



BROCKHURST & MARLSTON HOUSE SCHOOLS
Including all of the Pre-Prep Department and Early Years
Foundation Stage



FORESEEABLE CRISIS POLICY

Brockhurst & Marlston House Schools (the School) is committed to providing the best possible care and education to its pupils, and to safeguarding and promoting the welfare of children and young people. This policy is written with that commitment in mind, and in accordance with KCSIE September 2024.

Reviewed: September 2024

Next Review: September 2026

CRITICAL INCIDENT – DEFINITION

In practice, a critical incident is any incident that threatens to de-stabilise the effective and viable operation of the School and may, for example, range from fire damage and extreme weather conditions to loss of communications and accusations of child abuse.

EMERGENCY PLAN – PURPOSE

To prepare governors, academic and support staff to deal with situations that are, or have the potential to become, critical incidents for the School.

PRIORITIES

- To minimise or eliminate any danger or risks to individuals
- To ensure that the school acts in a lawful manner
- To facilitate effective recovery
- To take reasonable steps to minimise any adverse publicity and to ensure all external enquiries are handled consistently by nominated personnel
- To rehearse the plan regularly to ensure it is effective at all times

PRINCIPLES

Alerting: it is necessary to contact as soon as possible all those who need to know and who are most able to help.

Communication: a central co-ordinating point and a full exchange of information between all concerned are of the greatest importance. Consideration should be given at an early stage to the nomination of an “Incident Centre”.

Consultation: careful examination of the situation and evidence must occur at the outset.

Inter-Agency Co-operation: all relevant external agencies should be contacted and their expertise utilised.

Provision of information: letters to parents and defensive press briefs should be prepared and used as necessary to give accurate information and to counter unhelpful speculation.

Protection of Material: if buildings have been damaged it may be necessary to decide speedily what most needs to be saved.

All Due Speed: handling of the emergency will clearly take priority over normal activity. Given that a large number of actions will be necessary, they must be carefully prioritised.

PREPARATION

The importance of Preparation

Good planning can reduce the likelihood of a catastrophic even occurring, or if one does occur, it can mitigate the seriousness of its effects. Planning is also a vital part of recovery, since without adequate records the school cannot re-establish its business.

Planning to Reduce the Risk

The following procedures should reduce the risk of a disaster occurring which threatens the physical structure of the school:

Action	Responsibility
Fire safety checks carried out at regular intervals	Bursar
Staff are instructed in the use of fire extinguishers	Bursar
Extinguishers are inspected and serviced regularly	Christopher Pettitt (fully qualified FIA)
Emergency evacuation procedures practised	Chief Fire Marshal Deputy Fire Marshal Head of Boarding Head of Early Years
Fire doors are kept closed. Except those fitted with door closing mechanisms.	All staff
Boilers and pipes are checked regularly for leaks	Directors, Headmaster, Estate workers, Bursar, Plumber
All departments that deal with potentially hazardous substances (Science, technology, maintenance etc.) carry out annual risk assessment.	Head of Science Head of Design Technology Bursar
Teachers responsible for trips, clubs or special activities complete risk assessments	Teacher/person responsible for the activity.

PLANNING TO MITIGATE THE DAMAGE

It is important to know exactly who is on site in the event of a disaster, particularly a fire, so that the emergency services can focus their rescue activities. The following precautions will enable the Crisis Management Team to fulfil their role and provide the emergency services with appropriate information.

Action	Responsibility
Register of pupils attending school each day to be kept in a quickly accessible location	Registrar
Lists of pupils to be updated when any change occurs	Registrar
Parents contact details and emergency numbers to be updated each half term	Registrar
Parents contact details and emergency numbers to be kept in a quickly accessible location	Registrar
List of all teachers, with telephone numbers to be kept and updated each half term	Registrar
Plans of the school to be kept in an easily accessible location	Bursar

OFF SITE ACTIVITIES

An injury, accident or other incident which takes place off site while pupils are in the care of the School can also have serious repercussions for the reputation of the School. In order to minimise the risk, a risk assessment form should be completed for every trip (Appendix 1).

PROPERTY DISASTERS

DEALING WITH THE INCIDENT

It is impossible to anticipate the proper response to every possible incident or disaster. However, certain principles apply in most crises:

- Clear leadership is needed
- All involved must know who is in charge, and follow that persons instructions. Debate may delay an urgently needed response. In a crisis, firm decision making is more important than assessing all the options and consulting about them.
- Saving a human life and health is more important than preserving property or reputaion
- Heroic gestures should not be encouraged or supported; leave dangerous situations to the professionals.

There will usually be a typical pattern. This will be along the following lines:

1. **DISASTER OCCURS**
2. **INITIAL RESPONSE**
3. **EMERGENCY ACTION**
4. **RECOVERY**
5. **BUSINESS AS USUAL**

INITIAL RESPONSE

On discovering an emergency situation, all members of staff should understand that they have the authority to call the police, fire service or ambulance service without requiring authorisation. However, in the first instance, in case of fire, it will be the responsibility of the CFM or, in their absence, the Deputy CFM. It is then the responsibility of the person who made the call to await the arrival of the emergency service and direct them to the location of the problem. That person should also contact the Headmaster, Bursar or another senior member staff who will convene with the Crisis Management Team (see below);

PHASES OF THE RESPONSE

The incident can thereafter be divided into three separate phases:

1. The emergency phase, when important actions are directed towards saving people and minimising damage to property;
2. The recovery phase, when the emphasis is on information management, restoring order, making emergency arrangements and salvage.
3. The return to “business as usual”, or to as near to that as can be achieved.

1. EMERGENCY PHASE

The Crisis Management Team (CMT)

The immediate role of the CMT is to take whatever action is required to deal with the emergency. The role of the team is to bring order, do whatever is needed to ensure the safety of those involved and, where possible, take steps to limit the damage.

Composition The core team will consist of:

- **Headmaster**
- **Deputy Heads**
- **Bursar**
- **Head of Compliance & Communications**
- **DSL**
- **Deputy DSL**

BASE

The CMT should be based as close to the emergency as possible, probably in the Headmasters office or if not possible the finance office.

Immediate responsibilities of the Crisis Management Team during the emergency phase:

2. RECOVERY MANAGEMENT

Action	Responsibility
Ensure that the emergency services have been called	Whoever discovers the disaster should
Evacuate buildings if appropriate	By activation of fire alarm
Immobilise utilities if necessary	First member of the CMT on the scene
Liaise with emergency services – ensure that site plans are available	First member of the CMT on the scene
Take a roll call to confirm evacuation	Follow normal fire drill procedures
Call in additional staff to undertake recovery phase	Headmaster/Deputy Heads/ Bursar
Decide the next step – possible School closure or sealing off area	Headmaster or most senior person present in consultation with
Keep off site people who are not required	Headmaster

When the immediate crisis and danger is over, attention will shift to the recovery. At this stage the CMT will need to be augmented by additional staff as appropriate.

Responsibilities of the CMT during the recovery phase;

At this stage, the CMT should take care to avoid making irrevocable decisions. This is the point where consultation starts to pay dividends.

Prepare a summary of what happened	Headmaster/Business Manager	This will need frequent review and revision
Inform Schools insurers	Bursar	
Maintain a log of events and communications	Bursar and other members of the CMT	
Retrieve data on parent and staff contact numbers	Head of HR and Administration team	
Identify immediate needs	Headmaster/ Bursar /CMT	Food, electricity, heating, lighting etc.
Have a prepared statement for the press	Headmaster	
Advise the media, especially local radio if the School is closed	Headmaster	
Contact staff and parents	Administration team under instruction from Headmaster	
Start to identify next steps	Crisis Management Team	What will be needed for the next 48 hours? This activity should only commence when all pupils and staff are safe and well supervised.

If recovery is going to take a long time, it may be prudent to split the team into two shifts.

Plan for the first 24hours after the disaster

It is helpful now to start building a plan to communicate this to those who will either action the plan or be affected by it;

OTHER CRISES

Incidents which do not threaten the Schools physical property can take many forms, examples of which are listed below:

- Serious accident to pupil or staff member – on or off site
- Outbreak of serious infectious disease
- Criminal offence (or alleged offence) by a pupil or staff member
- Inappropriate relationship between a pupil and a member of staff
- Fraud or impropriety on the part of staff
- Death or suicide of a pupil or member of staff

Many other potential crises can be imagined. In these situations there may not be a need to call the emergency services, but speed and clarity of response can reduce the damage done to the Schools

reputation and morale. It is just as important to set up the Crisis Management Team, though the members would need to be chosen to match the needs of the circumstances.

DEALING WITH THE INCIDENT

Responsibilities may vary depending on the location of the incident: whether it has taken place in or out of School; in the United Kingdom or overseas; in School time or holidays.

In the most foreseeable circumstances crises will be dealt with by the Directors, the Headmaster and Deputy Heads and during term time the CMT.

An incident involving injury or death to pupils will require the most careful and sensitive treatment. Once it is clear that nobody else is in immediate danger, it is important to think carefully about the communication strategy; statements, once made cannot be retracted. The importance of sensitivity in dealing with relatives, friends and colleagues of those most affected by the crises. The next of kin should always be given information before it is made available to the media; careful thought should be given as to who will speak to the relatives and whether they should do this in person, rather than over the telephone.

In the case of alleged criminal activity, scandal or impropriety, an important aspect of managing the situation may involve protecting the individual(s) concerned so that they can be dealt with, if appropriate, through the due process of the law. This may mean helping them to leave the premises and move to a suitable 'safe house'. The individual must be presumed innocent until found guilty by the legal process, so it is important that nothing is said or done which could interfere with his/her right to a fair trial; however, this does not mean that life must carry on as though these allegations had not been made, and it may well be necessary to reach an agreement with the person concerned that they will stay away from the School and/or not approach staff or pupils while events unfold.

GUIDANCE ON HANDLING THE MEDIA

When a disaster occurs, one of the most critical factors in making a successful recovery may be the way the public relations are handled. This is even more vital when the crisis takes the form of an accident or a scandal relating to staff or pupils, when the press can be expected to be highly intrusive and merciless in their investigations. Saying the wrong thing can have significant repercussions. There are certain principles which apply in all cases:

Staff should be told not to speak to the press themselves, but refer the the query to the Headmaster or one of the Directors. Nobody else should speak to the press.

The Headmaster, the Directors and members of the CMT will agree a consistent strategy for dealing with the press. The briefing notes should take into account the following:

- o Questions about normal policies should be anticipated
- o Do not get drawn into answering hypothetical questions
- o Do not admit liability
- o Do not attribute blame
- o Do not identify individuals involved until their next of kin have been informed
- o Only use facts which are absolutely certain, and avoid unnecessary detail
- o Never comment "off the record"
- o If giving a TV interview or posing for a press photographer, consider the background of any location shots – do not stand in front of the disaster scene.

- A holding statement should be cleared with the Directors and issued as quickly as possible, ideally within one hour. Routine enquiries should be answered by reference to the statement.
- The press statement should be reviewed at least once every day, and revised and reissued as required.
- Early consideration needs to be given as to whether to employ professional public relations advisors; if so, the sooner they are on board the better.
- Press should not be allowed on the premises, except by invitation
- Staff and pupils should be asked not to speak to the press, and to report to the Headmaster and incidents where they have been approached.
- Staff should be aware that members of the press will sometimes pretend to be an old pupil, a governor or a parent. (note we do not have governors). They should treat all enquiries with extreme caution.
- It is vital that any information given to the press is correct in factual content and approach with the line that has been given to parents and pupils. Any discrepancies will be quickly revealed and will reflect badly on the School.

GUIDANCE FOR STAFF HANDLING TELEPHONE CALLS

- Give your name as requested.
- Keep calm and listen carefully to the caller.
- Show that you understand their concerns and want to help them.
- Reassure the caller that the situation is under control.
- Do not in any circumstances admit liability or fault.
- Never criticise the School, any of its staff, or the way the crisis is being handled.
- Do not give out personal details relating to individuals without the authority of a senior manager.
- Never say anything 'off the record' or in 'confidence'.
- Do not become impatient or lose your temper.
- Only promise to call back if you are certain that you can do so.
- If a journalist or reporter calls, refer them to the press statement. If they have other queries, pass the call to the Headmaster.
- Be aware that journalists can masquerade as parents, former pupils or governors. Be very wary of intrusive questions and if in doubt, say you will call back. Check the number they give you, or ask for other details (e.g. confirmation of address) before providing information.
- Make a brief note of each call, logging the time, who called and what information was given

ACTIONS IN THE EVENT OF AN EMERGENCY ON A SCHOOL TRIP

A copy of the following guidance must be taken by all party leaders and their support staff.

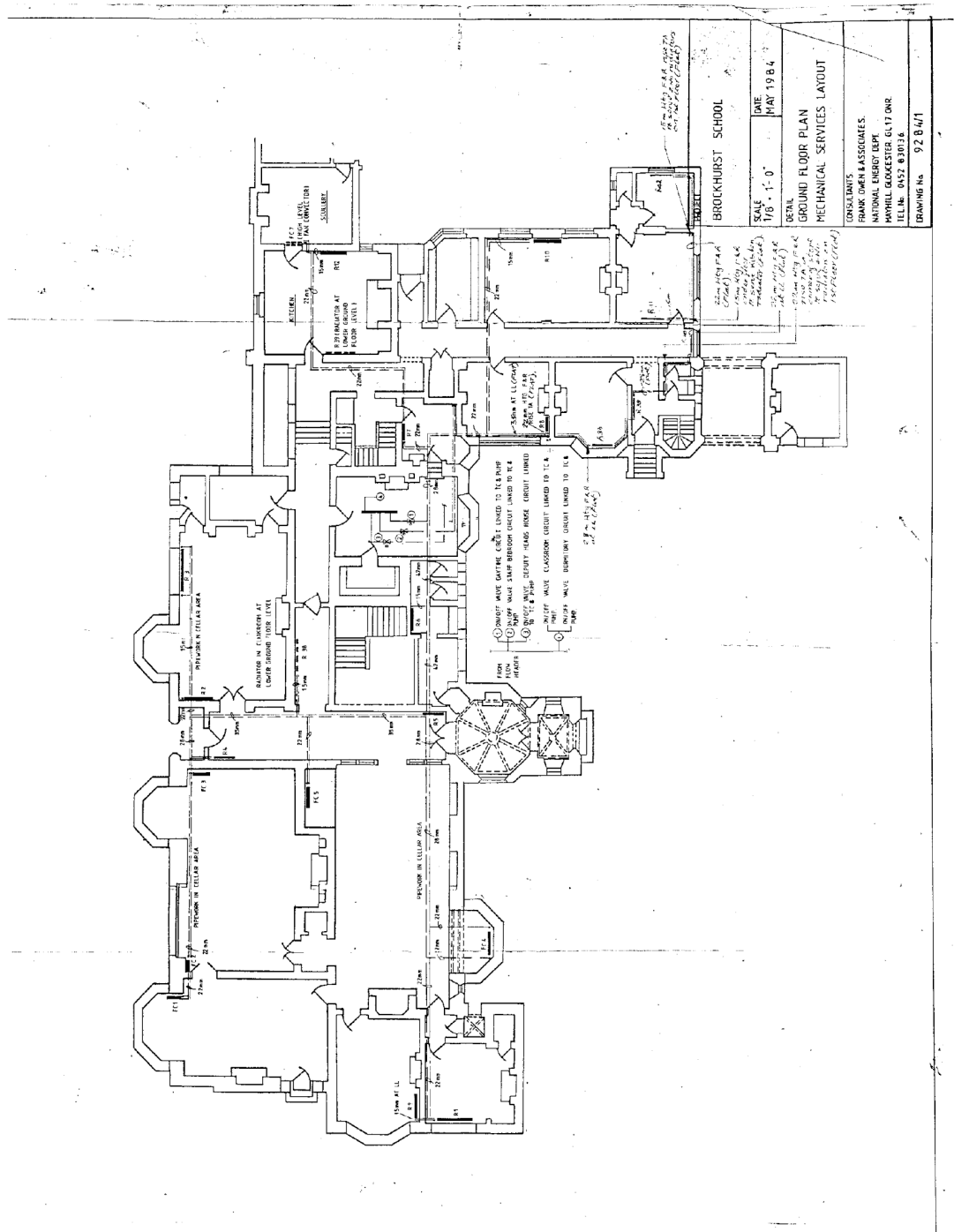
Guidance of Emergency Procedures

- Establish the nature and extent of the emergency.
- If there are injuries, establish their extent and administer first aid (if you have been trained or feel capable) – but be aware of consequences that might follow were you to give incorrect treatment.
- Telephone relevant emergency services.
- Establish the names of the injured and ensure that all members of the party are accounted for and safe.
- Advise other party staff of the incident and that emergency procedures are in operation.
- Ensure that an adult from the party accompanies casualties to hospital or if on your own you go with the injured pupil(s); the emergency services will look after the rest of the group until another member of staff arrives
- Arrange for one adult to remain at the incident site to liaise with emergency services until the incident is over and all the pupils are accounted for
- Control access to telephones until contact is made with the Headmaster, Head of Compliance & Communications or a member of the Reception team and until they have had time to contact those directly involved. Pass full details of the incident (name, nature, date and time of incident, location of incident, details of injuries, names and telephone numbers of those involved, action taken so far).
- Telephone numbers for future communication; identify alternate telephone numbers in case telephone lines become jammed.
- The School will arrange to contact the parents of those involved. In serious incidents, the parents of all the party members should be informed.

Media

- The Headmaster should act as the point of contact with the media to whom all involved should direct questions.
- Under no circumstances should the name of any casualty be divulged to the media.
- The party leader should write down as soon as practicable all relevant details. A record should be made of any witnesses. Any associated equipment should be kept in its original condition.
- Legal liability should not be discussed or admitted.
- All accident forms should be completed and insurers and HSE or LA inspectors should be contacted.
- Parents should be informed of any delays that will be necessitated.

PLANS OF THE SCHOOL – Mansion house ground floor



Appendix 1

ASSESSMENT RISKS FOR :

Assessment Date:

Signed:

Date:

Name of Assessor:

(J Wooldridge)

Location, hazards identified: possible harm or accident	Level of risk (high / medium/ low)	Likelihood of Risk (High/ medium/low)	Existing controls / precautions / procedures (i.e. risk control)	Risk control acceptable? (Yes / No)	Additional risk control required	Action/ review to be taken	Date completed / initials

Factors which should be considered when completing a risk assessment: The gender, age, abilities, behaviour and any special needs or disabilities of pupils – The nature of the activities in which they are engaged – The location, environment and conditions in which the activity will take place – The number, competencies and qualifications of available supervisors – The availability of first aid cover – Contingency arrangements for other incidents or emergencies – Travel , transport and accommodation arrangements.

Brockhurst, Marlston House, Ridge House Risk Assessment