

Section: Professional Matters



DISASTER PROCEDURES (CONTINGENCY PLAN)

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PROCEDURES TO REDUCE THE IMPACT OF DISASTER (CONTINGENCY PLAN)

Updated: 14 May 2015

There are many types of crisis that can affect schools. Examples include:

- The death of a member of the school
- Traffic accidents
- Deliberate acts of violence
- Fire or explosion
- Death or injuries on school journeys
- Tragedies involving children from many schools (the crush at Hillsborough football ground; the sinking of the Herald of Free Enterprise; the Lockerbie plane crash)
- Civil disturbance involving bombs
- Refugee children joining a school, perhaps shocked by war or atrocity.

The following procedures are to be considered as a guide *to be followed where possible* but circumstances will vary according to the nature of the disaster and it may be that only part of these procedures are appropriate.

[Duty Principal - Headteacher. If absent Deputy Headteacher (REM), then Deputy Headteacher (AMG), then Assistant Headteachers, then Key Stage Managers deputise for Deputy Headteachers if the Headteacher is out. If SLT is absent on INSET, Key Stage Managers deputise for the Deputies.]

IMMEDIATE ACTIONS:

COMMUNICATIONS:

The communication of accurate information will be vital. The Duty Principal will act as co-ordinator for both incoming and outgoing messages. The Deputy Headteacher (REM), having secured the safety of survivors, will relay accurate lists of pupils and staff via the Attendance Officer or Assistant, to the Duty Principal. The Deputy Headteacher (AMG) will be dealing with the dead and injured and will be keeping records to relay to the Duty Principal. Those answering the phones must keep records of who has phoned in and who has still to be contacted. Mrs Wharton (Assistant Headteacher) and Mrs Potts (Assistant Headteacher) will supervise traffic around the school gates. The remaining SLT will brief **all** staff at the point of assembly or elsewhere as appropriate. Tutors (or Relief Tutors) will need to brief their tutor groups as soon as possible/practicable but this **MUST NOT** be done by general announcement to large groups of pupils. Tutors use Emergency Tutor List to send pupils home. As soon as is practicable Tutors (or Relief Tutors) are requested to ensure that the parents of Emergency Tutor List (those without permission to be sent home) are contacted by phone. Administration staff will make available useful telephone numbers, eg hospital emergency number. The Headteacher will arrange to brief the media. The Duty Principal should inform the Chair of Governors and the Headteacher if absent.

In communicating with both pupils and parents staff must ensure that they only convey factual information (believed to be accurate at the time) and must not engage in speculation as to causes and possible consequences of the crisis.

BURIAL RITES:

People from different backgrounds and religions have different burial rites. Some, including Parsees, Sikhs and Jews, may hold funerals within twenty-four hours of death. There is not always time therefore to prepare staff or pupils for attendance. In this case the Assistant Headteacher (Mrs Martinelli) will be asked to make swift enquiries about the burial customs, eg if flowers are in order, whether women and men and pupils would be welcome as representatives of the school.

SHORT-TERM ACTIONS:

As far as possible school closure will be avoided and normal routine will be followed. In the event of school closure the media will be given 'return to school' notices. **All** staff will need opportunities to express their emotional reactions to the crisis. This may take place through friendship groups for some but **a support network will be established** using the school Pastoral team, school staff and/or outside agencies for both staff and pupils. Outside 'offers of help' must be checked for experience and qualifications by SLT before they are accepted. Following a disaster it is **VITAL** that those pupils who need to are able to talk about their experiences and Key Stage Managers and Form Tutors will need to make themselves available. Inexperienced staff must obtain advice from more experienced colleagues to avoid being overwhelmed. Informal, personal support will be essential. Children must feel that staff are available and willing to listen and staff will need to be aware of significant behaviour changes. Hampshire Educational Psychology will be contacted if necessary to help with immediate counselling needs. Some children will find it difficult to share their innermost feelings and it might be appropriate to provide opportunities for them to express themselves through the curriculum (eg Art, Drama). It may be appropriate to provide information about 'normal' stress reactions to help pupils to understand their own reactions.

Staff should be reminded that it may become necessary to monitor pupils for long-term effects. Post-traumatic stress disorder (PTSD) has three main groups of symptoms:

1. The traumatic effect is persistently re-experienced in thoughts, dreams or flashbacks where the individual thinks it is all happening again.
2. There is persistent avoidance of stimuli associated with the trauma (including a reluctance to talk about the trauma), there may be guilt at their own survival or there is a numbing of general responsiveness.
3. There are signs of increased physiological arousal such as disturbed sleep and poor concentration. There may be difficulties with separation, heightened alertness to danger, memory problems, irritability, depression, anxiety and panic.

Adults are also vulnerable to PTSD and colleagues will need to be aware of staff who are in need of help and support.

MEDIUM-TERM ACTION:

Helping people to come back into school.

There are already well-established procedures for negotiating young people's re-entry into school involving:

- Home/Hospital visits by Key Stage Managers/Tutors/PPS staff
- Ensuring good communication between home and school

- Discussing with the pupil how best to prepare the tutor group for the re-entry
- Considering part-time attendance
- Considering special requirements regarding public examinations
- Arranging 'Sanctuary' facilities
- Briefing subject staff

It may well be that additional support is needed in the classroom and the Key Stage Manager will need to negotiate with the Learning Support and Parent Pupil Services (PPS) Departments to achieve this. Teachers may need to be sensitive about curriculum content/wall displays etc.

ATTENDING FUNERALS:

Survivors should be encouraged and enabled to attend the funerals of those who died, and the parents of those who died should be encouraged to allow it. Notes will be required from parents requesting such absence. The school may need to take control of the situation to ensure legitimate absence by issuing a standard letter with a reply slip. Large, unaccompanied groups of adolescents are to be avoided.

SPECIAL ASSEMBLIES AND MEMORIAL SERVICES:

It may be appropriate to hold a special assembly or memorial service. It will be necessary to hold discussions with parents, pupils, staff, governors and the local community on what form this should take. Other memorial activities may be appropriate.

INFORMING PARENTS:

Parents will need regular communication about the action the school is taking, eg who has been called in to advise staff and pupils, how parents can have access to help, who to contact if they are worried about their child's progress.

CONTINUED MONITORING:

Those most at risk from PTSD are:

1. People whose lives were at greatest risk
2. Those who witness death and carnage
3. Children who come from unstable family relationships
4. Children who are less able intellectually
5. Girls (more likely to experience problems than boys)
6. Refugee children.

Key Stage Managers and Tutors will carry the burden of monitoring the effects of the disaster on individual pupils. Records of specific examples of behaviour causing concern should be kept so that patterns can be established. There should be regular contact between Key Stage Managers, Parent Pupil Services and outside professionals as appropriate keeping children under review. Parents should be kept informed of progress, including positive steps towards rehabilitation. If distress remains high six to eight weeks after the incident, parents should be advised that children should be referred to a specialist with skills in treating PTSD.

LONGER-TERM PLANNING:

1. Tutors and Key Stage Managers will need to ensure that new staff and staff new to vulnerable children are briefed on the most effective ways of maintaining support.
2. Decisions about whether, and how, to mark anniversaries should be made in good time. The wishes and feelings of bereaved families will need to be considered.
3. Legal processes such as inquests, boards of enquiry, postponed funerals, etc can complicate mourning. Key Stage Managers and Tutors will need to monitor this.
4. Explanations, guilt and blame may be redistributed at any time and feelings of distress may resurface in vulnerable children and adults. In these cases original support procedures may need to be re-introduced.

USEFUL CONTACTS:

CRUSE - Bereavement Care
135 St Mary Street
Southampton
Hampshire
SO14 1NX
Tel: 0844 8793448
Email: southhampshire@cruse.org.uk
www.cruse.org.uk

Help in Bereavement
Tel for adults: 07432 602613
Tel for children: 023 9261 8166
www.help-in-bereavement.co.uk

Winston's Wish
Tel: 08452 030405
www.winstonswish/org.uk

National Association for Pastoral Care in Education (NAPCE)
P O Box 6005
Nuneaton
CV11 9GY
Tel: 07532 408835
www.napce.org.uk

Samaritans of Portsmouth & East
Hampshire
296 London Road
North End
Portsmouth
PO2 9JN
Tel: 08457 909090 or 023 9269 1313
Email jo@samaritans.org
www.samaritans.org

MIND
P O Box 277
Manchester
M60 3XN
Tel: 0300 123 3393
Or text 86463
Email: info@mind.org.uk
www.mind.org.uk

Childline
Tel: 0800 1111
www.childline.org.uk

GUIDANCE SHEET FOR EMERGENCY PROCEDURE FOR SLT + KEY PERSONNEL

In the event of a major emergency which might involve fatality or press or adverse parental response and needs **IMMEDIATE** response.

- A. USING EMERGENCY DATA CARD** (Contains list of Contact Nos) [Held by SLT, Chair of Governors, Vice Chair of Governors, Site Manager, Main Reception, Teacher Governors]
[Update card]

Duty Principal:

1. Ensures Emergency Services have been called. Obtains mobile phone if necessary (has instructions on laminated card for use). It is located in Main Reception.
2. Briefs Senior Team and delegates on the ground action.
3. Headteacher **ONLY** deals with **PRESS** and **NEXT OF KIN** unless absolutely uncontactable. If uncontactable, Duty Principal consults with SLT + Chair/Vice Chair of Governors.

B. DEATH OF STAFF OR CHILD ON SITE

1. As above.
2. **CANCEL** any assembly
3. Headteacher's office to call staff meeting at next available break
4. Follow procedure for dealing with sudden death

C. DEATH OF VISITOR

1. As above.
2. Headteacher's office to call staff meeting at next available break
3. Follow procedure for dealing with sudden death
4. Pastoral support for affected children to be co-ordinated by HOY + Deputies

D. SUDDEN DEATH OF STAFF OFF-SITE NOTIFIED BY NEXT OF KIN

1. If overnight - place sign in foyer 'Emergency Staff Briefing' or call staff meeting as above
2. At briefing give news to staff
3. **CANCEL** any assembly
4. Cancel Parents' Evening if Staff in distress
5. SLT have discretion over meetings and extraordinary pupil events.

E. SUDDEN DEATH OF PUPIL OFF-SITE NOTIFIED BY NEXT OF KIN

1. As above but Parents' Evening and meetings to continue. Cancel inappropriate pupil activity at SLT's discretion.

F. SUDDEN DEATH OF STAFF/PUPIL ON SCHOOL VISIT/OFF SITE ACTIVITY

1. In School Situation:
 - a. On receipt of information:
 - i. As above
 - ii. Cancel any Assembly
 - iii. Call Staff Briefing
 - iv. Cancel Parents' Evening and other evening activities

2. Off-Site Activity: USE THE DATA LEFT BY STAFF ON VISIT

- a. Duty Principal central phone access
- b. Members of admin staff directed by SLT - to various Admin phones for incoming parent calls
- c. Duty Principal deals with Press on site in consultation. No interviews with other staff/pupils
- d. Duty Principal verifies accuracy of incoming information
- e. Duty Principal decides on outgoing information
- f. In event of Staff not being able to supervise at the scene - take advice and inform parents accordingly.

IN THE EVENT OF EXPLOSION/OTHER MAJOR EVACUATION

After identifying size of problem:

1. Duty Principal remains in School Office and carries out procedures as per Emergency Data Card.
2. REM conducts orderly evacuation procedure except for when she is Duty Principal then CFM conducts the evacuation.
3. AMG co-ordinates evacuation and first aid for injured at site of incident. When he is absent AJP substitutes.
4. Anyone with First Aid qualifications reports to AHH who advises AMG.
5. JBr organises admin back-up, telephones, refreshments, buses, etc.

FOLLOW UP (IMMEDIATELY) - EMERGENCY SCENARIO:

1. JBr will check with admin system and report personnel accounted for to Duty Principal.
2. Tutors to stay with children.
3. REM will organise bodies and name details with aid of CFM to report to Duty Principal - will also check injured names taken off site. JBr will then check site with Site Manager and begin to initiate premises procedures with Insurance Company.
4. AJP and JCW to organise gates, incoming and outgoing emergency service traffic and parking for parents on rough ground.
5. Site Manager and Assistant Site Manager making safe and reporting to Duty Principal.

PROCEDURE FOR DEALING WITH SUDDEN DEATH:

1. Always summon an ambulance. However, **only the doctor can certify if the person is dead.** The doctor has a duty to notify the coroner. This in effect means the police. The police officer (the coroner's officer) will take statements and details.

2. A body cannot be moved off site by the ambulance crew until death has been certified and, in the case of sudden death, until the coroner's officer has attended, the police officer will authorise the removal of the body to the mortuary.
3. If the death is because of a heart attack in a classroom or similar evacuate the children from the classroom and leave the body there covered (using a Mylar survival blanket). The moving of the body is dependent on the situation at the time.
4. If the death is because of an accident then it is best to leave the body in situ and covered until the police and ambulance crew arrive.