Business Continuity Plan

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Approved By	FARR Committee	Status	Committee
Last Review	July 2024	Next Review	July 2026

Date	Details
January 2023	5.3 added 'PR & Communications Manager'
	6.3 added 'fire assembly point'
July 2024	Roles updated
	Removal of Appendix 1 – School Closures Guidance (to be included in school specific plans)

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1.0 Introduction

The North Star Academy Trust 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:

- School specific Business Continuity Plan
- School specific Fire Evacuation Plan (the operation of which does not necessarily activate the BCP).

2.0 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.

3.0 General Information

3.1 Review

This document should be reviewed biennially by the Executive Team and the FARR Committee.

3.2 Associated Documents/information

Associated School specific documents include:

- Fire Evacuation Plans
- Fire Risk Assessments
- Fire Safety Log Book
- Premises Management Records
- COSHH Register
- Snow Chains

These documents should be backed up electronically and hard copies held on the school site.

3.3 Emergency Grab Bag

An emergency grab bag should be held in the reception office at each school site.

3.4 Emergency Contact Information

An emergency information pack is held in the reception office at each school site and includes copies of this document.

Access to staff and student data (those on roll) with home phone numbers can be accessed through the Cloud based Management Information System, Arbor.

4.0 Strategy

If a disaster is declared by the Chief Executive Officer the Business Continuity Plan will be activated.

Staff communication will be via email / text messaging and the website if this is operable, or by use of the snow chain telephone lists if not.

The following organisations may need to be advised of the implementation of the Business Continuity Plan as soon as possible:

- Director of Children's Services office
- Press Office
- Health and Safety Advisors
- Health and Safety Executive (HSE)
- Insurance Advisors
- Local Police
- Local Fire Service
- Public Health England
- School Catering Supplier
- Service Suppliers (Gas, Electricity and Water)
- Extended Services Providers or Lettings

5.0 Roles and Responsibilities

5.1 Headteacher or their Deputy

The Headteacher is responsible for the implementation and co-ordination of the BCP, including:

- Immediately contacting the Director of Finance and Operations 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.
- Co-ordination of status reports/communication for the benefit of all audiences (including staff, students, parents, LA, DfE Academies Team, press)
- Maintaining the BCP in an up-to-date format by delegating responsibility to the Director of Finance and Operations (DFO) for updates.

5.2 Incident Management Team (IMT)
Led by the Headteacher, the Incident Management Team includes Deputy Heads, the DFO, the Estates Manager, site Caretakers and the PR & Communications team. 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 Headteacher (or their Deputy) to restore normal conditions as soon as possible.

All decisions and subsequent actions are to be logged in order to have a record of events and communication made to support services.

5.3 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.

6.0 Procedure for Closing the School

6.1 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 Headteacher or their Deputy.
2. Notification of a school closure using the Local Authority on-line website (actioned by a member of the Central Team).
3. Implementing the school staff 'snow chain' (actioned by Senior Leadership Team)
4. Recording the closure on the home page of the school website (actioned by a member of the Central Team)
5. Sending out text messages via Arbor to all parents (actioned by a member of the Central Team).

6.2 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 Headteacher or their Deputy on the basis that students with parental authorisation may make their way home by themselves. Students 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 or email address directly to the student's phone and seen (and recorded) by a member of staff.

b. Consider use of Places of Safety (as described below).

2. Notification of the school closure using the Local Authority on-line website (actioned by a member of the Central Team)

3. Recording the closure on the home page of the school website (actioned by a member of the Central Team).

4. Sending out text messages to all parents (actioned by a member of the Central Team).

Please see Appendix 1 for School Closure Guidance

6.3 Immediate Places of Safety

In the event of a major incident on site requiring the school to be closed, students will assemble at the primary assembly points (fire assembly point). If these are not useable staff will escort students to the secondary assembly points identified in the school specific BCP.

6.4 Off-Site Place of Safety

If it becomes necessary to evacuate the site completely, students will be escorted to the area identified in the school specific BCP where they can be collected or from where they can be released to make their own way home.

7.0 Lockdown Procedure

It is now possible to envisage circumstances where the school may wish to lock itself in, to secure staff and students from an outside threat. This circumstance is described as a 'lockdown'.

If a lockdown is declared:

- The Estates Manager (or Caretaker in their absence) will be advised to implement the lockdown via a two-way radio and by word of mouth.
- The IMT will communicate via a two-way radio.
- The school will be advised that it is in 'lockdown' by announcement via a two-way radio and by word of mouth.
- All staff will remain in classrooms and keep students calm and away from windows.
- All students in external PE lessons will be advised to return to the main hall.

The lockdown will proceed in the following priority:

- The external gates of the school will be closed and locked ensuring no one can enter or leave the premises.
- The front and rear entrance doors will then be locked.

Monitoring the Site Entrances:

Once the site is secure, staff should return to the building and school entrances will be monitored via CCTV. The gates should only be opened by the Estates Manager (or Caretaker in their absence) when visual confirmation of the presence of the Emergency Services can be confirmed.

8.0 Silent Evacuation

Staff will be aware that the majority of fire escapes are only accessible when the fire alarm releases the maglocks to open doors. Buildings are also equipped with a single release that will free maglocks without the need for the fire alarm. This provision is available if it ever became necessary to complete a silent evacuation. Doors will be released by the Estates Manager (or Caretaker in their absence) following an instruction from IMT. Notification of a silent evacuation would be made by word-of-mouth.

1. Business Recovery in the Event of a Loss of Buildings or Space

9.1 General
Replacement of the buildings and facilities that have been damaged or made unavailable will be the responsibility of the ESFA. In the event of building unavailability, the school should be covered under their insurance policy for reinstatement costs and temporary accommodation costs.

Temporary working facilities are the responsibility of the Trust for which it holds insurance (see below).

9.2 Insurance
The schools are insured thought the risk protection arrangement (RPA) for schools.

Material damage	Reinstatement value of the property
Business interruption	£10 million any one loss

9.3   Replacement Site Facilities

The size and scope of facilities required for the school will vary according to circumstance. In the first instance contact should be made with the RPA on 03300 585566.

The location of the temporary accommodation will be determined based on the space required and circumstances at the time. Erecting additional buildings on the current site will always be the preferred solution.

9.4 Paper Based Records

Important paper-based records such as exam papers should be kept in a secure location (e.g. a fire-proof safe).

9.5 Remote Learning

The IMT will initiate and make arrangements for pupils to access remote learning where necessary.

10.0 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 consider safe staffing ratios, and may reduce the number of year groups able to be taught, prioritising key year groups eg Year 11, or if insufficient staff are available, may be forced to close the school to students using the same procedures described above.

11.0   Flooding

Follow BCP procedures in the event of flooding on the school grounds, in the school premises or within the local area which may affect the normal running of the school.

Notification of actual or potential flooding could come from a variety of sources, such as:

- Receipt of an Environment Agency Flood Alert / Flood Warning / Severe Flood Warning;
- Local trigger, such as river levels;
- Reports of actual flooding;
- Met Office weather reports.

12.0   Other Threats

The following other threats may need to be considered, and a brief description of possible scenario and action to be taken documented in the school specific BCP:

- Phone and ICT Communications Loss
- Cyber Attack
- Finance Process Breakdown
- Utilities / Energy Supply Failure
- Service Delivery Loss of General Nature
- Key Supplier Failure eg. Catering, Transport
- Evacuation due to Nearby Incident
- Bad Weather Prolonged
- Strikes
- Terrorist Attack or Threat

Local information can be found at: https://www.bristol.gov.uk/crime-emergencies/emergency-information

12.0   Draft Recovery Action Plans

Please refer to the School specific BCP.