

Business Continuity and Contingency Plan

This plan applies across all partner schools in the Stephen Sutton Multi-Academy Trust (SSMAT). It is available on the SSMAT website and is accessible from our schools' websites.

APPROVAL and REVIEW

Review date: **Oct. '20**

Approval needed by: **Finance, Audit and Risk Committee**

Adopted: **Oct. '19**

Next review date: **Oct. '21**

OPTIONS - IN AN EMERGENCY ...

- ❖ As appropriate, call the **Emergency Services** on 999 (OR 112)
- ❖ Contact the **Executive Headteacher** (Stuart Jones) on 01543 687310 (Office) or 07889 650665 (Mobile)
[Alternatively, contact the **Chair of the Trust Board** (Richard Williams) on 07747 791162]
- ❖ Inform the **Trust Business Manager** (Sharon Thorp) on 01543 687310 (Office) or 07889 650653 (Mobile)
- ❖ Inform the **Head of School**:
Chase Terrace Academy - Nicola Mason, on
01543 682286 (Office) or 07889 650663 (Mobile)
- ❖ Send a message to the **County Council's Director on Call** on:
07623 910065 (Leave name, contact number and message)
[In the unlikely event that the Director On Call does not get back to you within a reasonable time period, contact the Staffs. Civil Contingencies Unit's Duty Officer, by calling 08451 213322 and asking Fire Control to page the CCU Duty Officer, leaving an appropriate message.]

Please note that the numbers above are not public numbers and should only be used in an emergency.
- ❖ Use the '**Emergency Actions Card**' (Appendix A of this document)

Amendment Record Sheet

<i>Serial</i>	<i>Amendment Details</i>	<i>Notified by / Incorporated by</i>	<i>Date</i>
1.	Change of Roles and contact details at CTTC	SJ	Oct 19
2.	Change of Mobile number for the County Council's Director on Call and website address for SCC Health and Safety Department	SCC - SLN	Oct 19
3.	Change of name for Chase Terrace Academy	ST	Oct 20
4.			
5.			
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8.			
9.			
10.			

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STEPHEN SUTTON MULTI ACADEMY TRUST

Emergency Actions Card

Distribution List	Location
Action Copies:	
Chair of Trust Board (COTB)	COTB – home copy
Executive Headteacher (EH)	Office copy and home copy
Trust Business Manager (TBM)	Office copy and home copy
Head of School (HT)	HOS's office
Deputy Head Teacher (DHT)	DHT's office
Office / Business Manager	Relevant office
Caretaker	Relevant office
Chair of Governors (COG)	Home copy
Information Copies:	
Off-site copies with ...	COTB, EH, TBM, each HOS, each DHT, each Office /Business Manager, each Caretaker, each COG
Electronic copies	SSMAT website / SSMAT network

1. Introduction / Overview

- 1.1 The aim of this plan is to ensure that the Trust can continue to meet its key aims in the event of a major incident that threatens people, premises or operational structure and requires special measures to be taken to restore a normal service.

2. Implementation.

- 2.1 The plan is generally implemented, in whole or in part, on the authority of the Executive Headteacher.

- 2.2 Incident Management Teams

A school's Incident Management Team comprises suitably experienced members and experts from relevant disciplines, who are able to understand and manage the likely impact of a major incident, in order to minimise disruption to the operation of the school. This team generally includes:

- Executive Headteacher
- Trust Business Manager
- Head of School
- Deputy Headteacher
- Business Manager
- Chair of Governors
- Other relevant senior staff (depending on the issue in question)

Support is also provided, as appropriate, by the school's Site Team and ICT Support Team. The Trust Board is kept informed by the Executive Headteacher.

- 2.3 Emergency Actions Card

The major incident Emergency Actions Card, designed for the use of the Incident Management Team is attached as Appendix A. The card outlines the actions needed at the various stages of an incident, namely:

- Stage 1 – Immediate actions required;
- Stage 2 – First 24 hours;
- Stage 3 – 24 hours to 2 weeks;
- Stage 4 – Post-incident.

- 2.4 Persons / groups responsible for the actions

Individual actions are determined on the day, by the Executive Headteacher (supported by the Head of School), taking into account the nature and scale of the incident and the staff available at the time.

2.5 Emergency contact list

Details of emergency contacts are listed and a collated document is held by the Executive Headteacher, Trust Business Manager and Chair of the Trust Board. Personal information may be subject to the Data Protection Act and colleagues should be reminded that their details (as contained in this list) may be only shared with the emergency services, local authorities and other organisations responding to an emergency situation.

2.6 Staffordshire County Council support

During an emergency that affects a school, the County Council offers support in the following areas:

- corporate management; educational psychologists; and health and welfare support and guidance;
- transportation; highways; and access to various contractors;
- Health and Safety;
- corporate communications (media); and
- specific support from the County Council's Incident Management Team.

2.7 How to activate County Council support

The County Council's emergency contact is through the Director On-Call, who can be paged on **07623 910065**. Messages should include: name, contact number and (in brief) relevant details. [In the unlikely event that the SCC Director On-Call does not get make contact within a reasonable time period, then contact should be made with the Staffordshire Civil Contingencies Unit's (CCU) Duty Officer. This can be done by calling 08451 213322 (Fire Control). On request, Fire Control will page the CCU Duty Officer, leaving an appropriate message.]. These numbers are not public numbers and should only be used in an emergency. The Director On-Call will assess the situation and will either pass the information on to the appropriate County Council Manager or, if the situation demands, declare a Major Incident and activate the County Council's Incident Management Team. Whichever method is employed, the County Council's support to the school affected by an incident will be undertaken with the degree of urgency appropriate to the emergency situation.

2.8 Incident documentation

Details of the actions undertaken and the decisions made during an emergency situation should be recorded, for use during any subsequent inquiries. Copies of the Incident

Notification Sheet and Incident Log Sheet are attached as Appendix C, for information and for use, as required.

3. Training and Exercises

3.1 The Executive Headteacher and the Local Governing Body are responsible for ensuring that staff with the roles and responsibilities identified in this plan understand how this plan should work, in practice.

3.2 The Head of School and Incident Management Team are responsible for updating the plan.

4. Plan Review and Maintenance.

4.1 The Head of School, supported by the Executive Headteacher and Trust Business Manager, is directly responsible for the overall handling, coherence and effectiveness of the school's Emergency Action Card.

4.2 The Executive Headteacher and Local Governing Body are responsible for ensuring that an annual review of the school's Emergency Action Card is carried out and that necessary changes are made.

Stuart Jones / Sharon Thorp; Oct. '20

STAGE 1 – IMMEDIATE ACTIONS REQUIRED

Serial	Action	Contacts / Comments	Person / Group Responsible	Date / Time Completed	Initials
1	Any member of staff who becomes aware of an actual or potential major incident or issue should:				
1.1	Establish / assess incident and immediate impact	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Declare emergency situation? • Contact emergency services (999)? 	Senior Leadership Team (SLT)		
1.2	Evacuate premises, as appropriate	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Ensure that everyone is safe (including joint users and visitors) • Restrict access to affected areas. 	Refer to school's Evacuation Plan for individual responsibilities		
1.3	Obtain Emergency Contact Lists for students, staff and family	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Emergency Contacts Lists – students and staff 	Head of School (or other nominated person)		
1.4	Complete and maintain appropriate documentation	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Incident Notification Sheet • Incident Log Sheet 	Business Manager		
1.5	Record details of casualties and obtain relevant information	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Names of anyone injured and details of injuries • Make record of First-Aid treatment administered • Record current location of those treated 	First Aiders		
1.6	Injury considerations	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Who is accompanying the injured person(s) to hospital? • What are the immediate transport, assistance, and counselling needs? 	Head of School (or other nominated member of SLT)		
1.7	Executive Headteacher, or Head of School, decides on further action, taking into account whether incident is inside, or outside, of school hours	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Inside school hours: decide whether, or not, to send students home; arrange transport; notify parents. • Outside school hours: follow school closure procedures used in cases of adverse weather. Consider local radio announcement. 	Executive Headteacher / Head of School / other member(s) of SLT		
1.8	Establish priorities for salvage and advise emergency services and recovery team	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Such items might include valuable equipment, important records and registers. 	Head of School (or other nominated member of SLT)		

STAGE 1 – IMMEDIATE ACTIONS REQUIRED

Serial	Action	Contacts / Comments	Person / Group Responsible	Date / Time Completed	Initials
1.9	<p>Consider notifying County Council of incident, via Director On Call emergency number:</p> <p>Page the Director On Call on 07623 910065</p> <p>[In the unlikely event that the SCC Director On Call does not get back to you within a reasonable time period, then contact should be made with the Staffordshire Civil Contingencies Unit’s Duty Officer. This can be done by calling 08451 213322. This number will put you through to Fire Control. Please ask Fire Control to page the CCU Duty Officer, leaving an appropriate message].</p> <p>These numbers are not public numbers and should only be used in an emergency</p>	<p>Phoning the number activates support from the County Council, including notifying all relevant people / groups and support officers from the County Council, who will attend the site as a matter of urgency, as necessary. Relevant people include:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • County Improvement Officers; • Corporate Communications (Media) Officers; • Strategic Health and Safety Advisors. 	Executive Headteacher		
1.10	Notify others, as required	E.g. District Senior Educational Psychologist, Corporate Communications Team etc. (Appendix B – Emergency Contacts)	Executive Headteacher		
1.11	Review welfare support for students, parents and staff	Refer to Staffordshire County Council’s ‘Coping with a Crisis at School’ document, as appropriate (Appendix F)	Head of School, assisted by other members of SLT		
1.12	As appropriate, taking into account timescale and nature of incident, continue to Stage 2 or to Post-Incident Checklist		Executive Headteacher		

STAGE 2 – FIRST 24 HOURS

Serial	Action	Contacts / Comments	Person / Group Responsible	Date / Time Completed	Initials
2.1	Establish / assess, where possible, nature of loss of service, likely cause and likely timescale of recovery	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Consider whether, or not, incident can be managed locally Consider whether, or not, incident requires implementation of any special contingency arrangements 	Executive Headteacher		
2.2	Convene school's Incident Management Team, as appropriate	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Consider suitable location for Team to manage incident 	Executive Headteacher		
2.3	Notification procedures	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Staff – website, email, meeting, text, telephone calls Parents – text, website Keep all staff and people involved up to date Ensure that Trust Business Manager and Chair of Governors are kept fully informed and updated on ongoing situation. 	Executive Headteacher, assisted by Head of School, Business Manager and other members of SLT		
2.4	Review welfare support for students, parents and staff	Refer to Staffordshire County Council 'Coping with a Crisis at School' document, as appropriate (Appendix F)	Head of School, assisted by other members of SLT		
2.5	Complete and maintain appropriate documentation	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Incident Notification Sheet; Incident Log Sheet. 	Business Manager		
2.6	Establish media communication	Pass to Executive Headteacher, who, as appropriate, liaises with County Council's Incident Management Team, or Corporate Communications Team, as soon as possible.	Executive Headteacher acts as point of contact for media enquiries, and for work with police and Staffs County Corporate Communications Team.		

STAGE 2 – FIRST 24 HOURS

Serial	Action	Contacts / Comments	Person / Group Responsible	Date / Time Completed	Initials
2.7	Establish priorities for salvage	Notify emergency services (records, registers, valuable equipment)	School's Incident Management Team		
2.8	Make alternative arrangements for examination groups, as appropriate	County Council's Incident Management Team can provide support, through liaison with Executive Headteacher	School's Incident Management Team		
2.9	Record financial expenditure	SSMAT is insured through the Governments Risk Protection Arrangement (RPA) insurance. Any expenditure incurred needs to be communicated to Executive Headteacher and Trust Business Manager.	Business Manager		
2.10	ONGOING INCIDENT CHECKLIST – STAFF				
2.10.1	Hold staff briefing session. as soon as possible	Refer to Staffordshire County Council's 'Coping with a Crisis at School' document, (Appendix F), where incident involves death, or serious injury, of member of school community	Executive Headteacher		
2.10.2	Ensure that all Health and Safety risks have been identified and are being managed	County Council's Health & Safety Team – Dean Willetts (Tel: 01785 355777 Mobile: 07773 791499 dean.willetts@staffordshire.gov.uk)	Executive Headteacher		
2.10.3	Communications	Provide written information regarding the incident and how it will affect the school. This should also be sent to the Executive Headteacher and Trust Business Manager.	School's Incident Management Team		
2.10.4	Consider rotas and timetables	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Consider staff rota / shift system Consider student timetables (and any exam issues) 	Head of School		
2.10.5	Allocate staff, at set locations, to meet students returning to school		Head of School		

STAGE 2 – FIRST 24 HOURS

Serial	Action	Contacts / Comments	Person / Group Responsible	Date / Time Completed	Initials
2.11	ONGOING INCIDENT CHECKLIST – PREMISES				
2.11.1	Premises checklist	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Obtain building plans • Walk through buildings and mark on plans areas affected by incident • Note any relevant amendments (obstacles, toilets, fire escapes etc) • Communicate to staff and students 	School's Incident Management Team / Business Manager / Site Team		
2.11.2	Reallocate space	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Consider parking arrangements • Consider students' congregation areas 	School's Incident Management Team		
2.11.3	Review other relevant procedures	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Site security • Health and Safety • Fire prevention 	School's Incident Management Team		
2.11.4	Review lettings and joint use arrangements	Discuss changes	Business Manager		
2.12	ONGOING INCIDENT CHECKLIST – STUDENTS				
2.12.1	Notification	<p>Hold assembly to pass on factual information and, as appropriate, maps and timetables.</p> <p>Refer to Staffordshire County Council's 'Coping with a Crisis at School' document (Appendix F), where incident involves death, or serious injury, of member of school community)</p>	Executive Headteacher		

STAGE 2 – FIRST 24 HOURS

Serial	Action	Contacts / Comments	Person / Group Responsible	Date / Time Completed	Initials
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2.13 ONGOING INCIDENT CHECKLIST – PARENTS/GUARDIANS					
2.13.1	Hold meetings with parents / guardians	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Issue information sheets • Issued letters • Update website, Twitter, Facebook Refer to Staffordshire County Council's 'Coping with a Crisis at School' document (Appendix D), where incident involves death, or serious injury, of member of school community)	Senior Leadership Team		
2.13.2	Change the message on the school's answer-phone		Business Manager		
2.13.3	Place notices around the school perimeter		Business Manager		
2.13.4	Update information to school users and local community	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Students, staff, parents and governors • Communications plan, covering notice boards, newsletter, website, Twitter, Facebook, screens, reception points, etc. 	Head of School (following liaison with Executive Headteacher)		

STAGE 3 – 24 HOURS TO 2 WEEKS

Serial	Action	Contacts / Comments	Person / Group Responsible	Date / Time Completed	Initials
3.1	Review Stages 1 and 2		School's Incident Management Team		
3.2	Identify most urgent issues	Focus particularly on key educational needs.	School's Incident Management Team		
3.3	Identify useable facilities on site.	Where school is in need of temporary accommodation, contact: Portakabin, 43 Kings Street, Stoke on Trent, ST4 3LZ Telephone : 01782 747317 Email : stoke.hire@portakabin.com	School's Incident Management Team		
3.4	Review welfare support for students, parents and staff.	Refer to Staffordshire County Council's 'Coping with a Crisis at School' document (Appendix D), where incident involves death, or serious injury, of member of school community)	School's Incident Management Team		
3.5	Establish supply cover for teaching / non-teaching staff.	In consultation with the school's preferred suppliers	Senior Leadership Team		
3.6	Check / reschedule examination arrangements.	In consultation with the appropriate examination boards	Senior Leadership Team		
3.7	Update information to school users and local community.	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Students, staff, parents and governors; • Communications plan, covering notice boards, newsletter, website, Twitter, Facebook, screens, reception points, etc. 	Head of School (following liaison with Executive Headteacher)		
3.8	Formalise revised transport arrangements	In consultation with school's preferred suppliers	Senior Leadership Team / Business Manager		
3.9	Review services / deliveries to site	In consultation with school's preferred suppliers: catering, cleaning, grounds, resources etc.	Senior Leadership Team / Business Manager		

STAGE 3 – 24 HOURS TO 2 WEEKS

Serial	Action	Contacts / Comments	Person / Group Responsible	Date / Time Completed	Initials
3.10	Prepare inventory to furnish alternative accommodation		Business Manager Site Team		
4.1	Once incident is nearing closure, and when circumstances permit, plan for 'stand down'	Consider phased process, acknowledging that certain activities may have to continue for some time, e.g. media relations and long term 'clean up'	Executive Headteacher		
4.3	Notify all contacted officers that incident is closed		Executive Headteacher		
4.4	Ensure that staff are accounted for		Executive Headteacher		
4.5	Arrange de-briefs for all staff involved, including members of Governing Body, as necessary	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Debrief as soon as possible • Further internal structured debrief within two weeks • Inter-agency structured debrief, as required 	School's Incident Management Team		
4.6	Complete, and retain, all documentation related to incident.	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Incident Notification Forms • Incident Log Sheets • Completed Action Cards • All other documentation relevant to the incident, including electronic records • Records of debriefs and lessons learned • Updated Business Continuity Plan, Evacuation Plan and Risk Register 	School's Incident Management Team		

EMERGENCY CONTACT NUMBERS

Service	Tel (Work)	Out of hours	Mobile(M)	Time & Date Contacted	Initials
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<i>Each school keeps its own version of this form. A central record of all forms is held by the Executive Headteacher and Trust Business Manager)</i>					
Executive Headteacher (Stuart Jones)	01543 687311	07889 650665	07889 650665		
Trust Business Manager (Sharon Thorp)	01543 687312	07889 650653	07889 650653		
Head of School (Nicola Mason)	01543 682286	07889 650663	07889 650663		
Deputy Headteacher (Jason Cain)	01543 682286	07889650648	07889650648		
Business Manager (Selina Morgan)	01543 682286	07718 482174	07718 482174		
Caretaker	01543 682286	07966 328818	07966 328818		
Chair of Local Governing Body (Di Evans)	01543 685447	07813 151672	07813 151672		
<i>Other relevant staff:</i>					
<i>Neighbouring schools:</i>					

EMERGENCY CONTACT NUMBERS

Service	Tel (Work)	Out of hours	Mobile(M)	Time & Date Contacted	Initials
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<i>Other alternative premises:</i>					
Emergency Services:	999 / 112				
Staffordshire Police Area Control Room	08453 30 20 10	0300 123 44 55			
Staffordshire Fire & Rescue Service	08451 22 11 55	08451 21 33 22			
West Midlands Ambulance Service	01785 237455				

EMERGENCY CONTACT NUMBERS					
Service	Tel (Work)	Out of hours	Mobile(M)	Time & Date Contacted	Initials

Staffordshire County Council:					
• Director On-Call	Page the Director On Call on 07623 910065 Leave your name, contact number & any relevant short message.				
<p><i>[In the unlikely event that the SCC Director On Call does not get back to you within a reasonable time period, then contact should be made with the Staffordshire Civil Contingencies Unit's Duty Officer. This can be done by calling 08451 213322. This number will put you through to Fire Control. Please ask Fire Control to page the CCU Duty Officer, leaving an appropriate message].</i></p> <p><i>N.B. The above numbers are not public numbers and should only be used in an emergency.</i></p>					
• County Improvement Manager (Tim Moss)	01785 277963	07805 692129			
• County Manager Educational Psychology Service (Julia Anderson)	01785 278964				
• Corporate Communications	01785 895050				
• Corporate Health & Safety	01785 355777	07773 791499			

APPENDIX C – INCIDENT NOTIFICATION AND INCIDENT LOG SHEETS

Stephen Sutton Multi Academy Trust INCIDENT NOTIFICATION SHEET					
1) CALL RECEIVED BY:		EMERGENCY SERVICES INCIDENT NUMBER:			
2) CALL RECEIVED FROM:					
3) DATE:			4) TIME:		
5) WHAT HAS HAPPENED?					
6) LOCATION:					
7) GRID REF:					
8) SERVICES INVOLVED:		FIRE >>>>	POLICE >>>>	AMBULANCE >>>>	
OTHERS:					
9) WHAT IS REQUESTED?					
10) SPECIALIST ADVICE REQUIRED:					
11) WHO IS OUR CONTACT POINT?			NAME:		
			TEL NO:		
12) ANY OTHER INFORMATION:					

Coping with a Crisis at School

Advice and Guidance for Head of Schools, Teachers and Governing Bodies
Educational Psychology Service, March 2015

1. Introduction

There are two documents that give schools guidance when they are coping with a crisis.

- Schools Business Continuity Plan
- Coping with a Crisis at School

The following paragraphs outline which of the two documents would be the most appropriate to use in the circumstances.

Where an incident threatens, or continues to threaten, personnel, premises or the operational structure of the school and requires special measures to be taken to restore a normal service, the school would be advised to use the 'Schools Business Continuity Plan' as a framework (rather than this document). Examples might be where the premises are affected or where there are multiple casualties. The 'Schools Business Continuity Plan' can be found at <https://www.staffordshire.gov.uk/secure/Schools/Health-and-Safety/Business-Continuity/Business-Continuity-Plan-Template-for-Schools.aspx>

If you are unable to locate the 'Schools Business Continuity Plan', and your crisis is of the nature above, contact 07623 910065 for the Director on Call. This will activate support from the County Council, including notifying all relevant people, who will attend the site as a matter of urgency, as necessary, including Health and Safety advisors and property consultants. In the unlikely event that contact cannot be made with the Director on Call, contact the Staffordshire Civil Contingencies Unit's Duty Officer. This can be done by calling 08451 213322. This number will put you through to Fire Control. Please ask Fire Control to page the CCU Duty Officer, leaving an appropriate message.

If your incident relates to the management of a death, or serious injury of a student or member of school staff, but does not threaten the wider functioning of the school, then 'Coping with a Crisis at School' provides the appropriate framework.

This 'Coping with a Crisis at School' document contains more detailed advice and guidance to support the 'Schools Business Continuity Plan', with particular reference to the needs of staff, pupils and parents. Issues concerning premises are not covered in this document.

If in doubt, use the 'Schools Business Continuity Plan', which includes references to this 'Coping with a Crisis at School' document.

2. Developing a Contingency Plan in advance

In the event of a critical incident, schools are better prepared if they have developed a contingency plan for future use. Information and guidance to support this are found in the Appendix to this document.

It is recommended that schools discuss and update their contingency plans on a regular basis (see recommendations in the 'Schools Business Continuity Plan'.

3. Coping with a crisis – needs of staff, students and parents

Where applicable, the corresponding reference numbers on the Schools Business Continuity Plan (SBCP) are cross-referenced.

A. IMMEDIATE ACTION:

(i) Obtain and collate information (SBCP 1.1)

When a crisis occurs, the first task is to obtain accurate information and to relay it to senior management within the school. In many cases, information will be widely available on social websites, although this may include inaccuracies and speculation. It is the school's role to work with the facts as they become known. Details may be unclear for many hours, but there is still a need to convey as much accurate information as possible.

(ii) Inform support contacts (SBCP 1:10, 1:11, 2:4, 2:5)

- Contact the County Improvement Manager for the school, who will, if required, inform the District Senior Educational Psychologist to initiate critical incident support.
- Contact the Corporate Communications Department (see Appendix for contact numbers).
- Inform the Chair of Governors and, if a faith school, the school religious leader.

(iii) Nominate and brief the school critical incident management team (BCP 2:2)

As soon as an incident is confirmed, the senior leadership team needs to meet to decide their strategies. This group should appoint a small team (e.g. the Head of School, Head of Pastoral Care and County Improvement Manager), relieve them of their duties, and allow them to manage the crisis over the next few hours.

(iv) Start the incident log (BCP1:4)

See the Appendix for the Staffordshire County Council log sheet.

(v) Identify an incident management room and dedicated phone line (BCP 2:2)

In the event of a tragedy, the school is likely be inundated with telephone calls. This means that people will need to staff the school phone line. Dealing with distressed and worried enquirers, especially when there is uncertainty or bad news, can be a stressful task.

Personnel answering the phones should keep notes and have them checked against appropriate records, so that there is certainty about who has phoned in and who still needs to be contacted.

Where there has been an accident outside the school, the party leader needs to have an emergency number on which to make contact with senior leaders back at school or at their homes. If possible, this should be different from the regular school number.

Senior school leaders can then also use this different line or mobile number to maintain contact with the Staffordshire LA staff. This will enable the school line to continue to be used for routine school business and for responding to the parents and press who are trying to phone in.

(vi) Consult the District Senior Educational Psychologist (BCP 1:10)

The Educational Psychology Service (EPS) offers support and advice to schools in such situations. It does not usually include working with individual students because, at this stage, students need to be supported by adults they already know and trust.

Different levels of support are available depending on the requirements of the school. Examples of the types of support available are:

- telephone discussion of the incident (which may include advice on the management of practical and emotional issues); and
- an EPS visit to the school to listen to immediate concerns and to support the school in planning its response.

Support for planning may include:

- a) advice on sharing information with the pupils;
- b) information about the development of the understanding of death;
- c) information about trauma; and
- d) contributing to the development and/or implementation of the school action plan, e.g. through providing input to a staff meeting

(vi) Contacting families whose children/next of kin are involved

The families of the young people involved in a tragedy will need full and accurate information. Parents need to be contacted promptly, but the speed will depend upon the nature and scale of the incident. This may be done in person or may have to be undertaken by telephone.

It is difficult, in this document, to give very specific advice on the best way to pass on distressing information, because the nature of crises vary. However, the following general suggestions will help to ensure that the information is passed on as effectively and sensitively as possible:

- a) Prepare a brief for the member of staff making the contact, perhaps suggesting that they rehearse the message first
- b) Take careful note of those parents who still need to be informed, so that those who already know are not contacted again
- c) Check that the parents are not left alone in distress, perhaps making suggestions for making contact with relatives or neighbours
- d) Give out useful phone numbers, either for support or for more information, e.g. the emergency disaster number or the hospital number

(vii) Inform teachers and support staff (BCP 2:3 2:10 2:12)

All staff should be informed as soon as possible, preferably at a specially convened staff meeting. It is essential that both teaching staff and ancillary staff share the same information, so that rumours do not start to circulate.

Some members of staff will need support and advice at this stage. This should be managed by the school's Incident Management Team (in consultation with the Educational Psychology Service).

(ix) Dealing with the media (BCP 2:8)

In a crisis, media relations are especially important. In most circumstances it is recommended that the Staffordshire Corporate Communications Department is contacted for advice (see Appendix for contact telephone numbers). One of the tasks of schools must be to protect children, parents and staff from the glare of publicity, particularly during the first week or so. While the media can help to inform the public responsibly, it can also be intrusive at times of stress and personal grief.

A senior person on the school staff, working alongside the County Improvement Manager (and the Corporate Communications Department, where appropriate), should be nominated as press officer to deal with the media. It is not advisable to permit press and television on to the school premises, nor to give them unsupervised access to staff or children.

APPENDIX D

All enquiries should be directed to, and through, the Corporate Communications Department, who will be able to advise on the appropriate information that can be shared with the press. They can also arrange briefing sessions with the press, where necessary. If the press are aware of these arrangements, they may be less inclined to crowd the school gates or try to interview individual pupils, staff or parents.

While factual information may be given to the press, the privacy of staff, young people and their families should be maintained. Students should only be interviewed with the explicit permission of their parents, or carers.

Members of staff dealing directly with families involved in the crisis should not be asked to take on the task of dealing with the press.

(x) Inform students (BCP 2:14)

Students should be told simply and clearly what has happened. It is recommended that this is done in the smallest groups possible, e.g. in classes, or tutor groups. Their questions should be answered as straightforwardly as possible. Staff who undertake this task should be asked to pass on facts only and never to speculate on the causes of the crisis, or its consequences. It may be helpful to prepare a fact sheet for staff to use. Where questions cannot be answered at the time, this should be acknowledged.

It is important to provide time for discussion and expression of emotion, which will need to be managed sensitively by the adult.

If a school is to close, children and parents should be told by the end of the school day, preferably at the same time as parents are told about the incident. Closure should, on the whole, be avoided.

(xi) Make arrangements for informing other parents (BCP2:3)

Wherever possible, parents of all the other children in the school, who may be affected, should be informed that the school community has experienced a crisis and that their child may be upset.

This might most easily be achieved through a letter sent home with the students. The advice of the Staffordshire Corporate Communications Department concerning the appropriate information to share with the press and others is likely to be helpful here too.

In some circumstances, it may be possible to consult the parents of the pupil or pupils affected.

The Educational Psychology Service will be able to provide example letters.

(xii) Maintain a normal routine

As far as possible, the school's normal routine should be followed. This is to ensure some security in the lives of the pupils at a time of crisis.

(xiii) Attendance at funerals or burials

People from differing backgrounds and religions have different burial rites: some may hold funerals within 24 hours of death. There is not always time, therefore, to prepare staff and students for attendance. In this case, a member of staff should swiftly make enquiries about the burial customs (e.g., whether, or not, flowers are in order and whether, or not, women and men and representatives from the school, including pupils, would be welcome).

B. MEDIUM TERM ACTION (1 – 3 DAYS):

(i) Organise update of information

Ensure that up-to-date information is provided to all those concerned, as appropriate.

(ii) Arrange opportunities for support

After a critical incident, staff and students may feel shocked and numb; many will feel a strong need to talk. The whole school is often involved, even though some sectors may be more affected than others.

Staff and students will need an opportunity to express their emotional reactions. Current research shows that the best people to provide support for the children and young people are the adults that the children and young people already know and trust.

At a time of crisis, there may be many offers of help from outside the school. It may be difficult to know when to say 'yes' and when to say 'no' and with whom to work. The Head of School has legal responsibility for what happens to the students in school. When the Head of School invites help and advice from professionals outside, this should be done by creating a partnership.

(iii) Develop a plan for responding to the feelings and reactions of the school community (BCP 2:6)

- Staff - After a crisis, staff need to know that it is natural to want to talk about the incident and to share their feelings. Many will need space and time to talk, before being able to focus on other things. A staff meeting could be organised to talk and to share responses.
- Pupils (BCP 3:4) - After a disaster, many pupils may need to talk about their experiences. Initially, adults should try to listen, even though it might be disruptive to the task in hand. After a few days, the young people should be encouraged to talk to a designated member of staff, although the young people themselves should obviously have some say in the choice of the listener. As always, it is important to observe and to **listen** to the child, or young person. Adults should try not to be too intrusive. On the other hand, experience has shown that children, or young people, will not talk about their innermost feelings, unless they are given strong signals that it is safe to do so. Opportunities for students to express their feelings need to be organised; some children may find it helpful to show their feelings through drawing and writing. Some children and young people may express their distress through challenging behaviour. For most students, continuing to follow the routine of the classroom provides some security in a time of great stress. For the small minority, who are not able to cope in the lessons, a room could be put aside for the students to go to - it might have drawing and writing materials available for the pupils to use. This room needs to be supervised by sensitive and responsive adults. It is important to ensure that staff supervising this room, and providing support for the students, receive the support they need too.

(iv) Ensure that high risk pupils and staff have been identified and are being monitored (BCP 3:4)

Some members of the community will be vulnerable because of their relationship to individuals who were involved in the crisis. Others may be reminded of incidents in their life that were similar, or have been very difficult to deal with. There is great variation in the way that children, young people and adults respond to crises. Some people, who one might predict would need support, may have good internal resources and/or support outside the school.

Check which students and staff likely to be most affected and provide support for individuals who identify themselves. If possible, ascertain the availability of support at home. Keep a record of individuals and regularly monitor how they are progressing.

C. LONG-TERM ACTION:

(i) 'Follow up' actions agreed

It is important that the school's Incident Management Team follows through all the actions agreed and clearly communicates how these are progressing to everyone in the school. This will give the community a good sense of security and support.

(ii) Ensure a return to school routines as soon as possible

This is essential to provide the security that students will need at this time. It does not mean that the expression of emotion is not allowed, but rather that it is contained by the clear frameworks within the school organisation.

Tragedies can bring people together. In some schools, the experience can be so profound that staff want to retain the sense of community that the event has generated. Schools should remember that the effects of a crisis can reverberate for several years.

It is important that new staff, and staff new to the children identified as vulnerable, are briefed on the most helpful way of continuing to offer support and regularly monitor how they are.

(iii) Identify appropriate support

Those school staff, who are identified as having responsibility for the monitoring of specific children and young people affected by the crisis, need to check that these children and young people are progressing.

Where there are concerns, the children and young people, if asked, may be able to identify the type of support in school that would be helpful to them. For example, some young children may need their teachers to encourage other children to play with them, where their original friendships have been affected by the crisis.

(iv) Organise long-term counselling, as necessary

Children and young people will need time to come to terms with the impact of the crisis. However, in time, most children and young people will make progress towards their normality before the crisis. Children and young people who are not starting to make this progress may need to be referred to specialist counsellors. If there is any doubt about particular individuals, then the schools' Educational Psychologist, or other outside support agencies, could be consulted.

Agencies that can provide this counselling are medical services, accessed through the local GPs, or charities such as those listed in the contact list at the end of the document. Counselling for school staff is also available through the Staffordshire Staff Counselling Service, also listed in the Appendix.

(v) Consider the issue of memorials and anniversaries

It is often helpful to mark the loss of members of the school community with a memorial service, together with a symbol, such as the planting of a tree or the purchasing of a special bench. The memorial service could include colleagues' and students' writing, poems and art and also, e.g. the individual's favourite hymns.

It is very important to liaise closely with the family/families to ensure that they are happy with the memorial arrangements and are included if they wish to be.

In the case of a death by suicide, it is recommended that the advice of the Educational Psychology Service is sought.

Anniversaries are often difficult times. It is better if decisions about how to treat anniversaries are made collectively, in good time, before the anniversary itself. These decisions could include: an annual memorial prize; the planning of a special garden that blooms at the appropriate time; a commemorative assembly; or a concert. Again, decisions need to take account of the wishes and feelings of the family/families.

4. Acknowledgements

This document is an amended version of the document 'Coping with a Crisis at School', written by Vincent McDonnell in July 1997. It was amended following consultation with Head of Schools in July 2001. In 2012-2013, it was updated to align with Staffordshire's document, 'Business Continuity Plan for Schools'. I am indebted to Julia Anderson (County Manager for Educational Psychology), Sally Williams (District Senior Educational Psychologist) and the Staffordshire Educational Psychology Service Critical Incident Lead EPS team for help with this task.

*Paula Hodson
District Senior Educational Psychologist
March 2013*

APPENDIX

WHO TO INFORM:

If your incident threatens personnel, premises or the operational structure of the school, and requires special measures to be taken to restore a normal service, the school would be advised to use the Business Continuity Plan as a framework instead.

If you are unable to locate the Business Continuity Plan and your crisis is of the nature above, contact 07624 314950 for the Director on Call. In the unlikely event that contact cannot be made with the Director on Call, contact the Staffordshire Civil Contingencies Unit’s Duty Officer. This can be done by calling 08451 213322. This number will put you through to Fire Control. Please ask Fire Control to page the CCU Duty Officer leaving an appropriate message.

For other incidents

1. IN OFFICE HOURS:

When a school experiences a crisis, they need to contact the Educational Psychology Service (and the Corporate Communications Department and the Director on Duty, if they feel this is appropriate).

2. OUT OF HOURS:

In serious situations, a school needs to inform the Corporate Communications Department (see number below).

The Corporate Communications Department will be able to advise the school regarding contact with the press issues, which may be urgent. The Corporate Communications Department will also contact the Director on Duty and the Educational Psychology Department, where this is felt to be appropriate

<i>During office hours, school to contact:</i>	
EPS County Manager:	Julia Anderson 01785 278964
Corporate Communications:	Gemma Styles 01785 27799
Media office/on-call press officer:	01785 895050

<i>Out of hours, in serious situations, school to contact:</i>	
Corporate Communications Team (who will contact others as appropriate)	Out of Office Hours: 01785 895050

APPENDIX D

Charity	Area of Work	Phone Numbers
<p>Child Death Helpline www.childdeathhelpline.org.uk</p>	<p>A service staffed by bereaved parental volunteers, with professional support, for all those affected by the death of a child</p>	<p>0800 282986 (Every evening, 7.00 pm to 10.00 pm, and week day mornings)</p>
<p>Winston's Wish www.winstonswish.org.uk</p>	<p>National Charity providing a helpline for anyone caring for a child coping with death or serious illness. Also provides individual child and family support, where the bereavement is through suicide, murder or manslaughter</p>	<p>08452 030405 Mon-Fri, 9.00 am to 5.00 pm</p>
<p>Cruse Bereavement Care www.cruse.org.uk</p> <p>Website for young people (12 years upwards) www.rd4u.org.uk</p>	<p>National charity providing a telephone helpline, a useful website and face to face support, where there is a local branch</p> <p>Young Person's Helpline</p> <p>Burton-on-Trent Branch offers support for children</p> <p>Lichfield Branch</p>	<p>0844 477 9400</p> <p>0808 808 1677</p> <p>01283 593167 (Tues and Wed 9.00am to 1.30pm)</p> <p>01543 433479 Thurs, 8.30am to 9.30am</p>
<p>Eclipse, Stafford</p>	<p>A child bereavement service, based in Stafford, that seeks to support children and young people, aged 5 to 18, usually in their school</p>	<p>01785 660800</p>
<p>Dove Service in Hanley, Stoke on Trent</p>	<p>For North Staffordshire, or people who can reach Hanley. For anyone affected by bereavement, significant loss, or a life-changing illness, at any time in their lives, The Dove Service is able to provide support for children and those with learning disabilities</p>	<p>01782 683155/ 01782 683153</p>
<p>Staffordshire Staff Counselling Service</p>		<p>01785 277400/1</p>

