



# Isbourne Valley School

## Emergency Planning Policy & Procedures

June 2026

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### Aims

We recognise that incidents and emergencies can arise anywhere and at any time. This document aims to help staff respond efficiently and effectively to emergency situations which arise at school or offsite. It aims to cover a range of potential incidents and most eventualities e.g. significant damage to school, fire, flood, disruption to services such as water or sewerage, severe weather, public health incidents, serious traffic related incidents, criminal activity, violence to staff, serious injury/death, or local disaster. It also covers procedures for incidents occurring during school hours, including weekends and holiday periods. The school has an Emergency Planning Management Team (EPMT) all members of which have authority to make critical decisions in the absence of the Headteacher.

### Preparation for Emergencies

It is not possible to fully plan for all emergency situations and our preparation for emergencies is therefore an ongoing process which includes:

- maintenance of an emergency plan;
- appointment of members of the EPMT;
- periodic review of emergency procedures;
- a training schedule for the EPMT, key staff and governors;
- reviewing and updating the plan as required; and
- keeping a record of tests of routines (such as fire drills, water testing, infestations, terrorism/bomb threats).

In planning for dealing with and responding to emergencies and/or disasters the school consults with staff, governors, parents, Gloucestershire County Council (the LA) and other appropriate advisory bodies.

### Emergency Planning Management Team (EPMT)

The response to any major, critical or emergency incident will be led by members of the EPMT in order to provide clarity and reduce confusion. The EPMT is made up of:

Justin Godding – Headteacher

Elizabeth Rogers – Senior Teacher

Nicola Gard/Charlotte Bowler – Administrative Assistants

Rachel Bale – Chair of Governors

### Overlap with other policies and procedures

Many aspects of school life have some relation to emergency planning. Our emergency planning policy and procedures therefore works alongside and in conjunction with our documents and practices concerning first aid, medicines, offsite visits, health and safety, confidentiality, data protection, and safeguarding.

### Confidentiality

We respect confidentiality and adhere to our policy in this regard in all aspects of school life. We recognise, however, that emergency situations will involve a response which is appropriate to the circumstances. Our plan contains sensitive information (e.g. contact details) which is available to the members of the EPMT and must be kept secure and is not published in this version of the document.

### Emergency or critical incidents

These may be defined as any sudden and unexpected incident or sequences of events which cause(s) trauma within a school community and which overwhelm(s) the normal coping capacity of that school. They will usually require the assistance of the emergency services and/or Gloucestershire County Council and others. The incident or event may be unanticipated, imminent or in progress. It may occur on school property, in the local community or out of school.

A major incident may be defined as:

- an accident leading to a serious injury or fatality;
- severe injury or severe stress;
- circumstances in which a person or persons might be at serious risk of illness;
- circumstances in which any part, or whole of the school is unable to function as normal due to external influences; and
- any situation in which the national press or media might be involved

Major incidents therefore include:

- death of a pupil or member of staff;
- death or serious injury on a school trip;
- epidemic in school or community;
- a violent incident in school;
- a pupil missing from home;
- destruction or major vandalism in school;
- a hostage taking;
- a transport accident involving school members;
- a disaster in the community;
- a civil disturbance or terrorism;
- an arson attack on the school;
- a major fire at the school;
- significant vandalism;
- pupil suicides and sudden deaths;
- violent attacks on pupils and/or staff members;
- the sudden death, in tragic circumstances of members of staff;
- an incident involving an intruder, believed to be armed, on school premises;
- road traffic accidents, involving fatalities within the school community;
- abductions/disappearances;
- allegations or actual incidents of abuse against pupils by staff and staff against pupils;
- incidents involving the murder of schoolchildren that attracted the attention of national and international media over prolonged periods;
- floods; and
- the school used in an emergency.

If a major incident arises the priorities of those adults in charge of the school or trip at the time must be to:

- save life;
- minimise personal injury;
- safeguard the interests of pupils and staff;
- minimise loss; and
- return to normal working quickly.

### **Non-Critical Incidents**

Some incidents might be non-critical. Examples include:

- death of a person associated with the school;
- lower scale health issues;
- an external incident requiring enhanced awareness;
- short term loss of staff or infrastructure; and
- the expected death of a pupil or member of staff.

## Prevention

No amount of planning can totally prevent accidents and problems occurring, but we hope that some can be prevented and the effects of others minimised by taking sensible precautionary measures. It is therefore expected that:

- all staff and pupils should be familiar with the school's routines for fire and the evacuation of the school building on hearing the fire alarm;
- all staff should be familiar with the routines and procedures for dealing with emergencies (as detailed in this document);
- all staff and pupils should be familiar with the school's security procedures, in particular that all visitors not wearing a visitor's badge should be questioned and escorted to reception;
- all staff organising school trips and visits follow the school's policy and guidelines;
- all staff are aware of pupils with medical needs or health problems;
- all staff are aware of school policy in dealing with violence at work;
- all staff are aware that they should assess the associated risks to children before carrying out a curriculum or other activity; and
- all staff are aware that they are responsible for assessing risks to themselves before undertaking an activity.

## Response

The school's response to emergencies and critical incidents will vary depending on the nature of the incident and the timeframe.

Immediate action could include:

- obtaining and collating information relating to the incident – uncertainty breeds rumour and accurate information is essential;
- gathering and briefing the EPMT, allocating roles and responsibilities;
- trigger support from the LA and other contacts on emergency list – establish clearly who is going to contact whom;
- set up an incident management room and dedicated phone line – to deal with calls from anxious parents etc. EPMT should agree a factual statement and avoid speculation;
- contact families affected. It may be appropriate for families to come to school and immediate emotional support could be a possibility;
- make arrangements to inform other parents;
- take advice from LA;
- inform teaching and other school staff;
- encourage people involved to talk – the incident may need to be discussed before children go home for the day, for both pupils and adults;
- deal with the media;
- devise a plan for handling the reactions and feelings of people affected;
- seek external professional support, advice and guidance;
- plan further actions.

Short term action could include:

- reunion of children with their families – especially where the incident occurs outside the school (mostly children will need to be brought home, but sometimes parents and families need to visit the scene of the incident to understand how they deal with repercussions in terms of children's fears etc.);
- managing and supporting staff;
- encouraging pupils to talk. This may have implications for the wider curriculum i.e. training in bereavement counselling for staff, provision of a range of books, PSHE discussions etc.;
- hold debriefing meetings (to clarify what has happened, allow for sharing reactions, reassure people that reactions are normal, mobilise resources e.g. parental support groups);
- sharing reactions and emotions; and
- re-establishing routines;

Medium term action could include:

- the return to school for staff or pupils after long absence;

- consulting professionals (e.g. the Educational Psychology Service for support and guidance, especially to help those showing unusual or prolonged reaction to the incident);
- keeping parents informed; and
- support for staff including members of the EPMT.

Long term action could include:

- monitoring the vulnerable – the effects of a crisis can reverberate for years, and it is especially important that new staff and pupils are briefed in the school's history to help them understand and deal with potential repercussions especially at anniversary times;
- marking anniversaries;
- Legal processes; and
- Curriculum implications (adjustment of curriculum content for children and/or training opportunities for staff).

### **Communications**

The welfare and safety of pupils and staff will always be our paramount priority in any emergency situation. As a small school with a limited number of staff we recognise that dealing with an emergency or critical incident could stretch us and we will not necessarily have the capacity to deal with any other than the immediate and urgent. We are also aware of the dangers which could be caused by the phone lines becoming jammed with incoming calls or the road being blocked by cars and preventing the access of the emergency services.

The decisions which we make about communication will be based on the individual circumstances and needs of any situation. Our first priority will always be summoning emergency assistance from the appropriate services. We will communicate with parents and carers in an appropriate manner as soon as the circumstances allow us to do so.

We ask parents not to come to the school site or telephone the school unless asked to do so by a member of the EPMT.

### **School closure at short notice**

We try to keep school open and continuing as normal as far as we can. The safety of our pupils, staff, families and any visitors to the school site is our priority at all times. We might have to make changes to how we work in response to an emergency situation and might be forced, from time to time, to close the school. If the school has to close at short notice or as a result of unforeseen circumstances the EPMT team will have a grab pack (see Appendix 3) containing all relevant information (up-to-date crucial records, addresses and contact numbers off-site).

Circumstances which could necessitate closure during the school day include storms (posing a potential danger to buildings, trees, other structures, or life), floods (including any potential impact on transport arrangements), cold weather, adverse weather conditions, disruption to the water supply.

### **Emergency closure before the start of the school day**

It may, in certain situations, be appropriate in advance to decide that the school should not open. This will generally be as a result of a difficulty where there is advance notice. This could include a planned disruption to water or energy supplies. In such cases, parents will be given as much notice as possible and informed of either a confirmed date when the school will re-open or advised on how this will be communicated.

In other situations, for example when weather conditions worsen dramatically overnight, a decision to close the school will have to be taken. Any such decision will be taken by the Headteacher and Chair of Governors at the earliest possible opportunity. The Headteacher will inform staff and parents by using the LA school closure system <https://www.gloucestershire.gov.uk/closures/> and on the school website if possible.

*Adopted by Isbourne Valley School Governing Body on 23<sup>rd</sup> June 2026*

*Next review Summer term 2027*