Business Continuity and Emergency Planning Policy



Partnership Learning

Oxlow Bridge School

Approved by: Full Governing Body
Reviewed and evaluated: October 2026
Ratified by Governors: November 2026
Next Review date: October 2027

1. Introduction

Oxlow Bridge School is committed to ensuring the safety, wellbeing and continued education of all pupils during any disruption to normal school operations.

This Business Continuity and Emergency Planning Policy sets out how the school will respond to significant incidents that may affect the delivery of education, safeguarding arrangements, medical care, therapy provision or the operation of the school site.

The plan aims to minimise disruption and restore normal operations as quickly and safely as possible.

2. Purpose

The purpose of this plan is to:

- Protect pupils, staff and visitors.
- Maintain critical safeguarding functions.
- Ensure the continuation of education wherever reasonably possible.
- Minimise disruption to families.
- Protect school assets, information and resources.
- Establish clear roles and responsibilities during emergency situations.
- Support effective communication with stakeholders.

3. Scope

This plan may be activated in response to:

Premises and Site Emergencies

- Fire
- Flooding
- Severe weather
- Utility failure (electricity, water, gas, heating)
- Structural damage
- Site contamination
- Loss of access to the school site

Staffing Emergencies

- Significant staff shortages
- Pandemic or infectious disease outbreaks
- Industrial action

- Loss of key personnel

Safeguarding and Welfare Emergencies

- Serious safeguarding incidents
- Critical incidents affecting pupils, staff or families
- Death of a pupil, staff member or member of the school community

IT and Communications Failures

- ICT outages
- Cyber incidents
- Telephone failure
- Loss of internet access
- Data breaches

Transport Disruption

- School transport failure
- Severe travel disruption
- Fuel shortages

4. School Priorities During an Emergency

The school's priorities will always be:

Priority 1: Life, Safety and Welfare

- Protect pupils, staff and visitors from immediate harm.
- Ensure supervision levels remain safe.
- Meet medical, personal care and safeguarding needs.

Priority 2: Safeguarding

- Maintain safeguarding arrangements.
- Ensure Designated Safeguarding Leads remain available.
- Continue communication with external agencies where required.

Priority 3: Essential Operations

- Deliver education where possible.
- Maintain communication with families.
- Preserve critical records and information.

Priority 4: Restoration of Services

- Return to normal operations as soon as practical.
- Review lessons learned and strengthen future resilience.

5. Critical Functions

The following functions are considered essential and will be prioritised:

Safeguarding

- Designated Safeguarding Lead (DSL)
- Deputy DSLs
- Child protection procedures
- Contact with external agencies

Medical and Personal Care

- Administration of medication
- Emergency health care plans
- Feeding programmes
- Moving and handling procedures
- Continence and hygiene support

Pupil Supervision

- Appropriate staffing ratios
- Behaviour support
- Risk assessments

Communication

- Communication with families
- Communication with staff
- Communication with transport providers
- Communication with external professionals

6. Roles and Responsibilities

Headteacher

The Headteacher will:

- Lead the emergency response.
- Determine whether the Business Continuity Plan should be activated.

- Liaise with governors and the local authority.
- Coordinate communication with stakeholders.
- Make decisions regarding school closure or partial closure.

Senior Leadership Team

The Senior Leadership Team will:

- Support implementation of the plan.
- Coordinate operational responses.
- Monitor staffing and pupil safety.
- Ensure critical services continue.

Designated Safeguarding Lead

The DSL will:

- Maintain safeguarding arrangements.
- Liaise with external agencies.
- Monitor vulnerable pupils.
- Ensure safeguarding records remain secure and accessible.

Staff

All staff will:

- Follow emergency procedures.
- Report concerns immediately.
- Support pupil wellbeing and safety.
- Follow instructions from senior leaders.

7. Communication Procedures

In the event of disruption, communication may take place through:

- Telephone
- Email
- School website
- ClassDojo
- Local Authority communication channels

Communications will include:

- Nature of the incident.
- Impact on school operations.
- Expected arrangements.

- Guidance for families.
- Updates regarding reopening.

8. Severe Staffing Shortages

Where staffing levels fall below safe operational levels the school may:

- Redeploy staff across classes.
- Reduce non-essential activities.
- Prioritise pupils with the highest level of need.
- Suspend external visits.
- Implement temporary timetable changes.
- Close individual classes.
- Partially close the school.
- Close the school if safe staffing cannot be maintained.

All decisions will be based on risk assessment and the ability to meet pupils' care, medical and safeguarding needs safely.

9. Infectious Diseases and Public Health Emergencies

The school will:

- Follow guidance from Public Health authorities and the Local Authority.
- Implement infection prevention measures.
- Review visitor access where necessary.
- Consider temporary adjustments to curriculum delivery.
- Maintain communication with families.

Particular consideration will be given to:

- Clinically vulnerable pupils.
- Pupils requiring respiratory support.
- Pupils with complex medical conditions.

10. Loss of Utilities

Electricity Failure

The school will:

- Assess whether emergency lighting is available.
- Review the impact on medical and specialist equipment.
- Determine whether the building can remain open safely.

Water Failure

The school will assess:

- Drinking water availability.
- Toilet facilities.
- Hygiene requirements.
- Feeding and medical support requirements.

Heating Failure

The school will assess:

- Building temperature.
- Pupil vulnerability.
- Suitability of accommodation.

11. ICT and Data Systems Failure

The school will:

- Implement backup procedures where available.
- Notify relevant service providers.
- Maintain manual recording systems if necessary.
- Ensure safeguarding information remains accessible to designated personnel.
- Follow data protection procedures in the event of any data breach.

12. Alternative Accommodation

Where part or all of the school site becomes unavailable, the Headteacher will:

- Work with the Local Authority to identify suitable alternative accommodation.
- Prioritise continuity for pupils with the most complex needs.
- Assess accessibility, medical provision and safeguarding arrangements before use.

13. Educational Continuity

Where pupils are unable to attend school for an extended period, the school will consider:

- Remote learning activities appropriate to pupils' needs.
- Home learning resources.
- Therapeutic recommendations for families.
- Communication activities and sensory learning opportunities.
- Welfare checks for vulnerable pupils.

Any remote offer will be personalised and appropriate to pupils' developmental needs.

14. Recovery and Return to Normal Operations

Following significant disruption, the school will:

- Conduct a review of the incident.
- Identify strengths and areas for improvement.
- Update risk assessments where required.
- Provide support to affected pupils, families and staff.
- Amend this plan where necessary.

15. Linked Policies

This policy should be read alongside:

- Child Protection and Safeguarding Policy
- Health and Safety Policy
- Emergency Evacuation Procedures
- Critical Incident Policy
- Medical Needs Policy
- First Aid Policy
- ICT Acceptable Use Policy
- Data Protection Policy
- Accessibility Plan

Emergency Contact Structure

Strategic Lead: Headteacher

Operational Lead: Assistant Headteacher

Safeguarding Lead: DSL

Site Lead: Site Manager

Chair of Governors: Hermann Farrington