



## **APEX EDUCATION ALTERNATIVE PROVISION BUSINESS CONTINUITY POLICY**

Policy approved by: **Directors**

Date reviewed: **August 2024**

Next review date: **July 2027**

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### **1.Introduction**

A critical Incident is a sudden crisis or emergency involving the school (in or out of school hours) where the effectiveness of the provisions response is likely to have a significant impact on the community.

Parents trust our provision to keep their children safe and staff work hard to ensure that schools are generally a safe haven. However, education providers can find

themselves in the middle of a crisis with little or no warning – whether this be a natural disaster such as a fire or flood, an accident which leads to the death of a pupil or member of staff or even a violent incident that threatens the lives of a number of pupils and staff.

Thankfully serious incidents are rare but a serious incident can have a long-term impact on a educational community. Staff will always be at the forefront of any incident that occurs on, or near, our premises and need to know how to ensure the safety of pupils and themselves. Good crisis management can save lives, prevent a more minor incident escalating to become critical, protect pupils, staff and witnesses, protect property, protect against litigation, safeguard the reputation of the organisation and assist in any subsequent investigations.

## **2.Aim of the Business Continuity Management Plan**

The aim of the Business Continuity Management Plan is to ensure staff and pupils are properly protected and prepared, ensure confidence in Apex Education can be maintained and that normal education process can be restored as quickly as possible. It will enable us to provide a flexible response to:

- Respond to a disruptive incident (incident management)
- Maintain delivery of critical activities during an incident (business continuity)
- Return to 'business as usual' (recovery and resumption)

## **3.Plan Remit**

The following school functions are covered by this Plan:

- Teaching
- Administration
- Catering
- Out of hours clubs
- Trips & Journeys
- IT infrastructure
- Communication system

The plan does not provide a definitive list of actions needed to be taken during and adverse event affecting the continuity of service, however by having a plan, Apex Education are supported and more prepared in order to protect the staff and pupils and recover in an efficient and effective manner.

## **4. Preparing Staff are a Critical Incident**

In order to respond to serious and critical incidents effectively and appropriately, preparation is required. All staff must be trained on the content of the incident plan

and their specific responsibilities during an incident. An incident drill needs to be planned and carried out at least once during the academic year, including a school 'lock down', a test of site access, evacuation exercise etc. We will have an annual detailed plan for this that includes the practice of different scenarios. This will be communicated to staff and form part of the induction process.

## **5. Preparing Pupils for a Critical Incident**

Ensure that topics of loss, bereavement, risks/safety and change are covered in the curriculum. We have a clearly designed safety policy and the information will be given to all students during their induction. We will talk about these topics openly, and treat them as normal life events, so students are likely to find it easier to cope when a difficult or tragic incident occurs.

The Business Continuity Management Plan also needs to be communicated to pupils and parents to prepare everyone for a potential situation. Pupils need to be trained in how to respond in an incident situation. One of the best ways to teach them is through practice/drills: -

- Familiarise pupils with the incident plan and procedures. Remind pupils that it is unlikely we will need to activate the critical incident plan but by practicing it we can always be ready just in case.
- Periodically remind pupils of emergency signals and codes so incident situations will be less stressful.
- Remind pupils to remain calm and quiet. Although drills are serious, students should not be frightened.
- Pupils should be reminded that in a lock down situation they are to go to the nearest safe room/space.
- Remind pupils that Apex Education is one of the safest places for them to be. It is unlikely that an incident will occur at school but if it does you will be ready.

## **6. Circumstances**

The following are examples of incidences where the critical planning needs to be considered:

- Loss of key staff or skills e.g. above normal levels of absenteeism due to illness or other scenarios such as severe weather, transport disruption.
- Loss of critical systems e.g. ICT failure, theft, power outage.
- Denial of access, or damage to, facilities e.g. loss of a building through fire or flood or an external emergency with a cordon preventing access to the site.
- A deliberate act of violence or threat of violence such as the use of a knife or firearm, civil disturbances and terrorism.

- Pupils and staff being kept in the building for long periods of time, for example during a lock down.
- Total or significant IT/data loss or failure or theft of equipment.
- A pupil or staff member being taken hostage/missing person/absconder/an abduction.
- A fatality or a medical situation affecting large numbers of pupils or staff ( e.g. pandemic)
- Threat of terrorist action or a bomb hoax.
- The death of a pupil or member of staff through natural causes, accidents or criminal action.
- A transport-related accident involving pupils and/or members of staff / Death or injuries on journeys or excursions.

## **7.Escalation Checklist**

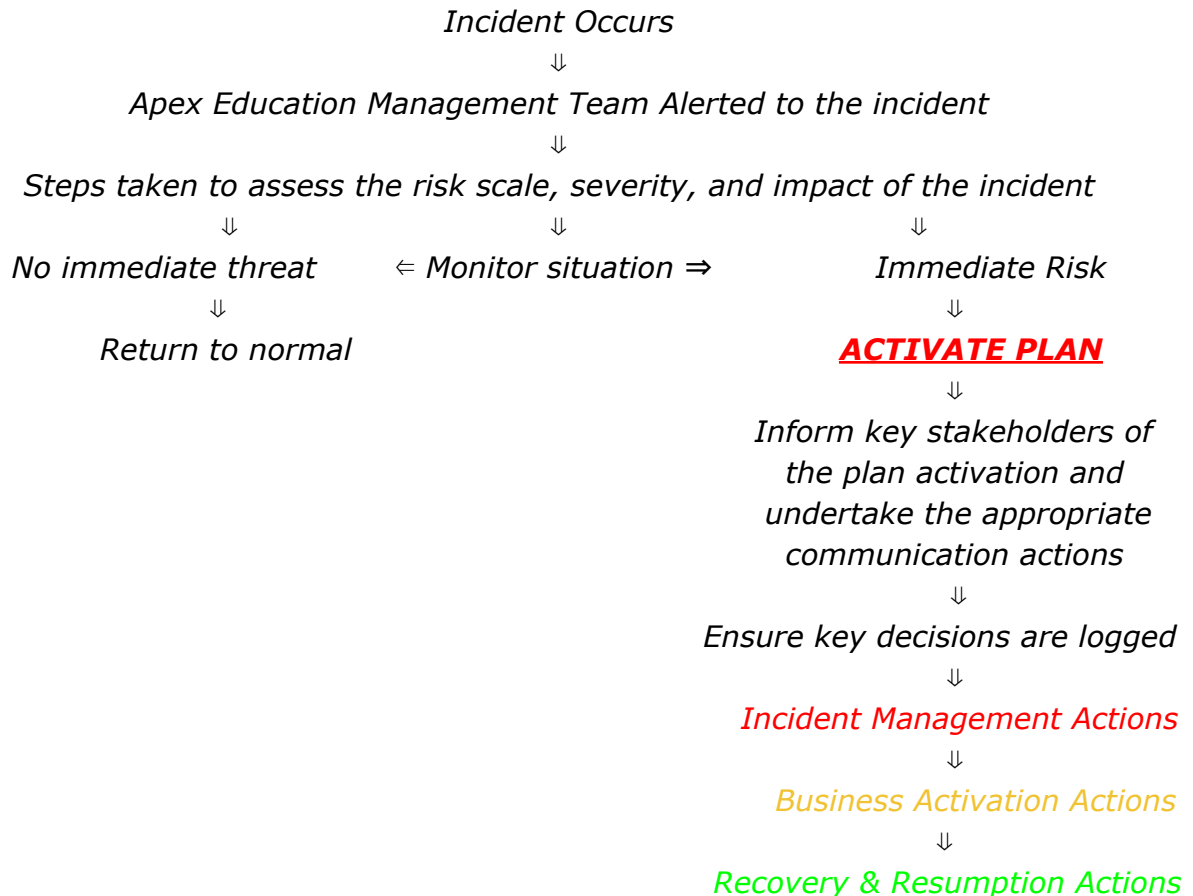
Apex Education boasts a well-defined Escalation Checklist that provides essential contact information and detailed guidance on effectively managing various situations, encompassing media reports, as well as ICT issues.

Business Continuity Plan checklist:

- Does the school have an incident management team?
- Has the management team establish roles and responsibilities?
- Has the emergency response plan been implemented after discussions with staff?
- Are the procedures established to ensure contact details are maintained and updated for:
  - 1.Parents / Carers
  - 2.Staff
  - 3.Pupils
  - 4.Directors
  5. Other relevant parties e.g. supply
- All the IT systems backed up daily and kept off-site?
- It is a copy of the asset register kept off-site?
- Is a fireproof safe use to relevant records?
- Do you have a site plan showing gas / electricity / water cut-off locations?
- Details of staff / pupils on educational visits and work experience known to relevant staff?
- Are there procedures for inclement weather and dealing with flooding in place?
- A risk assessment been undertaken and control measures implemented to reduce risks?

- Have precautions been taken to reduce the threat of arson?
- Does the site have suitable arrangements for out of hours emergencies?
- The school have an off-site evacuation contingency plan?
- Our arrangements in place to introduce counselling to pupils, staff, parents / carers as necessary?

## 8. Activation Plan



## 9. Incident Management

The responsibility to deal with any actions plan is to be done by the most senior member of staff present. This will often be a director.

Their responsibilities are as follows:

- Senior responsible owner of Business Continuity Management
- Ensuring Apex Education has capacity within its structure to respond to incidents
- Determining the overall response and recovery strategy
- Business Continuity Plan development

- Developing continuity arrangements and strategies e.g. alternative relocation site, use of temporary staff etc.
- Involving the community in the planning process as appropriate
- Plan testing and exercise
- Conducting 'debriefs' following an incident, test or exercise to identify lessons and ways in which the plan can be improved
- Training staff within the company on Business Continuity
- Embedding a culture of resilience within Apex Education, involving stakeholders as required
- Leading the companies initial and ongoing response to an incident
- Declaring that an 'incident' is taking place
- Activating the Business Continuity Plan
- Notifying relevant stakeholders of the incident, plan activation and ongoing response actions
- Providing direction and leadership for the whole Apex Education community
- Undertaking response and communication actions as agreed in the plan
- Prioritising the recovery of key activities disrupted by the incident ▪ Managing resource deployment
- Welfare of Pupils
- Staff welfare and employment issues

#### Response and Recovery-

- Ensuring that all key decisions and actions taken in relation to the incident are recorded accurately
- Collating information about the incident for dissemination in Press Statements
- Co-ordinating communication with key stakeholders as necessary.
- Undertaking duties as necessary to ensure site security and safety in an incident ▪ Liaison with the Incident Management to advise on any issues relating to the sites physical infrastructure
- Lead point of contact for any Contractors who may be involved in incident response
- Ensuring the resilience of the ICT infrastructure
- Liaison with ICT support / external providers
- develop proportionate risk responses
- Leading and reporting on the recovery process
- Identifying lessons as a result of the incident
- Ensures lessons are incorporated into the plan development
- Monitor, evaluate and ensure that the school Business Continuity Plan is fit for-purpose and continuity arrangements are robust and reliable

## **Purpose of the Incident Management Phase**

- Protect the safety and welfare of pupils, staff, visitors and the wider community
- Protect vital assets e.g. equipment, data, reputation
- Ensure urgent and necessary communication takes place
- Support the Business Continuity phase with appropriate support for recovery
- The list below is not an exhaustive list but a guide. Much of what individuals do will be instinctive and then should go and check the list for reassurances that all aspects have been covered

## **Incident Management Actions**

1. Make a quick initial assessment: Survey the scene, Assess (i.e. scale/severity, duration & impact), Disseminate information (to others)
2. Call the Emergency Services (as appropriate)
3. • Evacuate the building, if necessary, Consider whether it may be safer or better for the welfare of pupils to stay within the school premises and congregate at a relative place of safety indoors. If there is time and it is safe to do so, consider the recovery of vital assets/equipment to enable delivery of critical school activities
4. Ensure all Pupils, Staff and any Visitors report to the identified Assembly Point.
5. Check that all Pupils, Staff, Contractors and any Visitors have been evacuated from the building and are present.
6. Ensure appropriate access to site for Emergency Service vehicles
7. Establish a contact point for all supporting personnel
8. Use the Apex Education Incident Management Team to undertake specific emergency response roles
9. Ensure a log of key decisions and actions is started and maintained throughout the incident
10. Where appropriate, record names and details of any staff, contractors or visitors who may have been injured or affected by the incident as part of your incident record keeping
11. Take further steps to assess the impact of the incident Agree response / next steps
12. Log details of all items lost by Pupils, Staff, Visitors etc. as a result of the incident, if appropriate
13. If appropriate, arrange contact with Press.
14. Assess the key priorities for the remainder of the working day and take relevant action
15. Ensure Staff are kept informed about what is required of them
16. Ensure Parents/Carers are kept informed as appropriate to the circumstances of the incident. Parents/carers of those immediately affected by the incident

will require additional considerations to ensure information is accurate and up-to-date.

- 17.Ensure Directors are kept informed as appropriate to the circumstances of the incident
- 18.Communicate the interim arrangements for delivery of critical activities
- 19.Log all expenditure incurred as a result of the incident
- 20.Seek specific advice/ inform your Insurance Company as appropriate

## **10.Business Continuity**

### **Purpose of the Business Continuity Phase**

The purpose of the business continuity phase of your response is to ensure that critical activities are resumed as quickly as possible and/or continue to be delivered during the disruption. This may involve activation of one or more of your business continuity strategies to enable alternative ways of working. During an incident it is unlikely that you will have all of your resources available to you, it is therefore likely that some 'non-critical' activities may need to be suspended at this time.

### **Business Continuity Actions:**

1. Identify any other stakeholders required to be involved in the Business Continuity response
2. Evaluate the impact of the incident
3. Plan how critical activities will be maintained, utilising pre-identified or new business continuity strategies
4. Log all decisions and actions, including what you decide not to do and include your decision-making rationale
5. Log all financial expenditure incurred
6. Allocate specific roles as necessary
7. Secure resources to enable critical activities to continue/be recovered
8. Deliver appropriate communication actions as required

### **Business Continuity Strategies:**

- 1.Use of temporary staff e.g. Cover Supervisors, Supply Teachers, Office Staff etc.
- 2.Multi-skilling and cross-training to ensure staff are capable of undertaking different roles and responsibilities, this may involve identifying deputies, job shadowing, succession planning and handover periods for planned (already known) staff absence e.g. maternity leave
- 3.Using different ways of working to allow for reduced workforce, this may include: Larger class sizes (subject to adult and child ratios),Use of Teaching Assistants, Learning Support Assistants, Virtual Learning Environment opportunities, Pre-prepared educational materials that allow for independent learning, Team activities and sports to accommodate larger numbers of pupils at once



4. Suspending 'non-critical' activities and focusing on your priorities
5. Ensuring Staff management issues are considered i.e. managing attendance policies, job description flexibility and contractual requirements etc.

### **Arrangements to manage denial of access to your premises or loss of utilities**

1. Pre-agreed arrangements with other premises in the community e.g. church rooms or other
2. Remote Learning opportunities
3. Localising the incident e.g. isolating the problem and utilising different sites or areas
4. Off-site activities e.g. swimming, physical activities, trips decide which are necessary or not

### **Arrangements to manage loss of technology / telephony / data / power**

1. Back-ups of key data – daily, held off-site
2. Reverting to paper-based systems e.g. paper registers, whiteboards etc.
3. Flexible lesson plans
4. Emergency lighting

## **11. Recovery and Resumption**

### **Purpose of the Recovery and Resumption Phase**

The purpose of the recovery and resumption phase is to resume 'business as usual' working practises for us as quickly as possible. Where the impact of the incident is prolonged, 'normal' operations may need to be delivered under new circumstances e.g. from a different location

### **Recovery and Resumption Actions**

1. Agree and plan the actions required to enable recovery and resumption of normal working practises
2. Respond to any ongoing and long-term support needs of Staff and Pupils
3. Once recovery and resumption actions are complete, communicate the return to 'business as usual'
4. Carry out a 'debrief' of the incident with Staff (and possibly with Pupils). Complete a report to document opportunities for improvement and any lessons identified
5. Review this Continuity Plan in light of lessons learned from the incident and the response to it.