points.

These will be identified in each school/academy.

Offsite place of safety

If it becomes necessary to evacuate the site completely, pupils will be escorted to the offsite assembly point from where they can be collected or from where they can be released to make their own way home if there is approval in place to walk home alone.

Lockdown Procedure

It is now possible to envisage circumstances where the school may wish to lock itself in, to secure pupils and staff from an outside threat. This circumstance is described as a 'lockdown'.

If a lockdown is declared:

- The Site Services Officer or Office Manager will be advised to implement the lockdown via word-of-mouth;
- The IMT will communicate via the Headteacher or site service officer by mobile phone;
- The school will be advised that it is in 'lockdown' by word-of-mouth.;
- All staff will remain in classrooms and keep pupils calm and away from windows;
- Where it is safe to do so, classroom windows will be closed, and blinds drawn to limit visibility into the school.

The lockdown will proceed in the following priority:

- The external gates of the school will be closed and locked if safe to do so ensuring no one can enter or leave the premises;
- The following doors will then be locked:
 - o Mainbuilding - front entrances
 - o Other exits if there is reason to believe there is a threat on the school grounds

Monitoring the Site Entrances

Once the site is secure, staff should return to the building and monitor school/academy entrances via CCTV (if installed), and/or discretely from office windows (but without making themselves a potential target). The gates should only be opened by the Site Service Office or Associate Headteacher when visual confirmation of the presence of the emergency services can be confirmed.

Silent evacuation

The normal process to trigger an evacuation is via sounding the fire alarm; however, there are certain situations where a silent signal should be used instead, such as:

- When a bomb alert has been received or a gas leak is suspected - follow school's specific protocols for such instances;
- Where an audible alarm may further endanger risk to pupils/adults e.g. aggressive intruder.

Silent alarm procedure

The Associate Headteacher should arrange for a silent signal to be deployed in all school areas e.g. a member of staff travels around school with a visually recognised signal or verbal signal. If it is unsafe to alert the Headteacher, staff may use their judgement and undertake this.

On seeing/ hearing the alert, teachers should immediately evacuate pupils to the designated assembly points. Staff working with pupils outside the classroom should NOT return to the classroom but immediately evacuate pupils to join their class at the designated assembly point.

Business recovery in the event of a loss of buildings or site space

General

Replacement of the buildings and facilities that have been damaged or made unavailable will be the responsibility of the school/academy. Temporary working facilities are the responsibility of the School and Multi-Academy Trust for which it holds insurance (see below).

Insurance

The schools are insured through the Risk Protection Arrangement (RPA) scheme set up by the Department for Education for schools/academies which covers the reinstatement value of the property.

Replacement site facilities

The size and scope of facilities required for the school will vary according to circumstance. In the first instance contact should be made with the DFE RPA underwriters.

The location of the temporary accommodation will be determined based on the space required and circumstances at the time.

Erecting additional buildings (porta cabins) on school sites will always be the preferred solution.

Pandemic threat/mass staff unavailability

Loss of staff is considered a generic threat to operations. The spread of a virus capable of impacting on operational service delivery is now considered genuine and serious.

In the event of mass staff illness, the IMT will shut the school to pupils using the same procedures described above.

Other threats

The following “other threats” have been considered

- Phone and ICT communications loss
- Finance process breakdown – payments to staff and suppliers fail
- Utilities/energy supply failure
- Service delivery loss of general nature – school/academy is unable to provide buildings or ICT support
- Key supplier failure – catering
- Evacuation due to nearby incident
- Bad weather prolonged
- Strikes
- Terrorist attack or threat
- Biological or environmental hazard

Impact Assessments

School activity (statutory duties are in bold)	What may happen?	Short- term impact on the school	Mid-long term impact on the school (48 hours+)	Mitigation and contingency arrangements in place	Further actions needed to reduce impact
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		(up to 48 hours)			
Early Years Teaching	<p>Potential to impact on development of Nursery & Reception Pupils</p> <p>Impact on reputation</p> <p>Potential for complaints</p>			<p>Cross-skilling of staff so teaching can continue if staffing is reduced.</p> <p>Access to supply teaching staff.</p>	<p>Utilise teaching resources from other schools in the MAT</p> <p>SIMS data back-up offsite so restore can take place.</p>
KS1 Teaching	<p>Potential to impact on results & attainment of Year 1 & 2 Pupils</p> <p>Impact on reputation</p> <p>Potential for complaints</p>		Key Stage 1 SATs in summer term each year	<p>Cross-skilling of staff so teaching can continue if staffing is reduced.</p> <p>Access to supply teaching staff.</p>	<p>Utilise teaching resources from other schools in the MAT</p> <p>Data back-up off site so restore can take place.</p>
KS2 Teaching	<p>Potential to impact on results & attainment of Year 3, 4, 5 & 6 pupils</p> <p>Impact on reputation potential for complaints</p>		Key Stage 2 SATs in summer term each year	<p>Cross-skilling of staff so teaching can continue if staffing is reduced.</p> <p>Prioritise over KS1 at critical times if necessary.</p> <p>Pupils at KS2 have more time to catch up on any missed work</p> <p>Access to supply teaching staff</p>	<p>Utilise teaching resources from other schools in the MAT.</p> <p>SIMS data back-up off site so restore can take place.</p>

Safeguarding Children	<p>Harm to an individual</p> <p>Potential culpability</p>			Refer to Trust/school/academy Safeguarding Policy.	Meeting between safeguarding lead, Pastoral Managers and other appropriate staff
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	Damage to reputation				to identify action relating to children at risk. Communication with other agencies.
Catering (Specifically free school meals)	Unable to fulfil statutory obligations Hunger impacts on behaviour and performance	Packed lunch to be prepared off site and delivered to school. Food to be prepared off site and delivered to school.	Free school meals and UFSM have to be provided. If there was no access to catering in the medium to long term we would need alternative arrangements for food preparation / free school meals / UFSM provision.		Discuss alternatives with catering staff/provider.
Access to ICT	No (or restricted) access to teaching materials Pupils unable to work online or use online resources Potential impact on performance of pupils and staff	Different key stages dependence on ICT varies. Loss would be more critical during online tests.	Different key stages dependence on ICT varies. Loss would be more critical during online tests.	Teachers and Support Staff have other teaching materials available.	ICT Manager – curriculum – reinstate by using back up

Extra-Curricular	Disappointed pupils Missed opportunities to enhance learning for pupils Damage to reputation			Existing staff to run extra-curricular activities where qualified.	Look for alternative provider
Facilities Management	Impact on cleanliness of the school general maintenance and upkeep of the school would not happen Potential health & safety risk		The MAT has a Senior Site Services Officer, who has the capacity to work across the MAT to provide support where required and to liaise with contractors etc.	Leadership team would open and close school in the short term.	Buy in external support

Draft Recovery Action Plans

Operational Threat	Steps to Restore Normal Working	Action by Whom	Comments/Notes
Phone and ICT communications loss	Contact phone/ communication providers/ ICT Manager for Curriculum Server/ICT Services for Admin Server	Office Managers/ ICT Manager/ Office Manager/ Finance Director	Keep CEO/Executive Headteacher, Associate Headteacher Finance Director updated CEO decides what communication is sent via School Comms to parents
Finance process breakdown – payments to staff and suppliers fail	Finance Director investigates issue with school office Extent of situation is fully assessed Bank balances verified from online banking staff and suppliers formally contacted with timescales / update	Finance Director/CEO	Chair of Audit & Risk Committee and Chair of Board of Directors kept updated
Utilities/energy supply failure	Providers called to ascertain issue School may have to close Consider suitability of accessing a generator	Senior SSO & school SSO/CEO/ Associate Headteacher	Keep Chair of Trust Board updated

Building loss – partial or complete (fire, flood etc.)	Buildings services notified immediately Short-term - share pupils between other schools in the MAT and provide coach service/minibus transport in the mornings and afternoons Medium term - erect portacabins on site long term - rebuild/ refurbish		Buildings services will assign a designated loss adjuster
Building denial leading to short term lack of access. Service delivery Loss of general nature – school/academy is unable to provide buildings or ICT support	Relocate to the other schools within the MAT providing transport morning & afternoons		
Key supplier failure other than school/academy – e.g. catering	Cook food off site and deliver to school Feed pupils at one of the other schools within the MAT Buy in pre-packed lunches	Catering Manager	Liaise with external providers to establish their continuity plan

Evacuation due to nearby incident	<p>1. Follow instructions from CEO/HT/DH/OM to:</p> <p>Evacuate immediately to designated assembly points</p> <p>Take register on arrival and inform admin of any children or members of staff that are unaccounted for.</p>	Associate Headteacher or nominated deputy	CEO notified as soon as possible
Lockdown due to nearby incident	Follow instructions from CEO/HT/DH/OM to: stay inside the building, well away from the windows and do not leave until instructed to do so by a member of SLT or the police/bomb squad		
Fire	<p>Exit the school following fire evacuation plan</p> <p>Call emergency services</p> <p>Call buildings services regarding any damage</p> <p>Review what happened and capture any lessons learnt</p>	Associate Headteacher/Business Manager	Associate Headteacher keep CEO/EP updated
Bad weather prolonged	School to follow snow procedure		

Strikes	<p>Associate Headteacher to establish which staff will be on strike</p> <p>CEO/EP decides if school has to close for pupils or which classes - staff not striking are deployed with suitable work and come to work as usual</p>	CEO/EP coordinates the communication brief to parents/carers and staff	<p>If there are a minimum amount of staff there may be a decision to allow staff to work from home if there is suitable work they can take home or deploy them to one of the other schools within the MAT (rather than heating school and incurring costs). CEO/EP updates Chair of the Trust Board</p>
Terrorist attack or threat	<p>Follow instructions from AHT/DH/OM either to:</p> <p>Evacuate immediately to designated assembly points</p> <p>Take register on arrival and inform admin of any children or members of staff that are unaccounted for</p> <p>OR</p> <p>Stay inside the building, well away from the windows and do not leave until instructed to do so by a member of SLT or the police/bomb squad</p>		

Biological or environmental hazard	<p>Follow instructions from AHT/DH/OM either to:</p> <p>Evacuate immediately to designated assembly points</p> <p>Take register on arrival and inform Admin of any children or members of staff that are unaccounted for</p> <p>OR</p> <p>Trigger IET team & follow plan</p>	CEO/Executive Headteacher
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