



# Policy

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# Business Continuity

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# Our Mission

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The school communities of The Bishop Wheeler Catholic Academy Trust will work together in truth and love to provide the best possible opportunities for all our young people and their families.

Our mission is the provision, development and future safeguarding of a World Class Catholic Education where every child, member of staff and family matters.

The schools, their governors and the trust directors will work together, based on the principle of subsidiarity, in faithfulness and humility, to provide an education where Christ and His values of respect, service, tolerance, dignity and forgiveness are at the heart of everything we do.

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**This policy was adopted by the Trust Board**

Signature:

Mrs C Hyde  
Chair of Trust Board

Date:

22/03/2016

**BUSINESS CONTINUITY POLICY  
FOR DISASTER RECOVERY IN THE EVENT OF A CRITICAL INCIDENT**

**MARCH 2016**

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## **1. INTRODUCTION**

Schools remain relatively safe and secure places in which to work and educate our children. Unfortunately however there are rare occasions where schools can be affected either directly or indirectly by emergencies or unplanned events which can have a devastating effect on schools and their communities. Effective planning minimises the impact of a potential crisis, save lives and or prevents injury, damage or harm to people, resources and reputation.

The Bishop Wheeler Catholic Academy Trust's overarching aim is to conduct our business with the highest regard for the health, safety and welfare of staff, pupils, parents, visitors and the wider community; to protect and preserve our premises, reputation and the environment. Continuity of operations must be maintained wherever it is practical and safe to do so.

**A critical incident** is "an incident or sequence of events affecting students, staff or property requiring immediate responsive action beyond that which could be reasonably expected from the school's management team during the day to day running of the school."

Critical incidents may involve our premises or one or more children or staff members, or members of the wider local community. Types of critical incidents include:

- The sudden death of a member of the school community
- An accident or significant incident involving students or staff on or off the school premises
- A physical attack on staff or children or intrusion into the school
- Serious damage to the school building through fire, arson, vandalism, floods etc.
- A potential threat to the school through malicious or authentic intent
- The loss or significant disruption to key systems and services (Telecoms, ICT, utilities)
- A pandemic or other major absence of key staff
- The disappearance of a member of the school community
- An accident, incident or tragedy in the wider community

## **2. BUSINESS CONTINUITY PROCESS**

The staff and management of Bishop Wheeler Catholic Academy Trust recognise business continuity management as 'a holistic management process that identifies potential threats to an organisation and the impacts to business operations that those threats, if realised, might cause. It also provides a framework for building organisational resilience with the capability for an effective response that safeguards the interests of its key services.' The aim is to identify the maximum exposure time our organisation is prepared to cope with disruption and how, as an organisation, we will respond and recover from them.

Our Trust business continuity process consists of a two tiered approach:

**1. Critical Incident Plan (CIP) – individual school level:** Each school has their own, specific, Critical Incident Plan which must be reviewed and updated annually or as changes to the site or staffing occur through Academy Councils. The individual critical incident plans include a detailed guidance handbook, supplied by our H&S advisors, AJ Gallagher. Included in the plan is:

- Key contacts information sheet
- Details of the ‘incident management team’ (IMT)
- Key tasks template / guidance
- Flowcharts
- Incident log sheets
- Action checklist
- Evacuation / shelter / lockdown procedures

Training for Headteachers, the Chair of the Trust and representatives from the Trust Office was provided by AJ Gallagher in February 2015, and is provided ongoing for new Headteachers joining the Trust. The training course included simulated critical incident examples.

The individual school’s IMT is responsible for **immediate response** and activation of the plan. In most cases, a critical incident will be resolved within 24 hours, without the need for school closure or further escalation. The aim of the CIP is to help the **(IMT)** to react quickly and effectively in the event of an incident, to enable them to maintain a sense of control and to ensure that appropriate support is offered to students and staff. Our procedures aim to minimise disruption on our school community and enable us to affect a return to normality as soon as is practically possible. Impact on key functions have been considered.

**2. Business Continuity Process (BCP) – Trust level:** some incidents will require more intense and extended periods of management for the school and the Trust to recover fully. In these instances the individual schools will seek assistance from the Trust office. A Business Recovery Team (BRT) has been established at Trust level. The members of this team are:

- Accounting Officer
- Business Director
- HR Manager
- ICT Manager
- Group Accountant.
- Expert H&S advice and support is provided by AJ Gallagher.

The BRT will be mobilised when the individual school are unable to return to ‘business as usual’ within **24 hours**. The BRT will establish clear lines of management and communication: prioritising tasks; relocating people; communicating with outside bodies and agencies in addition to investigating the root causes of the incident. Incidents requiring this level of support will normally be of a severe and significant nature and likely to span several days, weeks or even months. Guidance for the BRT is included in the Critical Incident Handbook. Our trust wide business continuity process has been developed to ensure the continuance of critical business functions in the event of a significant disruption/loss of service.

### **3. ROLES AND RESPONSIBILITIES**

*Roles and responsibilities are detailed, with full guidance, in the schools' individual CIPs. As a summary:*

1. **The Trust Board** is responsible for approving and reviewing this policy and disseminating it to Academy Councils
2. **Individual Academy Councils** are responsible for ensuring the individual school CIPs are reviewed annually to reflect changes to staff and site
3. **Headteachers** lead the incident management teams
4. **Business Managers** keep the CIPs up to date and ensure all members of the incident management team has a hard copy
5. **The Trust office business recovery team**, under the direction of the Business Director, has access to all individual CIPs and is responsible for managing business continuity with stakeholders such as parents and governors, the Diocese of Leeds, local authorities and external agencies such as ICT providers, insurance brokers, transport providers, EFA, HSE, the media.

### **4. CRITICAL INCIDENT PLAN ACTIVATION**

It is important that all employees are aware of our CIP arrangements and how and who to notify in the event of a crisis situation. It is essential that whoever receives an 'alert' obtains as much information from the source as possible. Any information provided will help the IMT to decide on the appropriate response. The activation of the CIP process will be based on failure in one or more of the following processes which exceed the defined parameters set.

**The decision to invoke the CIP process by the IMT will be based on one or more of the following criteria listed below as a guide -**

1. Loss of landline telecommunications for more than six hours
2. Loss of curriculum IT function for more than six hours
3. Loss of premises or access to premises (teaching spaces) for more than one hour
4. Loss of premises or access to premises (offices / administrative / support functions spaces) for more than two days
5. Loss of one or more children from the school site for more than ten minutes
6. Loss of one or more children whilst off site (UK or abroad) for more than five minutes
7. A serious incident occurring on an offsite activity which jeopardises the overall safety of staff and or students
8. The Circumstances of the incident prohibit the normal services provided by the school for more than 24 hours at which point the business continuity process would also be invoked irrespective of the nature of the incident

9. A wider community incident / situation (external to the school) is so widespread / has such a significant impact on the whole community that the business continuity process would automatically be invoked.

## **5. CRITICAL INCIDENT PLAN ESCALATION**

Should it transpire the incident cannot be managed within the boundaries of the individual CIP, and the BCP needs to be mobilised, the IMT leader should:

1. Outside office hours, ring the local authority '**crisis line**' – which operates a 24 / 7 telephone service, for immediate support
2. Contact Darren Beardsley and / or Gillian Osborne via e-mail or mobile phone for information, to alert the Trust to invoke the BCP

## **6. PROCEDURES FOR SCHOOL CLOSURE**

Each individual school has a documented, communicated procedure for school closure either in advance of the school day, for example owing to bad weather, or during the school day owing to any other incident. Most schools use a texting service for staff and parents, website messages and local radio messages.

## **7. RECORD KEEPING**

In the event of a critical incident, the IMT will keep records of phone calls made and received, letters sent and received, meetings held, persons met, decisions taken, interventions used, costs incurred, first aid administered, as guided by the templates in the individual CIPs.

## **8. CONFIDENTIALITY**

The management and staff of The Bishop Wheeler Trust have a responsibility to protect the confidentiality of information held and people involved in an incident. We will treat all information held by our school sensitively and only disclose information to those persons authorised to hold it. Any disclosures to third parties will only be undertaken where authorised by the Trust BRT Coordinator and will be done so in an appropriate and sensitive manner.

## **9. REVIEW**

The individual school CIP should be reviewed annually and / or as changes to IMT staff / premises occur. The CIP is approved by individual Academy Councils.

The Business Continuity Policy will be reviewed every three years, or as changes arise.

 The 10 schools in our Trust:

St. Mary's Menston, a Catholic Voluntary Academy  
St. Joseph's Catholic Primary School Otley, a Voluntary Academy  
Ss Peter and Paul Catholic Primary School, a Voluntary Academy  
Sacred Heart Catholic Primary School Ilkley, a Voluntary Academy  
St Mary's Horsforth Catholic Voluntary Academy  
St. Joseph's Catholic Primary School Pudsey, a Voluntary Academy  
St Joseph's Catholic Primary School Harrogate, a Voluntary Academy  
St Mary's Catholic Primary School Knaresborough, a Voluntary Academy  
St. Stephen's Catholic Primary School and Nursery, a Voluntary Academy  
Holy Name Catholic Voluntary Academy



## The Bishop Wheeler Catholic Academy Trust

The Bishop Wheeler Catholic Academy Trust is a charity and a company limited by guarantee, registered in England and Wales

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