

Reference number	EdPol-001
Designation	Education Policy

School Emergency Plan Policy & Procedures

Responsible department:	Education Services	Owner:	MD Education
Version:	1.0	Date of issue:	January 2025
Date of next review:	January 2026	Executive approval:	MD Education
Policy value:	Dependable: Ensuring that colleagues and children are safe by effective emergency planning		

Scope:	This policy applies across all Horizon schools and will ensure that emergency planning is in place to help prevent an incident getting worse, provide confidence to staff, parents, carers, and pupils.
Objectives	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> To help staff respond effectively to an emergency at school or on an educational visit.
Applicable legislation/standards:	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Health and Safety at Work etc Act 1974 Management of Health and safety at Work Regulations 1999 Department for Education

Version	Date of withdrawal	Reason for withdrawal
N/A	N/A	N/A

1 Introduction

Parents and carers trust schools to keep their children safe. Thanks to the efforts of staff, schools normally remain a safe haven for children; but they can become involved in an emergency or suffer disruption at any time. An emergency plan should be generic enough to cover a range of potential incidents that could occur. Examples include:

- Serious injury to a pupil or member of staff (e.g. transport accident)
- Significant damage to school property (e.g. fire)
- Criminal activity (e.g. bomb threat, vandalism)
- Severe weather (e.g. flooding, heavy snowfall)
- Public health incidents (e.g. influenza pandemic)
- The effects of a disaster in the local community.

2 Crisis Support procedure

Potential crisis may include: -

- death of or serious injury to a pupil, student, or member of school staff;
- violence, assault, or threat of violence in school;
- destruction of the school or part of the school;
- school fire or explosion;
- serious incident of vandalism;
- a pupil, student or member of school taken hostage;
- death or injury on a school trip or journey;
- road, sea, or air accident involving pupils, students, or staff;
- a disaster in the wider community affecting the school, pupils, and staff;
- civil disturbance in the wider community;
- terrorist incident; and
- epidemic or pandemic.

3 Risk assessment

Schools are potentially susceptible to a variety of risks; these vary in severity and likelihood. Make an assessment of the specific risks affecting the school and identifying any hazards which pose a particular risk, such as the proximity to an industrial estate, river or major road, as well as taking account of other potential risks, such as:

- A violent intrusion onto school premises by malicious persons, either in person or by means of arson or explosive device.
- Destruction or vandalism of part or whole of the school.
- The school building becoming unsafe as a result of fire or flooding.
- Severe weather.

- Death of a pupil, member of staff or governor.
- An epidemic.
- Serious incidents on educational visits.
- The release of hazardous substances near or on the school site.

Other events may also be deemed to be emergencies in schools because of the impact they have on teachers, pupils, or other staff:

- An incident in the community which is seen or experienced by pupils or staff.
- An incident affecting relatives of pupils, and which is known about within the school.
- An incident involving allegations within the school.
- An incident involving a nearby or comparable school.

4 Planning

The Department for Education emphasises that schools should maintain up to date contact details for use during an emergency. Knowing who to contact, and being able to contact them, is fundamental in responding successfully to an incident.

The plan should contain up to date contact details for all those who may need to be contacted during an emergency:

- SET
- Parents/carers
- Pupils
- School staff
- Estates
- HR
- Local authority
- The emergency services
- Extended services.

5 Activation

Potentially any member of staff could be notified of an emergency, so it is important that all colleagues are aware of the plan and a copy is made readily available. Throughout the response to an emergency staff should maintain a logbook.

6 Procedure

6.1 Initial Response, On-going Response and Recovery

Actions taken during the response to an emergency can have a direct impact on the recovery phase. The overall recovery strategy and post incident support to pupils and staff will be coordinated centrally.

The recovery phase may last for a significant period of time. Reconstruction work, formal inquiries or police investigations into an incident will require the co-operation and support of school staff, pupils, and parents / carers.

6.2 Emergency incidents in schools

There may be specific hazards which pose a particular risk to the school, such as proximity to an industrial site, river, or major road. Horizon will make an assessment of any specific risks affecting the school and plan how it would deal with an incident arising from them.

The plan must cover procedures for an incident occurring in school time, out of hours, weekends and during school holidays.

While it is not possible to plan for every possible eventuality that might arise, incidents are grouped into three levels:

- Level 0 – localised incidents
- Level 1 – Localised emergencies
- Level 2 – Major community emergencies.

6.2.1 Level 0: localised Incidents

Disruptive to routine but not an immediate threat to life or well being

An incident that can be dealt with locally and may, at most, require a limited closure of the school and includes limited disruption without involving risk to the well-being of individuals. Some support from LA or other agencies may be necessary, and some incidents may require formal notification. Examples include:

- Severe weather problems
- Services – power, gas, water cut off
- Failed heating system
- Flooding or other weather damage
- Fallen trees
- Minor earthquake tremor
- Water leak
- Vandalism
- Local industrial action
- Notifiable infectious outbreak.
- Travel restrictions preventing normal return of school group

- ICT failure or disruption including:
 - Internet Connectivity outage
 - Email system not working
 - Theft of servers or major parts ICT infrastructure
 - Malicious (Virus, Denial of Service, hacking etc.) attack on ICT systems
 - Website down
 - Telephone Services not working (possibly linked to Internet service).

6.2.2 Level 1: Localised Emergency

Localised emergencies may include any unexpected event which is likely to disrupt the normal functioning of the school

These are more likely to be critical incidents involving a real threat of, or actual injury or death, where urgent and significant LA and other agency support are needed. Examples include:

- A deliberate act of violence, such as the use of a knife or firearm
- A school fire or laboratory explosion
- A pupil or teacher being taken hostage
- The destruction or serious vandalising of part of the school
- Fire
- Gas leak
- Risk of local flood.

A localised emergency may include incidents outside of school, examples include:

- The death of a pupil or member of staff through natural causes or accidents.
- A transport-related accident involving a large number of pupils and/or members of staff or resulting in death or serious injury.
- Death or serious injuries on school journeys or excursions.
- Civil disturbances and Terrorist Firearms threat.
- Large clusters of localized human to human viral infection which will trigger concerns of a likely epidemic.
- Chemical, Biological, Radiological & Nuclear (CBRN) threat.

6.2.3 Level 2: Major Community Emergencies

An incident that occurs within the local community, which may, depending on the nature and proximity of the emergency may require school closure.

This may require several agencies to work together – liaising and supporting each other to achieve command and control arrangements.

Examples include:

- Serious road or rail accident or spillage
- Aircraft crash
- Factory explosion/fire
- Terrorist threat
- A more widespread disaster in the community
- A Flu epidemic or viral infection leading to national alert
- Risk of local flood.

6.3 School Emergency Management Team

The Headteacher will usually take overall responsibility for co-ordinating the response to an emergency. If this is not appropriate a pre-agreed nominee should be identified (and appropriately trained) to undertake this role.

Unless the incident is minor, it will be impossible for the Headteacher to implement all the actions required on behalf of the school. A School Emergency Management Team should be established at the onset of an incident which can assist the Headteacher in managing the response. The following roles could be covered by the School Emergency Management Team:

- Co-ordination (i.e. Headteacher or pre-agreed nominee)
- Business continuity
- Communications
- Log-keeping
- Media management
- Resources
- Welfare.

The size of the School Emergency Management Team will vary depending on the size of the school and the nature of the emergency. In some cases, more than one member of staff will need to be assigned to a role and some staff may have to undertake more than one role.

In smaller schools the majority of responsibilities may be assigned to the Headteacher with the support of office staff and the site manager.

When assigning staff to School Emergency Management Team roles, the immediate obvious choice may not always be most appropriate; so, the school will consider the strengths of the staff and what they would be most suited to doing. For example, if an employee updates the school website and contacts parents or carers on a regular basis, then this may be the appropriate person to undertake the 'communications' role. The site manager is often well placed to

undertake the 'resources' role due to their detailed knowledge of the school premises.

Staff not within the School Emergency Management Team will still have a crucial role in the response to an emergency; their presence will be needed to reassure pupils and minimise disruption to the school routine. They may also be required to provide assistance in other ways, such as accompanying pupils to hospital.

6.3.1 School Emergency Management Team Briefings

Headteachers must pre-designate a venue for the School Emergency Management Team to meet during an incident. Ideally this location will have access to telecommunications and enough space to accommodate the School Emergency Management Team and other responders (e.g. personnel from the emergency services or LA). In many instances, the school office or staff room will be particularly suitable for this role.

6.4 Post Incident Support

The effects of a traumatic event upon a school, such as the serious injury or death of a pupil, can be profound and have significant long-term effects.

After an incident there will be a continuing need to support pupils, parents / carers, and staff. It is important to ensure appropriate monitoring procedures are in place so any individuals who require assistance can be identified and supported. This could include those who:

- Were injured
- Were uninjured, but at great risk
- Witnessed the event
- Are related to those involved
- Are friends of those involved
- Blame themselves
- Are being blamed by others
- Are experiencing instability at home
- Have pre-existing behavioural difficulties
- Have previously suffered bereavement or loss
- Have witnessed a similar incident before.

People involved in the incident, whether directly or indirectly, will be affected in different ways. This could include:

- Sleep disturbance
- Recurrent dreams
- Disturbing images and memories of the event

- Impairment of memory
- Feelings of guilt
- Feelings of detachment
- Difficulty in retaining concentration
- Diminished interest in significant activities (e.g. exams).

6.5 Business Continuity

The purpose of a Business Continuity Plan (BCP) is to document appropriate measures to reduce the likelihood of disruptive incidents occurring and/or reduce the potential impact of such incidents should they occur.

The consequences of a disruptive incident impacting the school might include: -

- Loss of personnel
- Loss of buildings
- Loss of information/data (including ICT and telephony)
- Loss of key suppliers and supplies.

It is important to have arrangements in place to cope with a disruptive incident. Even whilst responding to an emergency schools should aim to maintain pupils' education and minimise disruption to timetables and examinations.

6.6 Site Information

Detailed information about the school site can prove particularly useful for personnel involved in the response to an incident, particularly the emergency services.

This could contain several differently themed maps including details of:

- Internal hazards (e.g. asbestos, chemical stores)
- External hazards (e.g. rivers, reservoirs, industrial sites, main roads)
- Utility supplies (e.g. isolation points for gas, water, and electricity)
- Evacuation procedures (e.g. evacuation routes, assembly points)
- Notable premises in the vicinity (e.g. places of safety, buddy schools, rest centres)
- Pre-designated areas to be used during an emergency (e.g. School Emergency Management Team briefing area, media briefing area, suitable rooms for lockdown procedures).

This section of the plan should also provide instructions on how to isolate utility supplies and reset the fire alarm system. It is easy to become over-reliant on site managers; other school staff should be able to perform these tasks.

6.7 Evacuation

Evacuation, shelter and invacuation (lockdown) procedures are particularly important sections of the plan as they outline the initial actions that should be taken to safeguard pupils and staff, both from internal and external hazards.

All staff must be aware of these procedures as warning signals may need to be triggered immediately, before advising others of the threat. In other situations, the emergency services might alert the school to a potential hazard, such as a plume of smoke or a potential intruder.

In some circumstances it can be difficult to know whether to evacuate the premises or take shelter; the emergency services will be able to provide advice on the best course of action.

It is important to distinguish between the different signals used for:

- Evacuation procedures
- Shelter procedures
- Invacuation (Lockdown) procedures.

The difference between these signals should be easily identifiable (e.g. using a different ring tone or pattern). Procedures for sounding the 'all-clear' should also be established.

The purpose of an evacuation is to move people away from danger to a safe place. This is likely to involve withdrawal from a hazard within a specific part of the school building but in some circumstances could require evacuation of the whole site.

If the entire site has to be evacuated pupils and staff may need to move from an initial assembly point to alternative premises.

6.7.1 Places of Safety

Other places of safety (e.g. community centres, church halls) could be used to provide temporary accommodation should the school be evacuated.

If there is a potentially suitable venue nearby it might be useful to assess the property to establish what facilities it has available and how many people, it could realistically support:

- Toilets
- Catering facilities
- Heating
- First aid
- Chairs and tables
- Beds / sleeping bags

- Disabled access / facilities
- Back-up generator
- Office.

Information on how to travel to a place of safety must be documented and practiced.

6.7.2 Shelter

Some emergencies may require staff and pupils to shelter within the school building. All staff will have an important role to play in reassuring pupils and alleviating any concerns parents / carers may have.

Depending on the nature of the incident it can be difficult for the emergency services to provide an accurate estimation of how long it will be necessary to shelter for.

Every effort should be made to enable pupils to return home but only as long as it is safe to do so.

It may be useful to assess if pupils and staff would require any special assistance (e.g. those with medical needs) were they to remain at school for an extended period of time or even forced to shelter overnight.

7. Lockdown

The purpose of lockdown or invacuation is to prevent an intruder from causing harm to pupils and staff. Entrances to the school must be secured in an effort to prevent the intruder from entering the premises and staff and pupils must find a suitable place to protect themselves.

A lockdown may be deemed the most appropriate course of action if an emergency situation occurs outside the school grounds, and which renders an evacuation unsafe. Staff and pupils will be expected to stay in a safe area inside until advised otherwise by the emergency services.

Lockdown arrangements will depend heavily on the size and layout of your school. You may wish to identify those rooms most suitable for lockdown (and entrances which need to be locked) on a map which could be included within this section.

It is important to ensure these rooms have an exit route in case the intruder does gain access to the premises.

The signal for a lockdown should be clearly distinguishable to that of an evacuation. Any confusion may result in pupils and staff congregating at an assembly point, thus potentially making them more vulnerable to an intruder.

8. School Closure

The Headteacher or School Emergency Management Team will need to assess whether closure is required. This will primarily depend on the health, safety and welfare of staff and pupils.

Ensure that everyone who needs to be aware of the closure is notified.

9. Communications

In order to alleviate the pressure of calls from concerned parents etc, it is advised to set up an answer machine 'set to message only' that can be updated when required. Dedicated lines must be available for contact with emergency services.

10. Appendices

- PREVENT Risk Assessment
- Lockdown Template

11. Policy compliance and effectiveness

Yearly audits will ensure colleagues are complying with the relevant sections applicable to their employment.

12. Policy review

This policy will be reviewed every three years, or after applicable significant changes to current legislation or following an emergency related incident. Any amendments required will be brought to the attention of the company.

13. Equality impact

This policy has been subject to an equality impact assessment and Horizon is satisfied that it does not unfairly disadvantage any person.