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**DISASTER PLAN FOR  
EMERGENCY CLOSURE AND LOCK DOWN  
PROCEDURES**

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*The Ursuline Preparatory School Mission Statement*

To live and learn in harmony,  
Caring for each other;  
Treating everybody as a sister and a brother;  
Reflecting Christ's actions and His message too,  
By striving for excellence in all that we do.

## **EMERGENCY CLOSURE POLICY**

Persons responsible:

Mrs V McNaughton and Mr M Smith.

Date adopted: February 2014

Date of next policy review: June 2019

## **HOW THE POLICY WAS DEVELOPED**

The policy was originally developed by the Senior Leadership Team, Facilities Manager, teaching staff and governors.

## **RATIONALE**

This emergency closure document has been written to outline our procedures should we need to either close the school or evacuate the building.

## **Definition of an emergency event**

An event (or events) usually sudden, which involve experiencing significant personal distress, to a level which potentially overwhelms normal responses and procedures and which is likely to have emotional and organizational consequences.

## **In school**

- An intruder threatening violence;
- A deliberate act of violence, such as the use of a knife or firearm;
- A fire, explosion, flood, gas leak or lightning strike;
- A pupil or teacher being taken hostage;
- The destruction or serious vandalism of part of the school;
- Acute infections/illness/poisoning affecting many children.

## **Outside school**

- The death of a pupil or members of staff through natural causes or accidents;
- A transport related accident involving pupils and/or members of staff;
- A more widespread disaster in the community;
- Death or injuries on school journeys or excursions;
- Civil disturbances or terrorism;
- Freak weather conditions e.g. hurricane.

In respect of school trips and visits, guidance is available from the DfES good practice guide 'Health & Safety of Pupils on Educational Visits' and will be revisited at each review period.

## **Audit of present procedures**

The Ursuline Prep School currently:

- Has specific risk assessment forms which are implemented and subject to regular revision;
- Has an excellent safety record for activities both within and outside the school. The relevant parental consents are sought where necessary and logged;
- Monitors relevant insurance policies;
- Holds emergency fire and evacuation drills at least once per term;
- Ensures that all adults involved with children are subject to relevant DBS disclosure procedure;
- Ensures that all necessary contact numbers are up to date, including those for all parents with home/office/mobile numbers, and are held in one secure place in school and one secure off school site;
- Has provision for alternative premises for continuity if a disaster occurs within the school itself. This standby arrangement is a reciprocal arrangement with The Ursuline Academy.

### **Key Personnel:**

Headmistress: Victoria McNaughton (VM)

Facilities Manager: Mark Smith (MS)

Deputy Facilities Manager: Antonio Bedoya (AB)

Chair of Governors: Peter Nicolson (PN)

The headmistress will be the overall incident manager and the decision to close the school or evacuate the children will be made only by her. She will liaise at all times with the Chair of Governors. In her absence the Deputy Headmistress will make this decision, again after full consultation.

VM will ensure that the appropriate emergency services have been called. VM will remain free from as many routine responsibilities as possible and remain in the school office or other known location in order to ensure effective control and communication.

Senior Leadership Team (SLT): VM + Mary Sales + Paula Boateng will meet with VM as soon as possible in her office to discuss planning and to ensure smooth and effective management of the situation. If VM has class responsibilities at the time, the class will take priority.

The Bursar will line manage the Premises Staff (MS + AB).

The aim at all times is to preserve life. This should be balanced with the recognition that staff and pupils involved in the incident would need immediate support.

### **EVACUATION PROCEDURES**

Evacuation of the buildings:

- MS will sound the fire alarm continuously (AB in his absence);
- Staff and children to follow the agreed fire drill procedures and evacuate to the playground;
- All staff are aware of their responsibilities in this situation;
- Pupils and staff to remain outside the buildings until told by VM to do otherwise. (VM will act on advice given by emergency services);
- The emergency services will be met by the school secretary at reception or other agreed location if deemed appropriate;
- Upon advice from emergency services staff and children will either re-enter the building or will be evacuated from the school site to the Academy dining room or Academy main hall;
- At this point the steps outlined below will be actioned – see 'Procedures for dismissal of children following an emergency' (below).

### **Remaining in the building during an emergency**

In certain situations (e.g. a terrorist threat, or hostage situation) evacuating the premises may put people in direct danger.

In this situation school staff may contact the police directly in an emergency, where doing so will not put pupils at risk. Staff are reminded that they should never provoke intruders and should always seek support and backup of some kind.

Once the police or emergency services arrive they can take control in consultation with VM.

### **Procedure for dismissal of children following an emergency**

#### **Dismissal from school**

- Class teachers to remain with their classes;
- Non-teaching staff to take responsibility for **telephoning** each child's parent or carer and requesting they be collected from school as soon as possible;
- Staff will say to parents and carers, "due to an emergency we have had to evacuate the building/close the school. Your child/ren is/are currently being looked after by his/her teacher. Could you please come to the school immediately and collect them from the Hall/Playground.";
- Staff will not give any further details to parents or carers;
- All children must be signed out.

#### **Dismissal from other premises**

- Class teachers remain with their class until they receive further notice;
- Non-teaching staff will take responsibility for telephoning each child's parent or carer and requesting that they be collected from the **other premises** as soon as possible. Children's names will be allocated to staff on the day;
- Staff will say to all parents and carers, "due to an emergency we have had to evacuate the building/close the school. Your child/ren is/are currently being looked after by their teacher. Could you please come to xxxxxx to collect your child?";
- Staff will not give any further details to parents or carers;
- All children must be signed out.

#### **Procedure following a major disaster and the school is unable to open**

- Staff already at school will take charge at different points to inform children that school will not be open. Should there be only a few staff at school then the school gate will be manned;
- Staff will say to parents and carers, "due to an emergency we are unable to open school today. Please take your **daughter/son** home. We will contact you during the day to inform you whether school will be open tomorrow. Thank you for your support in this matter. Please look on the school website for further information."
- Signs will be displayed on school door and gate reading: "due to an emergency school will not be open today."
- If pupils are already in school and it is necessary to close school, staff at school will take the names of those children present and telephone their parents/carers. They will use the same script as above.

## **Stages of action**

Action by VM

### **Stage 1**

- Open a personal log of all factual information received, actions taken and timings of events;
- Make every attempt to clarify what has happened;
- Call/meet with SLT and agree an action plan;
- Have clear instructions for administrative staff. All calls made and received, all information given and received and all actions taken and associated timings to be logged. This log will remain with admin staff at all times;
- Ask local priest to come to school if necessary;
- Consider whether the incident requires the involvement of the Local Authority Support Team;
- Give name and mobile number to any disaster coordinator if emergency has taken place out of school;
- Assist in assessing the emotional needs of staff and pupils. Coordinate the rapid action to sensitively provide appropriate support;
- Assist class teachers who will undertake classroom briefings;
- Arrange special groups for very distressed pupils.

### **During term time**

- Avoid if possible closing the school and endeavour to maintain normal routines and timetables;
- Have a designated room for parents to allow privacy;
- Have a designated pressroom.

### **Outside term time or school hours**

- Arrange for Facilities Manager to open certain parts of the school as appropriate;
- If deputising for the headmistress, try if possible to contact her;
- Inform the Chair of Governors;
- Chair of Governors should stand by to be available for interview by the media;
- Call in the designated staff members to form the 'School Emergency Management Team', and nominate the bursar as the On-Site Coordinator to oversee that team on the headmistress's behalf;
- Be prepared to receive many telephone calls;
- Consider what you are wearing when you go into school, in case you are unavoidably drawn into a TV interview;
- If the incident does attract media attention, there are likely to be requests for interviews and statements. The school must speak with a single authoritative voice so media training for the headmistress and a designated back up is desirable. Establish communication with a press so a quid quo pro exists; you supply information to them and they do not harass pupils, parents or staff. Move quickly; no news is terrible news in an emergency. A good communicator is essential to have a relationship with the local authority and support from the police.

### **Section 2**

Brief On-Site Coordinator, Bursar, to oversee the following:

- Agree appropriate identification of staff by using badges;
- Set up arrangements to manage visitors – arrange for their names to be recorded;
- Open kitchen and provide tea;

- Set arrangements to enable accurate information to flow into and out of school and for telephone calls, by ensuring:
  - Sufficient help is available to answer the many calls that could be received;
  - Staff maintain records of all calls received;
  - Brief, but up-to-date prepared statements are available to staff answering phones;
  - Media calls are directed to the designated media person from the earliest stages of the incident and no interviews or comments will be given by any other staff;
  - Care is taken when answering telephone calls;
  - An independent telephone is made available for outgoing calls only – a mobile phone can be useful;
  - Telephone staff are reminded that some calls could be bogus.
- To arrange for all staff – not just teaching staff – to be called in and, if necessary, briefed at an early stage. (Subsequent briefings say 2 per day for 10 minutes, should be arranged).
- To be aware of how colleagues are coping;
- To arrange for all pupils to be told, in simple terms, at an early stage (ideally in small groups and initially by class teachers, wherever possible);
- To brief the team to discourage staff and pupils from speaking to the media;
- To arrange, if appropriate, for team members to each have a copy of the next-of-kin list.

## LOCKDOWN PROCEDURES

Lockdown procedures should be seen as a sensible and proportionate response to any external or internal incident which has the potential to pose a threat to the safety of staff and pupils in the school. Procedures should aim to minimise disruption to the learning environment whilst ensuring the safety of all pupils and staff.

Lockdown procedures may be activated in response to any number of situations, but some of the more typical might be:

- A reported incident / civil disturbance in the local community (with the potential to pose a risk to staff and pupils in the school)
- An intruder on the school site (with the potential to pose a risk to staff and pupils)
- A warning being received regarding a risk locally, of air pollution (smoke plume, gas cloud etc)
- A major fire in the vicinity of the school
- The close proximity of a dangerous dog roaming loose

The school's lockdown plan is as follows:

Signal for lockdown	Air Horn
Signal for all clear	Verbally from staff member via telephones and/or walk round

Rooms most suitable for lockdown	All classes to remain in own classrooms
Entrance points (e.g. doors, windows) which should be secured	External doors Fire Doors Internal doors All windows
Communication arrangements	In person or telephones

### Lockdown Drill

Staff will be alerted to the activation of the lockdown drill in advance. When the three short blasts rings on the air horn staff must take the following action:

- Pupils who are outside of the school buildings are brought inside as quickly as possible and return to their classroom (outside staff will be informed by a senior member of staff)
- Those inside the school should remain in their classrooms and check corridors and toilets for pupils or staff
- All external doors and, as necessary, windows are closed (depending on the circumstances, internal classroom doors must also be closed).
- Blinds should be drawn and pupils sit quietly
- Once in lockdown mode, staff should notify the office immediately of any pupils not accounted for via the internal telephone system and instigate an immediate search for anyone missing
- Staff should encourage the pupils to keep calm
- As appropriate, the school office will establish communication with the Emergency Services
- If it is necessary to evacuate the building, the fire alarm will be sounded and the usual fire drill procedure will then take place
- Parents will be notified as soon as it is practicable via Clarion Call and the website (only when appropriate via guidance from Emergency Services)

Pupils will not be released to parents during a lockdown. It is of vital importance that the school's lockdown procedures are familiar to all members of the school staff. To achieve this, a lockdown drill should be undertaken at least once a year.

All situations are different, once all staff and pupils are safely inside, senior staff will conduct an on-going risk assessment based on advice from the Emergency Services. This can then be communicated to staff and pupils. Emergency Services will advise as to the best course of action in respect of the prevailing threat.

### **Lockdown Drill – All clear**

Once the incident has been assessed as safe all classrooms will be either visited by a senior member of staff or via telephone or in person and told the situation is under control and the class can resume activities as normal.

### **Communication between parents and the school**

In the event of an actual lockdown, any incident or development will be communicated to parents as soon as is practicable.

### **Emergency Services**

It is important to keep lines of communication open with Emergency Services as they are best placed to offer advice as a situation unfolds. The school site may or may not be cordoned off by Emergency Services depending on the severity of the incident that has triggered the Lockdown.

Emergency Services will support the decision of the Headteacher & Premises Manager regarding the timing of communication to parents.

**Staff will ALWAYS have advance notice of a Lockdown drill, therefore if the signal occurs without warning staff must assume it is NOT A DRILL.**

### **DRILL**

SLT/Premises Manager to sound 3 short blasts on the air horn in both buildings:

Nursery: - person who rings the bell will time from start to clearance of hall and corridors/toilets – They will note the time that it takes for all classes to be contained and in full Lockdown.

Prep School: - person who rings the bell will time from start to clearance of hall and corridors/toilets – They will note the time that it takes for all classes to be contained and in full Lockdown.

### **Duties/Check List:**

Headteacher/Deputy Headteacher must ensure the following procedures take place:

Jobs	Checked
Allocate a member of staff to go outside and check playground and tell those outside to return to their classrooms as Lockdown Drill is taking place.	
Office Staff member to take calls from classrooms if teachers report missing persons.	
Allocate Prep School Ringer: This person must go to the office once the lockdown is complete to give the all clear. Verbally/or telephone all classes to inform staff that Lockdown is over.	