



School Emergency Policy

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Review date: October 2024

Signed: _____ Chairperson schools governing body, on behalf of the governing body

Date: _____

**Signed: _____
Headteacher**

Distribution: Staff, governors, pupils, parents/carers, volunteers and visitors to the school

School Emergency Policy

This policy must be read in conjunction with the School Emergency Plan.

This policy should be read in conjunction with:

- Safeguarding policy
- COVID-19 Risk assessments
- Suite of risk assessments developed by the school

The content of this policy has been drawn up taking account of the Rhondda Cynon Taf County Borough Councils policy on Emergency Assistance and the information from the National Counter Terrorism Security Office (NaCTSO). The school emergency plan includes advice taken from the Nottingham County Council document - Coping with a School Emergency 2011.

All staff have received training on the PREVENT agenda and the use of the Respect and Resilience Self-Assessment Toolkit which forms part of the policy on Tackling Extremism.

The aim of a school emergency plan is to help staff respond swiftly and effectively to an emergency at school, during an off-site activity or an after-school activity.

Despite every effort incidents and emergency situations can happen and, in most cases, there are recognised school procedures in place to deal with them. However, it must be noted that on occasions, unusual or more major incidents can occur. In this instance the school management team has prepared plans specific to Ysgol Ty Coch Special School to deal with any emergency and to ensure that the relevant staff within the school are aware of the agreed procedures and plan.

The potential for a major emergency is low, however, the consequences for all involved could be substantial so the importance of a plan, and rehearsal of those arrangements, is essential.

Possible Hazards

In the context of school life emergencies, which by their very nature are beyond the usual accidents or incidents, may be categorised as major disasters or potential major disasters. Depending on the circumstances, they could pose both short-term difficulties and long-term problems for the school and its occupants. The identification and analysis of such potential hazards is therefore an essential first step towards preparing a school emergency plan.

Consideration of potential hazards needs to be wide ranging and the corresponding emergency management arrangements must be flexible. Some major hazards are

listed below. For each major hazard identified it is necessary to consider the scope of the threat, its effects and the counteracting measures.

Natural Disasters

The range of possibilities, perhaps precipitated by severe weather, is wide but needs to reflect that the school's area of interest stretches to the community from which its pupils are drawn. The school itself may not be directly affected. The Council's Emergency Planning Officer assists in identifying and quantifying the likely risks using historical authority records and advice from other agencies such as the Environment Agency and the Met Office.

Incidents Involving Death or Injury

This could involve a road traffic accident during a school trip, a death of pupil or staff or even one merely associated with a school because of the involvement of several pupils or staff.

Serious Damage to School Buildings

There are a number of possible causes ranging from fire, impact damage, structural failure or damage caused by severe weather conditions such as flooding.

Health Hazards

The range of possibilities is so great that forward planning is not practical but measures may be needed to put in place with health pandemics such as swine flu or major outbreaks of other illnesses such as meningitis, e-coli infection etc. In this case, advice would be taken from the Health and Safety Executive and Cwm Taf Health Board.

Industrial Incidents

There are no heavy industries within the localities, however the Tonteg site is close to light industries such as the Treforest Industrial Estate, where chemicals may be stored. It is also close to the local electrical substation. In addition, there may be unforeseen incidents due to atmospheric conditions e.g. a gas cloud

Malicious Intent

This may present itself in the form of a bomb threat, suspicious packages (left unattended) or an incident with aggressive people (who may be armed) outside the school or a visitor showing aggression. In these cases, depending on the circumstances, evacuation may need to occur or lockdown procedures may need to be followed.

COVID 19

Covid Guidance produced by the Welsh Government and Local Authority is followed at the school .

The Planning Process

Preparing for emergencies is an ongoing process which involves:

- Risk assessment
- Planning
- Training
- Exercising
- Reviewing

Links with Other Areas of Work

Many aspects of the emergency plan have some relation to other policies already held in the school.

- First aid arrangements
- Evacuation procedures
- Fire safety management procedures
- Educational visits policy
- Health and safety documentation
- PE
- Bereavement guidance

Some emergencies may affect the local community but not directly impact on the school e.g. if there was a bereavement. In such instances, it might be suitable to activate certain aspects of the plan (e.g. post incident support) to help those affected.

The emergency plan contains sensitive information so it is important to keep it secure. Copies are kept in reception in a locked cupboard and in the head teacher's office at the Tonteg site. A copy of the plan is kept locked in a cupboard in reception

at the Buarth y Capel site. The electronic version is held on the SMT drive and is password protected.

The plan is reviewed annually by the Health and Safety Committee of the Governing Body.

Potentially any member of staff could be notified of an emergency so it is important that all staff are aware of the plan and know where it is located.

Contact Details

The contact details of all staff are kept up to date on the Emergency Plan. Contact details are for staff across both sites. There are also contact details for the members of the governing body, Local Authority and emergency services.

Details of pupils are held in the black folder in the offices at the Tonteg and Buarth y Capel sites. In the case of an emergency these books are to be retrieved by reception staff and retained safely.

Activation of Plan

Throughout the response to an emergency, staff should maintain an incident log. When an incident occurs the priority is to safeguard those on site (i.e. pupils, staff, parents/ carers) and alert the emergency services if necessary. Following this, inform the Local Authority.

A log needs to be kept of the Notification of the Incident (Emergency Plan 2.1)

Grab Bags

Having the necessary resources available during the onset of an emergency can prove very beneficial to the response. Grab Bags are kept on each site in the entrance storage cupboard at the Tonteg site and in the reception at the Buarth y Capel site.

The grab bags contain:

- A first aid kit
- Torches
- Two-way radios
- Batteries
- A whistle

- A loud hailer
- High visibility tabards
- Blankets
- Sterile gloves
- Pens
- School Emergency Plan

School Emergency Management Team (SEMT)

A School Emergency Management Team (SEMT) should be established at the onset of an incident- people have already been identified on the School Emergency Plan and will work closely in conjunction with the head teacher for coordinating the response.

Employees who are not SEMT may have other roles in an emergency for example, those who are trained in first aid. In addition, staff will have a crucial role in responding to an emergency, reassuring the pupils and minimising disruption to the school routine. They may also be required to provide assistance in other ways such as accompanying pupils to hospital.

Where possible, staff and governors need to carry a means of identification with them when responding to an accident, as this may be required by members of the emergency services.

Emergencies During Educational Visits/Off-site Activities

Leaders of educational visits have a legal duty of care for people under their charge. The school uses the EVOLVE system and all staff have received training in applying this. Prior to an educational visit at least one member of staff is identified who may be contacted in the event of an emergency. A copy of the risk assessment is held in school along with the documentation related to the trip (e.g. a list of all attendees, contact details for the group and parents/ carers.) If the trip takes place outside of school hours, a copy of the risk assessment is held with the nominated person - the head teacher or deputy head teacher.

Initial Response, Ongoing Response, Recovery

Actions taken during the response to an emergency can have a direct impact on the recovery phase. When responding to an incident, staff should consider the long term implications of any decisions made.

Once the response to the incident has finished, all those who were initially notified of the incident should be informed and a recovery strategy should be initiated. This may involve remedial work to the property and support may be available from the Local

Authority (LA). In addition, post incident support may need to be given to the pupils and LA assistance may be sought.

The recovery phase may last for a significant period of time and may involve reconstruction work, formal enquiries or police investigations. This will require the co-operation and support of school staff, pupils and parents/ carers.

General Advice (To be read in conjunction with Emergency Plan 2.2)

Immediate Actions to Safeguard Pupils and Staff

Unless lockdown procedures are initiated the first and most important action to take, is to ensure that everyone is removed from the area of potential danger.

Everyone should assemble in one place at the evacuation point of the site and the names of those present should be checked against the class register. The staff will also be checked against the Fire Register and Visitors Register.

Many of those involved will be extremely distressed, so reassurance will be needed.

SEMT must be informed of the issue if this hasn't already occurred.

No actions should be taken which will put staff or pupils in unnecessary danger. The responsibility for rescue rests with the Fire Service.

Summoning Assistance

The emergency services - Police, Fire and Ambulance must be summoned as quickly as possible. Whoever makes the call must ensure that they have the following information available

- **Which emergency services are required**
- **Nature of the incident**
- **Exact location of the incident**
- **Number of casualties (if possible) and the nature of the injuries**
- **Hazards which may be encountered by the emergency services at the site**
- **Location and telephone number where the call is being made from**

Informing Parents / Carers/Local Authority

In the event of a major incident, the Police will establish a casualty bureau where all calls for information will be directed. If there are no fatalities or injuries the Police may ask staff to advise parents/carers of the situation/outcome. Where the incident is more serious and/or involves an investigation, the Police only will give advice.

The Media

The Police will usually coordinate the safety of the site, ensuring that rescue services carry out their work unhindered, whilst managing facilities that will enable the media to be provided with authoritative information and pictures. The Police will

usually set up a media operation base at or near the site. However, the school must be prepared to make a contribution, in providing information, reflecting its involvement, interest and concern.

As soon as practical, the following action should be taken:

- Liaise with the emergency services and LA over setting up a media centre
- Equip the centre with a telephone
- Identify and brief an authorised spokesperson
- Anyone speaking to the press should demonstrate concern and NOT panic
- Any media contact should be dealt with via the Council Press Officer. The school should liaise with the press office for advice before responding to media questions or making statements
- All information to be given to the press must first be shared with the emergency services
- Agree the timing of the press conference/ releases

The school needs to cooperate effectively with the media to ensure that the key objectives of:

- Showing that it is controlling the incident and doing all it can to minimise the consequences
- Set minds at rest as far as possible and counteract false information
- To establish itself as caring, responsible and competent, are met.

These objectives can be met by being as co-operative as possible. Any information given to the Police or directly to the media must be controlled, authoritative and consistent.

Press Statement

The head teacher and or Governors may see a benefit in producing their own press statement as soon as possible. It is advisable that any communication with the media is made known to the Council's Press Office and advice on its suitability for release sought. When agreed all press statements should be on headed paper and contain the following information:

- Date, number and time of issue
- School contact telephone number, name and address
- Subject heading
- Basic facts as confirmed
- The number of an enquiry bureau for next of kin
- Either "more" or "end " should appear at the end of the page

In major incidents the Police will establish a central casualty bureau. In this case, only the bureau will issue information to the press on this aspect of the emergency.

Appendices below are in collaboration with the appendices of the emergency plan.

Appendix 1 – Post Incident Support

The effects of a traumatic event upon a school, such as the serious injury or death of a pupil, can be profound and have long term significant effects.

After an incident there will be a continuing need to support pupils, parents/ carers and staff. It is important to ensure appropriate monitoring procedures are in place so any individuals who require assistance can be identified and supported. This could include those who:

- Were injured
- Were uninjured but at great risk
- Witnessed the event
- Are related to those involved
- Are friends of those involved
- Blame themselves
- Are being blamed by others
- Have previously suffered bereavement or loss
- Have witnessed a similar incident before.

People involved in the incident, whether directly or indirectly will be affected in different ways. This could include:

- Sleep disturbance
- Recurrent dreams
- Disturbing images and memories of the event
- Impairment of memory
- Feelings of guilt
- Feelings of detachment
- Avoidance of activities which recall the event

Affected individuals may also experience renewed grief on the anniversary of the incident or on other significant dates.

Staff will play an important role in supporting pupils as they recover from an incident but they should not be expected to perform a counselling role. If counselling support is needed, advice will be sought from Eye to Eye Counselling and from Educational Psychology Service.

The Educational Psychology Service offers:

- Immediate support during the first few days following a major incident
- Advice to staff about how to help
- Advice to head teachers and governors on a school response both in the short and longer term
- Information on normal grief reactions and the bereavement process
- Short term counselling of individual pupils and staff for up to one month
- Support for staff who are supporting pupils
- Longer term counselling of pupils and staff for up to seven months
- Identification of pupils and adults most likely to be affected
- Advice on referral to other agencies

Appendix 2 – Business Community

The aim of the Business Continuity Management is to ensure that critical services continue to be delivered during and after an incident.

Electronic Records

Electronic copies of records are backed up remotely by the LA.

Appendix 3 – Site Information

Detailed information about the school site is important for the personnel involved in the response to an incident, particularly the emergency services.

Detailed maps of both sites are kept in the reception area at YTC and BYC.

Appendix 4 – Evacuation

Evacuation, shelter and lockdown procedures are particularly important sections of the plan as they outline the initial actions that should be taken to safeguard pupils, and staff, from both external and internal hazards.

All staff must be aware of these procedures as warning signals may need to be triggered immediately, before advising others of the threat. In other situations, the emergency services may alert the school to a potential hazard.

The emergency services will advise on the best course of action regarding evacuating or needing shelter.

There are different signals for:

- Evacuation- fire or bomb threat (fire alarm)
- Shelter procedures- Code Blue
- Lockdown procedures- Code Red

The purpose of an evacuation is to move people away from danger to a safe place. This is likely to involve withdrawal from a hazard within a specific part of the school building but in some instances could require evacuation for the whole site.

If the entire site has to be evacuated, pupils and staff may need to move from an initial assembly point to alternative premises.

Contact the LA for advice regarding moving to a place of safety at alternative premises.

Telephone numbers of the nearest pharmacy are held just in case emergency medication is required.

The pupil's updated medical needs records are to be retrieved by the school nurse prior to leaving the building.

Appendix 5 – Shelter

Some emergencies may require staff and pupils to shelter within the school; building. If this is an environmental hazard (such as a smoke plume) employees must ensure that all doors and windows are closed and ventilation/air circulation systems are switched off. A signal of Code Blue will be activated. Those classes with no access to the tannoy will be contacted by telephone

All staff will have an important role to play in reassuring pupils and alleviating concerns which parents/ carers may have.

Depending on the nature of the incident it can be difficult for the emergency services to provide an accurate estimation of how long it will be necessary to shelter for. Every effort should be made to enable pupils to return home but only as long as it is safe to do so.

In very rare cases pupils and staff may become stranded at school. Pupils with medical needs would be assessed by the school nurse if they were to remain at

school for an extended period of time or even in extreme circumstances may need to shelter overnight.

Appendix 6- Lockdown

The purpose of a lockdown is to prevent an intruder from causing harm to pupils and staff. Entrances to the school must be secured in an effort to prevent the intruder from entering the premises and staff and pupils must find a suitable place to protect themselves.

In the incident of a lockdown, all doors are electronically secure, preventing access. Staff and pupils are to move away from windows and doors which lead onto the front part or any other external part of the school. If there are blinds/ curtains these should be closed.

The signal for a lockdown is clearly distinguishable from that of an evacuation and will be signalled as a Code Red over the tannoy or loudhailer. Classes will also be telephoned as this is the most efficient way to communicate. The Post 16 department at the Tonteg site would be telephoned to ensure they comply with the signal and staff who are in the sensory garden will be telephoned.

Staff who are on school educational visits or in college will be telephoned to ensure they know not to return to the site until they have been given further notice.

If pupils are outside when the signal for lockdown is sounded, staff will take pupils to the nearest building or part of the school which is secure.

During a lockdown it is important to keep in communication – class phones may be used or email/ mobile/ sms message if it is safe to do so.

Although it is very unlikely that the school will ever need to implement a real lockdown, it is essential for staff to remain calm and reassure the pupils in order to reduce widespread confusion and panic.

Appendix 7- Closing the School

Schools are expected to remain open in all but the most extreme circumstances as disruption to the school routine can have a detrimental effect on pupils' education. The decision to close the school will be taken by the Headteacher in collaboration with the Chair of Governors. In this event, the head teacher will inform the LA.

Occasionally the LA may also recommend this course of action.

Parents and carers will be notified of the school closure at the earliest opportunity- through Parent-mail and the website.

In some instances, it may be possible for the school to remain partially operational.

Appendix 8- Communications

If there is an emergency the answer phone message will be updated regularly with information for parents.

Parents/ carers of pupils or emergency contacts for staff, who have been directly affected by the incident will be telephoned, particularly if there has been an injury.

A log of communications must also be maintained.

Appendix 9 -Bomb Threats

Although bomb threats usually turn out to be hoaxes, they must always be taken seriously. All staff need to be aware of the actions to take if they receive a call from someone claiming to have information about a bomb and the procedure to be followed can be found in Appendix 9 of the Emergency Plan.

Bomb threats can come from a variety of sources, from people known to the school or strangers. A threat is more likely to be real if:

- A code word is used that is known to the police
- The police are aware of potential terrorist activity in the area
- The threat is specific rather than general
- The threat is credible

The threat level indicating the likelihood of a terrorist attack in the UK is currently rated as substantial (September 2022). This means an attack is likely. Staff have received training regarding the PREVENT agenda and are aware of the threat level. Prevent training is mandatory at the school. It is referred to in the safeguarding Level 1 training which is delivered annually.

Training is also found on Supporting People Vulnerable to Radicalisation Service <https://www.support-people-vulnerable-to-radicalisation.service.gov.uk/portal#awareness-course>. There are three parts to this training, all staff receive the training on Prevent, staff trained at Level 3 have training on referrals.

Whilst staff will not assess the accuracy or validity of a threat, employees will record as much detail as possible in order to provide information to the police.

Even if the call is a hoax, it must be reported to police as it is a crime. Follow police advice regarding evacuation following a bomb hoax and be aware about using the tannoy or mobile phone.

Appendix 10 –Suspicious Packages

In most cases a suspicious package turns out to be a hoax or a genuine mistake. Nevertheless, all appropriate precautions must be taken if such a package is

received. Any members of staff who handle school post are aware of procedures relating to suspicious packages and will follow Appendix 10 of the Emergency Plan.

Appendix 11 –Log Keeping Guidelines

In an emergency, events can occur very rapidly and it is vital to keep an accurate record of events.

Whenever an emergency response is required, an incident log will be maintained. Within this log, staff will record decisions made, actions taken, significant conversations and any other information which may be required.

Any emergency affecting the school may become the subject of a detailed enquiry, therefore accurate written records must be kept and no piece of information related to the response mislaid. Information related to the incident must be copied, retained and archived for future reference. In addition, records of expenditure relating to the response must be kept.

Training and Exercise

It is important that staff and governors are aware of the emergency plan and their roles when responding to an incident.

Training events are held which provide an opportunity for staff to become aware of emergency procedures and discuss any queries or concerns they may have.

Members of the School Emergency Management Team will be provided with more specific training and exercises.

The purpose of an exercise is to validate procedures documented within an emergency plan. Although they cannot fully replicate the pressure of a real incident, exercise can help to reinforce training, give confidence to staff that they have the necessary knowledge and skills to respond to an emergency.

Exercises may involve discussion-based exercises such as how the school would respond to a particular scenario. Staff will be provided the opportunity to talk about their roles and discuss what actions the school would take if an incident were to occur. This would develop greater awareness of the plan.

In addition to this members of the SEMT may take part in table top exercises, where a simulation of response to an incident is given.

Following the exercise, there must be a debriefing. This may result in the Emergency Plan being reviewed or extra training being given.

Reviewing the Plan

The plan needs to be reviewed annually, particularly with respect to ensuring accuracy regarding personnel and telephone numbers.

Health and Safety

The school follows the recommendations detailed in the Local Authority's Health and Safety Policy.

Any specific issues relating to Health and Safety must be brought to the attention of the Head teacher and the Health and Safety Officer.

Safeguarding

Safeguarding of pupils is given paramount importance. The school understands its duty to keep learners safe and adheres to the PREVENT agenda and broader safeguarding guidelines.

Staff Development

Staff will have access to in-service training as and when appropriate. This is in accordance with the school's policy for staff development.

The Role of the Head teacher

- To monitor Evolve risk assessments
- To discuss future developments for managing health and safety within the workplace
- To hold SEMT team meetings to discuss the policy
- To ensure budget provision for resources and materials
- To ensure budget provision for staff training.

Links to Other Policies and Guidance

This policy should be read in conjunction with the following:

- Safeguarding Policy
- Strategic Equality Plan
- Positive Behaviour Management Policy
- E-Safety Policy
- ESTYN Safeguarding Self-Assessment
- School Emergency Plan
- Visitors and External Speakers Policy
- Cwmtaf Safeguarding Board Immediate Response Protocol
- Social Services and Well-being (Wales) Act 2014
- Respect and resilience – developing community cohesion Self-Assessment Tool 2016 Welsh Government document (appended with this policy)
- Management of Health and Safety in the Workplace