



Business Continuity Plan

(for disaster recovery in the event of a critical incident)

Date of last Review:	December 2024	Review Period:	3 Years or sooner if needed
Date of Next Review:	December 2027	Owner:	COO
Type of Policy:	Trust	Signed:	

Introduction

The 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 Schools, which should conform to the arrangements covered in this document.

Reputation

The reputation of Victoria Academies Trust and of the individual Schools 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 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, COO and the MAT Board of Trustees. Briefings will be provided to appropriate staff at the start of the school year and will form part of the Induction Pack for staff joining the organisation.

Associated Documents/information

Associated documents include:

- Emergency Plans
- Fire Evacuation Plans
- Fire risk assessment
- Snow Extreme Weather Procedure
- Lockdown Procedures

These documents are held locally at each school.

Strategy

If a disaster is declared by the CEO (or a member of ELT) or by a 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/ communication system if not.

The following CEO/COO and ELT must be informed of the implementation of the Business Continuity Plan. Other organisations may need to be advised of the implementation of the Business Continuity Plan as soon as possible:

- Local radio stations
- Health and Safety Executive (HSE) (injuries only)
- RPA / Insurance companies
- Local Police
- Local Fire Service

Roles and Responsibilities

CEO

The CEO is responsible for the implementation and coordination of the BCP, including:

- Immediately contacting the emergency services, such as Police and/ or Fire Services, 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.
- Coordination of status reports/communication for the benefit of all audiences (including staff, pupils, parents, LA, DFE, and press).
- Maintaining the BCP in an up-to-date format by delegating responsibility to the Trust Chief Operating Officer (COO) for updates.

Incident Management Team (IMT)

Led by the CEO (or their nominated deputy), the Incident Management Team may include the Headteachers, Trust COO, and the Trust Head of Estates . 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 an appropriate 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. In this event the Trust will implement the appropriate remote working policies with these teams. Staff should refrain from using social media to report or discuss any incident where the BCP has been activated.

Emergency/ IMT Contact List	
Position	Name
CEO	Sharron Philpot
COO	Ian Kirby
Head of Estates	Chris Masters

Procedure for Closing an Academy within Victoria Academies Trust

Closure in advance of a school day

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

1. Closure authorised by the CEO
2. Implementing the school staff ‘snow communication procedure’
3. Recording the closure on the home page of the school website (actioned by Headteacher or delegated school staff) and appropriate Social Media channels
4. Sending out messages via teachers 2 parents, parent mail or other parent communication system to all parents (actioned by Headteacher or delegated school staff).
5. Notification to the chair of LGB and (if not already in discussion) the CEO, who will inform Trustees

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:

1. Closure authorised by the CEO. Pupils will continue to be supervised by staff until parents authorise them to leave or they are collected.
 - a. Parental authorisation can be provided by text message or email from a parental phone number which is already held on record
 - b. Consider use of Places of Safety (as described below).

2. Notification of the school closure using the website (actioned by the Headteacher or other delegated school staff).
3. Recording the closure on the home page of the school website and other social media channels (actioned by the Headteacher or other delegated school staff).
4. Contact local media and local authority to ensure that messages are posted/broadcast.
5. Sending out text messages to all parents (actioned by the Headteacher or other delegated school staff).

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.

Off-Site Place of Safety

If it becomes necessary to evacuate the site completely, pupils will be escorted to the off- site 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.

If needed, schools will implement their 'alternative place of assembly' which will be part of their own emergency plan.

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 MAT. 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 Zurich or RPA scheme set up by the Department for Education for academies which covers the reinstatement value of the property.

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 follow DfE and Public Health England guidance and shut the school to pupils using the same procedures described above if applicable.

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 – 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

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/ School Business Manager/ COO	Keep CEO, Head teacher, COO updated CEO decides what communication is sent via School Comms to Parents

Finance Process Breakdown – payments to staff and suppliers fail	<p>COO/ HoF investigates issue</p> <p>Extent of situation is fully assessed</p> <p>Bank balances verified from online banking Staff and suppliers formally contacted with timescales / update</p>	COO/CEO	Chair of Finance Audit and Risk Committee kept updated
Utilities / Energy Supply failure	<p>Providers called to ascertain issue</p> <p>School may have to close</p> <p>Consider suitability of accessing a Generator</p>	CEO/ COO/ Trust Head of Estates / Head Teacher	Keep Chair of Board of Trustees updated
Building Loss – partial or complete (Fire, Flood etc.)	<p>Buildings services notified immediately</p> <p>Short-term - share pupils between other schools in the MAT and provide coach service / Mini Bus transport in the mornings and afternoons</p> <p>Medium Term - erect Porta Cabins on site</p> <p>Long term - rebuild / refurbish</p>	CEO/ COO/ Trust Head of Estates/ Head Teacher	<p>Buildings services will assign a designated Loss Adjuster</p> <p>Keep Chair of Board of Trustees updated</p>

<p>Building Denial leading to short term lack of access. Service Delivery Loss of General Nature – Academy are unable to provide buildings or ICT support</p>	<p>Relocate to the other schools within the MAT providing transport morning & afternoons</p>	<p>CEO/ COO/ Trust Head of Estatesr/ Head Teacher</p>	<p>Keep Chair of Board of Trustees updated</p>
<p>Key Supplier Failure other than MAT – e.g. Catering</p>	<p>Cook food off site and deliver to school Feed pupils at one of the other schools within the MAT Buy in pre packed lunches</p>	<p>COO/ Trust Operations & Compliance Manager/ Headteachers/ Business Managers / BSO</p>	<p>Liaise with External Providers to establish their continuity plan</p>
<p>Evacuation due to Nearby Incident</p>	<p>Evacuate immediately to designated assembly points Take register on arrival and inform Admin of any children or members</p>	<p>Headteacher or nominated deputy</p>	<p>CEO notified as soon as possible</p>
	<p>of staff that are unaccounted for.</p>		

<p>Lockdown due to Nearby Incident</p>	<p>Follow instructions from CEO/HT/DH 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</p>		
<p>Fire</p>	<p>Exit the school following fire evacuation plan Call Emergency services Call Buildings services regarding any damage Review what happened and capture any lessons learnt</p>	<p>Head teacher/BM/BSO</p>	<p>Headteacher keep CEO updated</p>
<p>Prolonged bad weather</p>	<p>Follow school snow procedure</p>		<p>Headteacher keep CEO updated</p>

Strikes	<p>Headteacher to establish which staff will be on strike</p> <p>CEO/HT 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/HT co- ordinates the communication brief to parents and staff	<p>If there are a minimum number 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/ updates Chair of Trustees</p>
Terrorist Attack or Threat	<p>Follow instructions from HT/DH either to:</p> <p>Evacuate immediately to designated assembly points</p> <p>Take register on arrival and inform admin of an 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>	HT	Headteacher keep CEO updated

<p>Biological or Environmental hazard</p>	<p>Follow instructions from HT/DH 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 IMT team & follow plan</p>	<p>CEO</p>	<p>CEO to keep Chair of Trustee Updated</p>
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