Emergency Response and Crisis Management: Action Plan

The Emergency Action Plan is provided in order to assist students, agents, hosts, parents and staff to understand what needs to be done in an emergency situation. An action plan in the event of any BLS centre being closed due to unforeseen circumstances, such as natural disasters, or those caused by man.

Responsibilities of Key staff

BLS office

- Updating the BLS website including information or contact details in case of an emergency
- Providing email and telephone responses with an update on the latest information
- Ensuring all student and group data is up to date and contact details are available for Emergency phone pack at the end of each week.
- Supporting the emergency phone nominated person in preparing the information pack.

Emergency Phone

- Contacting all current students and updating them on the nature of the emergency and how it affects the school (if classes are taking place or whether the building is safe to use)
- Maintaining communication with BLS staff on the ground (e.g. Activity Staff)
- Passing information of any students who are unaccounted for on to welfare team.
- Emergency phone – the designated person will be the central communication hub and will contact Principal in the event of an emergency or crisis. An emergency phone pack will be prepared and updated weekly and carried on person at all times for mobilisation of control centre if required.

Principal

- Coordination of emergency response and close cooperation with other key staff members
- Informing and updating other members of staff as the situation develops
- Ensuring the maintenance of a record of telephone numbers and email addresses of all members of staff to be contacted in the event of the emergency.
- Communication with media if and when appropriate.
- Keeping Director informed.

Director of Studies

- Contacting all academic staff and instructing them accordingly, considering aspects such as when to return to work, whether the school buildings are safe to use and can be accessed
- Cooperation with administrative staff to determine the well-being of existing students
- Maintaining a list of all teachers' contact details and providing updated copies to the Principal.

Welfare Team (Designated Safeguarding Lead and Deputies)

- Contacting agents and if possible the students' families and prospective students who may be affected by the emergency and keeping them informed.
- Contacting agents or emergency contacts of students who remain unaccounted for.

Accommodation

- Contacting host families about the emergency and how BLS is dealing with it
- Cooperation with administration and welfare to establish the well-being of our students
- Advising when it is safe to return to the school

Communication Channels: Staff, Agents, Students, Hosts and their Emergency Contacts

We attempt to keep staff updated on the status of the emergency and staff should check emails regularly for the latest information. Where there is a breakdown in communication staff should follow official advice on TV and radio regarding further procedures. At all times, staff should exercise discretion and not travel if they feel it is unsafe to do so.

Our students are typically far from home and BLS has a duty to keep their families fully informed about their welfare. Therefore, it is essential that accurate information about the emergency, and those affected, is passed on to agents and emergency contacts as early as possible. Those contacted should be informed of the nature of the emergency, how the students are affected and how to contact the school.

Emergency contact for students, agents and other concerned parties
School Emergency Email: ben@blsenglish.co.uk
Emergency Telephone: 07754526949

All key communications must be followed up with written email report for school records. Then to be saved on server for review and analysis.

Communication Guidelines

Clear communication is very important during an emergency. There are several methods of communication to be used: Recorded messages to phones or other devices, Email notifications, Sirens, Public announcements, Text messages, News and other media releases, Phone calls, Notifications in school

Notifications should be given in plain language.

Notifications to the neighbouring area: In the event that a school emergency can impact the wider community, BLS will partner with local public agencies to alert the surrounding areas.
In all life-threatening emergencies, BLS employees or students should dial the emergency number to notify local authorities.
Listed below are some of the local authorities that can be contacted in an emergency situation:

Emergency phone number 999
Emergency phone number 112
Local Council Emergency phone 01612 536 606

Additional Measures

First aid measures are put into practice any time it is required by the situation. First Aid staff present on trips, activities and at all three BLS centres.

In situations where the notification system includes evacuation or lockdown procedures, the staff are responsible for assisting students and other members in responding accordingly to the procedures.

Disaster/Critical Incident Plan

The aim of this plan is to assist the school in dealing with, however unlikely, a number of disasters that could affect the ability of the school to operate on a day to day basis.

The most likely scenarios in such an event are:

- Terrorist attack whilst visiting a city (or indeed in Bury St Edmunds)
- Loss of whole school premises for an extended period through fire or flood or Storm Damage.
- Partial loss of school premises, through fire, flood, Storm Damage i.e. loss of a classroom or Admin Offices.
- Large scale loss of property and equipment through fire, flood or theft, particularly IT equipment.
- Loss of information through a catastrophic IT failure.
- Mass unavailability of staff e.g. pandemic.
- Temporary Closure of School at Short notice (due to severe weather or loss of utilities etc.)

This Policy aims to demonstrate that all relevant considerations have been made and attempts to illustrate a potential way forward with regard to the school's own roles and responsibilities, particularly at a level where matters can be determined by the school itself.

In the event of ANY critical incident within school the following steps should be followed:
Step 1 – Continually assess the situation for the level of impact.
Step 2 - Ensure that staff, students, visitors and all other users are not in any imminent danger.
Step 3 - Dial 999, if appropriate
Step 4 - Call Principal for support

Step 5 - ensure that you:
Log all communications and actions as and when required as evidence.
Where possible, try to avoid closing the school and try to maintain normal routines.
Where Adverse Public Interest has arisen, the senior management team will take control and seek advice from English UK and or Federation of Small Businesses.

Staff and students should not discuss any incident with the media and any media representatives should be referred directly on to the senior management team.

Do not pass the Principal's mobile number to the media, parents or members of the public.

1. Terrorist Attack (see BLS Risk Assessment for visits to Towns and Cities)
Activity leaders / Teachers to encourage all group leaders and students to follow the Run, Hide, Tell procedure.
Pre-trip information – team lists and student details to be carried.
All members of the trip to remain vigilant at all times and be aware of their surroundings.

WhatsApp groups for ease of communication if separated – may still work if voice calls don't.
Students must be reminded to carry their student cards with emergency BLS details.
Activity Leaders should try to keep the group together in any event.
If separated to contact the police.
The group leader should contact home as soon as possible to
Arrange the return transport only when the situation is deemed safe to do so.
Activate emergency plan as above. Set up a crisis centre at the school if necessary. Organise proactive counselling after any traumatic event.

2. Loss of whole school premises through fire or flood
This would probably involve the sourcing and fitting out of alternative temporary premises pending a re-build of the school. Should there be a need to evacuate the school site it is envisaged that following normal evacuation procedures Teachers would escort their students to one of the other BLS centres if space allowed.

3. Partial loss of school premises
This could be the loss of a single classroom or the School Office as a result of a fire or a burst pipe, flood etc. It is anticipated that this would put the area in question out of bounds for a considerable length of time but would not, on the whole, severely disrupt the day to day operation of the school. The senior management team would liaise with its Insurers, but would also anticipate assisting in establishing temporary accommodation or class room arrangements in the short term if required and where possible.

4. Large scale property loss, particularly IT equipment
A significant threat to the satisfactory operation of the school would be a large-scale loss of IT equipment, such as networking or Wi-Fi. Due to the layout and size of the school building it may be that certain areas would still be in use whilst some areas closed and if so maybe utilised in the short to medium term.

A partial loss only of equipment would be accommodated by a re-distribution of remaining resources and replacement systems would be arranged in liaison with the Insurers.

5. Loss of information through a catastrophic IT failure
Rather than the loss of actual equipment, this would involve the loss, or destruction, of the Serverand all the school data and information that is stored on it.

Backups
Backups are automatically performed on the network twice a day to a cloud. Staff are encouraged not to store essential data on their PCs and to back them up regularly with the server, or to store files within Google Drive.

6. Mass unavailability of staff (e.g. pandemic)
It is likely that in such a scenario the school may not be the only one affected. In the first instance advice will be available from the Principal in consultation with the local Health Protection Agency. Once advice had been obtained and passed on to parents as appropriate the School will then need to consider the opening/closing arrangements having regard to ensuring the safety of all students and existing staff, visitors, contractors on the premises.

In an effort to staff the school, the following procedures would be invoked:

- Existing Supply Staff used by school in the ordinary course of events.
- Recently retired staff still covered by DBS/safer recruitment requirements used as available.
- Other English UK East schools

It is recognised, however, that subject to the scale of the pandemic in the locality and the availability of staff from any of the above sources, it may not be possible to fully operate the school and at that point a decision would be taken by the Principal, in consultation with the Chair of Governors, whether to partially, or fully, close the school and for how long.
At all times the safety of both children and staff in school would be of paramount importance, although every effort would be made to keep the school open and functioning.

7. Closure of School at Short Notice (due to severe weather, loss of utilities, internal flooding etc.)

The School may decide that in the interests of safety it is appropriate to send students home early. The School may also be contacted by one or more operators suggesting that an early departure is advisable where severe weather or road access are perceived to be hazardous. These representations will need to be taken into account to determine the appropriate course of action. The priority of the school will be to inform Staff, Parents, Students and Agents in this order of any closure as soon as is possible.

School closure before start of the school day
The Principal, in liaison with the Director, makes decision to close the school. The host families, teachers and residential staff are informed of the decision to close the school.

School closure during the school day
In the event of the school needing to be closed during the school day, the office staff will contact the taxi companies and classes with contact parents/carers – this is to ensure that no child is released before consent has been given. The leadership team will assess which staff need to be sent home first (distance to travel, area of concern) whilst still providing adequate care for any students left on site, taking into account their medical needs and provisions. In extreme weather conditions the decision not to transport a pupil into school or the decision to collect a pupil early will be made by the host. They will coordinate with each other and inform the school of their decision.

Evacuation of school
The evacuation point is one of the alternative BLS centres. The fire meeting point would be used in the first instance. Contact numbers would be used from the emergency phone so that contact with the taxi companies and hosts can be made to start the sending home if students. Every reasonable attempt should be made to ensure the route to the fire evacuation point should be kept clear of ice/snow.

Calling an ambulance

- The ambulance should be called from the scene so that up-to-date information can be given to ambulance control
- Other students within the area should be calmly removed to another area of school
- The First Aider will attend to assess what support they can offer.
- A member of staff will meet and direct the ambulance into the carpark.

Minibus / Coach breakdown

- Driver to contact the breakdown giving details of location
- Staff on minibus to ensure safety of students at all times
- Notify the office – if at the end of the school day the office will contact hosts to warn them of delay
- Coach company to send replacement bus to collect students

KEY ADMINISTRATIVE TASKS
Certain administrative tasks need to be carried out in advance and list/contact details are regularly updated so that communication is speedy and effective in the event of a critical incident. In the event of an incident, the normal school business will also have to be dealt with at the same time as all of these tasks. A list of emergency contacts is available on the emergency phone.

Maintaining an up-to-date list of contact telephone numbers
Telephone numbers should be available for:

- Individual Students
- Group leaders
- Parents/guardians
- Hosts
- Staff members
- Transport

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