EMERGENCY MANAGEMENT AND BUSINESS CONTINUITY PLAN

Preparing effectively. Responding decisively. Recovering safely.



RIVERSIDE BRIDGE SCHOOL

INSPIRE, EMPOWER, ACHIEVE

This policy forms part of the Riverside Bridge School Policy Framework and should be read alongside any related policies, procedures and guidance.

RIVERSIDE BRIDGE SCHOOL
INSPIRE, EMPOWER, ACHIEVE

OUR COMMITMENT

At Riverside Bridge School, every policy reflects our commitment to creating a safe, inclusive and ambitious school community in which every pupil is valued, every voice matters and every family is respected and supported.

Our policies translate our values into consistent practice. They support high expectations, clear responsibilities, effective partnership and informed decision-making, ensuring that the needs, rights, wellbeing and future outcomes of our pupils remain at the heart of our work.

We work collaboratively, act with integrity and continually reflect upon and improve our practice to achieve the best possible outcomes for every pupil.

POLICY PRINCIPLES

Our Policy Principles underpin how we work together and guide the decisions and actions we take to support every pupil and their families.



POLICY PURPOSE & FRAMEWORK

Riverside Bridge School policies set out the expectations, responsibilities and approaches that support safe, consistent and high-quality practice across the school. They translate our values, statutory responsibilities and professional expectations into clear guidance for everyday decision-making and practice.

Each policy forms part of the Riverside Bridge School Policy Framework and should be read alongside any related policies, procedures, statutory guidance and school frameworks referenced within the document.

Policies apply to the members of the school community identified within each document, including staff, governors, parents and carers, volunteers, contractors and other professionals where relevant. Everyone is expected to understand and apply the requirements appropriate to their role and to seek further guidance where clarification is required.

CURRICULUM DRIVERS



Our Drivers provide a shared golden thread across curriculum, school life, policy and leadership, helping ensure that our decisions and practice remain focused on the experiences and futures we want for every pupil.

STATEMENT OF INTENT

This plan sets out Riverside Bridge School's approach to emergency management and business continuity. It establishes the principles, responsibilities and arrangements through which the school prepares for, responds to and recovers from emergencies or significant disruption while protecting life, maintaining safeguarding and sustaining critical educational and operational functions.

Riverside Bridge School is committed to maintaining effective arrangements that enable the school to respond promptly, safely and proportionately when normal operations are disrupted. Emergency preparedness forms an integral part of the school's wider safeguarding, health and safety, risk-management and organisational-resilience arrangements.

As a specialist school supporting pupils with complex special educational needs and disabilities, we recognise that emergencies can have a disproportionate impact on pupils who depend upon familiar people, predictable routines, specialist communication, healthcare, personal care, regulation support and adapted environments. Emergency planning must therefore consider not only physical safety, but also the continuity of the individual support that enables pupils to remain safe, understood and appropriately cared for during periods of uncertainty or disruption. The school will maintain clear leadership and decision-making arrangements, appropriate emergency procedures, access to essential information and resources, effective communication systems and proportionate business-continuity arrangements. Responses will be adapted according to the nature and scale of the incident, using dynamic risk assessment and professional judgement while maintaining safeguarding and the protection of life as overriding priorities.

Where disruption continues beyond the immediate emergency, the school will seek to maintain or restore critical functions as quickly as reasonably practicable. This includes safeguarding, essential healthcare, communication, leadership and coordination, safe premises and infrastructure, education and specialist SEND provision.

Our responsibilities to pupils

We will ensure that emergency arrangements take account of pupils' communication, sensory, physical, medical, mobility and regulation needs and any individual arrangements required to support their safety. Wherever reasonably practicable, familiar communication approaches, healthcare, personal care, regulation support and essential routines will be maintained or adapted to minimise distress and disruption.

We will ensure that pupils remain appropriately supervised, accounted for and safeguarded throughout any emergency or period of disruption. Decisions about evacuation, lockdown, shelter, relocation, closure or alternative provision will take account of individual needs as well as the wider safety of the school community.

Through these commitments, Riverside Bridge School aims to maintain an emergency-management culture that is prepared, coordinated and resilient while remaining responsive to the individual needs of our pupils. We will continue to strengthen preparedness through training, testing, partnership working, review and learning from incidents and exercises.

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APPROVED BY: Governing Board

APPROVED ON: September 2026

REVIEWED DUE ON: September 2027

Section 01

PURPOSE AND SCOPE

Defining priorities. Protecting people. Maintaining continuity.

The purpose of this Emergency Management and Business Continuity Plan is to establish a clear framework for responding to emergencies, managing significant incidents and maintaining the delivery of essential education and support services during periods of disruption.

The plan applies to all staff, pupils, governors, volunteers, contractors and visitors and covers incidents occurring on the school site, during educational visits, whilst travelling or during any activity undertaken on behalf of Riverside Bridge School.

The school recognises that emergencies can arise from a wide range of circumstances, including natural events, infrastructure failure, security incidents, public health concerns and critical safeguarding situations. Regardless of the cause, the school's priorities remain consistent:

- protecting life and ensuring the immediate safety of pupils, staff and visitors;
- maintaining effective safeguarding arrangements;
- supporting pupils' communication, regulation and wellbeing;
- preserving, where possible, the continuity of education and specialist provision;
- ensuring clear and timely communication with all relevant stakeholders;
- restoring normal operations safely, efficiently and with appropriate reflection and learning.

This plan distinguishes between emergency management, which focuses on the immediate response required to protect people and property during an incident, and business continuity, which focuses on maintaining or restoring the school's critical functions once the immediate danger has passed.

Recognising the complex needs of many pupils, the school will ensure that emergency responses remain proportionate, person-centred and responsive to individual communication, medical, mobility, sensory and regulation needs. Wherever reasonably practicable, arrangements will seek to minimise disruption to pupils' established routines and maintain the therapeutic and educational support upon which they rely.

This plan should be read alongside the school's Health and Safety Policy, Safeguarding and Child Protection Policy, Medical Needs, Medication and Allergy Safety Policy, Attendance Policy and other associated emergency procedures.

Section 02

LEGISLATIVE & PROFESSIONAL FRAMEWORK

Meeting duties. Applying guidance. Maintaining preparedness.

This Emergency Management and Business Continuity Plan has been developed with regard to relevant legislation, statutory guidance and recognised good practice relating to emergency preparedness, safeguarding, health and safety, education continuity and organisational resilience, statutory guidance and recognised good practice relating to emergency preparedness, safeguarding, health and safety, education continuity and organisational resilience.

The plan is informed by, but not limited to, the following legislation and guidance:

- Health and Safety at Work etc. Act 1974
- Management of Health and Safety at Work Regulations 1999
- Civil Contingencies Act 2004
- Education Act 2002
- Children Act 1989
- Children Act 2004
- Equality Act 2010
- Regulatory Reform (Fire Safety) Order 2005
- Reporting of Injuries, Diseases and Dangerous Occurrences Regulations (RIDDOR) 2013
- Keeping Children Safe in Education (current edition)
- Working Together to Safeguard Children (current edition)
- Department for Education guidance relating to emergency planning, school security, cyber security and business continuity
- UK Health Security Agency (UKHSA) guidance relating to infectious diseases and public health incidents
- Relevant Local Authority, Trust and emergency service guidance.

The school recognises that effective emergency management extends beyond statutory compliance. Planning must reflect the individual needs of pupils, the operational requirements of a specialist SEND environment and the need to maintain critical educational, therapeutic and safeguarding functions during periods of disruption.

Implementation of this plan is supported by the school's wider policies and procedures, including those relating to safeguarding, health and safety, medical needs, attendance, educational visits, information

governance and risk management. These documents collectively provide the framework through which the school prepares for, responds to and recovers from emergency situations.

The Governing Board and Headteacher will ensure that this plan is reviewed regularly to reflect changes in legislation, statutory guidance, local risk, organisational arrangements and lessons learnt from training exercises or actual incidents.

Section 03

DEFINITIONS

Clarifying terms. Distinguishing response. Supporting shared understanding.

For the purposes of this plan, the following definitions apply.

Emergency management

Emergency management refers to the immediate actions taken to protect life, health and safety following an incident that poses an actual or imminent risk to pupils, staff, visitors or the school environment. The priority during the emergency phase is to safeguard people, stabilise the situation and work with the emergency services and relevant agencies to manage the immediate impact of the incident.

Examples may include, but are not limited to:

- fire;
- gas leak;
- structural failure;
- flooding;
- serious medical emergency;
- security incident;
- missing pupil;
- severe weather;
- utilities failure requiring immediate protective action;
- any incident requiring evacuation, lockdown or shelter-in-place.

Business continuity

Business continuity refers to the arrangements implemented after the immediate emergency has been stabilised to ensure that Riverside Bridge School can continue delivering its critical functions and restore normal operations as quickly and safely as possible.

Business continuity planning focuses on maintaining essential services, including:

- safeguarding;
- education and learning;
- medical support;
- communication with families;
- staffing;
- therapeutic provision;

- information technology;
- site operations;
- other critical business functions.

Relationship between the two

Although emergency management and business continuity are closely linked, they serve different purposes. Emergency management focuses on responding to the incident. Business continuity focuses on recovering from the incident.

In many situations, both phases will operate sequentially. For example, following a fire, the emergency response will focus on evacuation, accounting for pupils and liaising with the emergency services.

Once the site has been made safe, the business continuity arrangements will determine how education, safeguarding and essential services continue whilst normal operations are restored.

Section 04

EMERGENCY MANAGEMENT PRINCIPLES

Protecting life. Leading clearly. Responding proportionately.

Riverside Bridge School adopts a structured and coordinated approach to emergency management, recognising that effective preparation, decisive leadership and clear communication are essential to protecting life, maintaining safeguarding and restoring normal operations following an emergency or significant disruption.

The school recognises that every incident is unique. Whilst this plan provides a consistent framework for responding to emergencies, the actions taken will always be proportionate to the nature, scale and impact of the incident. Decisions will be informed by dynamic risk assessment, available information and professional judgement, with the safety and wellbeing of pupils, staff and visitors remaining the overriding priority. The school's emergency management arrangements are underpinned by the following principles.

Protection of life

The immediate protection of pupils, staff, visitors and contractors is the school's first priority during any emergency. Decisions will always seek to minimise the risk of injury and preserve life before consideration is given to property, resources or the continuation of normal activities.

Safeguarding first

Safeguarding responsibilities remain fully in place throughout any emergency. Particular consideration will be given to pupils who may be especially vulnerable due to their age, communication needs, medical conditions, mobility, social care involvement or other additional needs. All decisions will continue to reflect the school's safeguarding responsibilities.

Clear leadership and accountability

Emergency situations require decisive leadership supported by clearly defined responsibilities. Strategic, tactical and operational roles ensure that decisions are coordinated, communication remains effective and resources are deployed efficiently throughout each phase of an incident.

Effective communication

Timely, accurate and consistent communication is essential to effective incident management. Information will be shared appropriately with staff, pupils, families, governors, emergency services, the Trust, the Local Authority and other relevant agencies, ensuring that communication is proportionate to the circumstances and supports informed decision-making.

Business continuity

Where disruption extends beyond the immediate emergency response, the school will implement appropriate business continuity arrangements to maintain critical educational, safeguarding and operational functions wherever reasonably practicable. The aim is to minimise disruption whilst ensuring that the quality and safety of provision are not compromised.

Meeting individual needs

As a specialist SEND school, Riverside Bridge School recognises that emergency arrangements must be responsive to the individual needs of pupils. Emergency responses will take account of communication methods, sensory regulation, mobility, medical requirements, personal care, individual Positive Support and regulation arrangements and any other factors necessary to ensure pupils remain safe and supported.

Recovery and continuous improvement

Recovery begins as soon as the immediate emergency has been stabilised. The school is committed to restoring normal operations safely and efficiently whilst reviewing its response to identify strengths, lessons learned and opportunities for improvement. Findings from incidents, exercises and debriefs will inform future planning, training and policy development.

Section 05

ROLES AND RESPONSIBILITIES

Defining leadership. Coordinating action. Maintaining accountability.

Effective emergency management and business continuity depend upon clear leadership, defined responsibilities and effective collaboration. Whilst specific responsibilities are allocated to designated roles, every member of the Riverside Bridge School community has a responsibility to contribute to maintaining a safe environment and responding appropriately during an emergency.
The school's response is coordinated through a structured leadership model that enables strategic oversight, tactical decision-making and operational implementation. This approach ensures that decisions are communicated effectively, resources are deployed appropriately and the welfare of pupils, staff and visitors remains central throughout every stage of an incident.

The Governing Board is responsible for ensuring that appropriate emergency management and business continuity arrangements are in place to safeguard pupils, staff and visitors. In fulfilling this responsibility, the Governing Board will:

- ensure appropriate policies, plans and procedures are maintained;
- receive assurance that emergency planning arrangements are regularly reviewed and tested;
- monitor organisational resilience and statutory compliance;
- receive reports following significant incidents where appropriate;
- support strategic decision-making during prolonged disruption where required;
- ensure that lessons learned contribute to continuous improvement.

The Headteacher has overall responsibility for emergency management and business continuity, including leading the school's response to emergencies and activating this plan where necessary. The Headteacher will ensure that appropriate leadership, resources and operational arrangements are in place to respond to significant disruption and support recovery. The Headteacher will:

- determine the appropriate response to an emergency or significant disruption;
- activate, coordinate and stand down the Emergency Management and Business Continuity Plan;
- provide strategic leadership throughout the incident;
- liaise with emergency services, the Trust, the Local Authority and other external agencies;
- authorise evacuation, lockdown, shelter-in-place or school closure where necessary;
- oversee communication with parents, carers, governors and the wider community;
- ensure safeguarding remains central throughout the response;

- lead the recovery phase and subsequent review of the incident.

The Senior Leadership Team provides tactical leadership and operational coordination during emergencies and supports the Headteacher in coordinating the school's business continuity arrangements. This includes prioritising critical functions, coordinating staffing and resources, maintaining communication with families and external partners, supporting alternative operational arrangements and overseeing the phased restoration of school services. Under the direction of the Headteacher, members of the Senior Leadership Team will:

- coordinate the implementation of emergency procedures;
- maintain oversight of pupil and staff welfare;
- deploy staff and resources according to operational need;
- support communication across the school;
- oversee continuity arrangements for education and specialist provision;
- maintain accurate records of significant decisions and actions;
- contribute to post-incident evaluation and recovery planning.

The Health and Safety Lead supports emergency preparedness, response and recovery in relation to health and safety, premises and operational resilience.

The Health and Safety Lead will:

- support assessment and management of premises and health and safety risks;
- maintain oversight of relevant emergency and compliance arrangements;
- coordinate with the Site Team regarding premises safety, utilities and infrastructure;
- liaise with the Trust, competent contractors and other specialist providers where required;
- support safe access for emergency services and contractors;
- advise the Headteacher and Senior Leadership Team on changing premises or safety risks;
- contribute to emergency exercises, recovery planning and post-incident review.

The Designated Safeguarding Lead (DSL) ensures that safeguarding responsibilities remain fully effective throughout any emergency. The DSL will:

- maintain oversight of vulnerable pupils;
- ensure safeguarding concerns continue to be identified, recorded and acted upon;
- liaise with children's social care and partner agencies where appropriate;
- support pupil wellbeing during and after an incident;
- ensure continuity of safeguarding arrangements throughout periods of disruption;
- advise the leadership team on safeguarding implications arising from emergency decisions.

The Site Team supports the practical management and safety of the school site during emergencies and periods of significant disruption.

The Site Team will:

- support evacuation, access, security and site-control arrangements;
- provide information about buildings, utilities, plant and identified site hazards;
- isolate utilities or equipment where trained, authorised and safe to do so;
- facilitate access for emergency services and approved contractors;
- undertake or coordinate urgent premises actions within their competence;
- monitor the condition and safety of the site during disruption;
- support the safe restoration of premises and building services.

The Administration Team supports the continuity of essential communication, information and administrative functions during an emergency or significant disruption.

The Administration Team will:

- maintain access to essential contact information and operational records;
- support communication with parents, carers, staff and external agencies;
- maintain access to pupil, staff and visitor information required during an incident;
- liaise with transport, catering and other service providers under the direction of the Senior Leadership Team;
- support the recording of key decisions, communications and actions;
- maintain and update operational emergency contact information as directed.

All members of staff have a responsibility to contribute to the safe management of emergencies and business continuity arrangements. Staff are expected to:

- familiarise themselves with this plan and associated emergency procedures;
- respond promptly to instructions from the leadership team;
- prioritise the safety, wellbeing and safeguarding of pupils;
- implement evacuation, lockdown or shelter procedures where required;
- report concerns, hazards or incidents immediately;
- support pupils according to their individual communication, medical, mobility, sensory and regulation needs;
- participate in training, drills and post-incident reviews.

Visitors, contractors and volunteers are expected to comply with all emergency procedures whilst on the school site. They must follow instructions issued by school staff, participate in evacuation or lockdown arrangements where required and report any concerns that may affect the safety or security of the school community.

Section 06

PREPAREDNESS

Planning ahead. Building readiness. Testing arrangements.

Effective emergency management begins long before an incident occurs. Riverside Bridge School is committed to maintaining a state of preparedness through proactive planning, regular training, robust risk management and the ongoing review of emergency arrangements. By investing in preparedness, the school aims to reduce the impact of emergencies, protect the school community and enable a coordinated response when incidents occur.

Preparedness is an ongoing process that forms part of the school's wider approach to safeguarding, health and safety, organisational resilience and continuous improvement.

Planning and risk assessment

The school will maintain and regularly review emergency management and business continuity arrangements to ensure they remain appropriate to the school's operational context and the needs of its pupils.

Emergency planning will be informed by:

- site-specific risk assessments;
- business continuity risk assessments;
- safeguarding considerations;
- premises and security assessments;
- local and national risk information;
- previous incidents and lessons learned;
- changes to legislation, statutory guidance or operational practice.

Planning arrangements will reflect the additional vulnerabilities and support requirements associated with a specialist SEND environment.

Training, drills and exercises

Emergency preparedness will be supported through appropriate training, drills, exercises and opportunities for staff to practise and review emergency arrangements. The nature and frequency of these activities will reflect the risks faced by the school, statutory requirements, operational need and learning from previous incidents or exercises. Staff will receive information and training appropriate to their role and responsibilities. This will include awareness of emergency procedures, communication and escalation arrangements, safeguarding

responsibilities and the actions expected of them during different types of emergency or significant disruption. The school will undertake appropriate drills and exercises to test its emergency arrangements. These may include fire evacuation drills, lockdown drills or exercises, business-continuity exercises and scenario-based discussion with relevant staff. Activities will be planned with appropriate consideration of pupils' communication, sensory, physical, medical and regulation needs and will avoid creating unnecessary distress or risk. Following significant drills or exercises, the school will review what worked effectively, identify any gaps or improvements required and update procedures, training or operational arrangements where necessary.

Emergency resources

The school will maintain appropriate resources to support an effective response to emergencies. These may include:

- emergency contact information;
- pupil emergency and medical information;
- first aid equipment;
- communication devices;
- site plans and utility information;
- visitor and pupil registers;
- emergency grab bags;
- access to critical policies, procedures and business continuity documentation.

Appropriate arrangements will be in place to ensure that essential information remains accessible should normal systems become unavailable.

Partnerships and external agencies

The school recognises that effective emergency management relies upon strong partnerships with external organisations. Where appropriate, preparedness activities will involve liaison with:

- emergency services;
- the Local Authority;
- the Trust;
- health services;
- transport providers;
- utility providers;
- specialist contractors;
- other agencies supporting the school's operation.

These relationships help ensure that external support can be accessed promptly and effectively when required.

Maintaining organisational readiness

Preparedness is a continuous process rather than a one-off activity. The Senior Leadership Team will monitor the effectiveness of emergency arrangements throughout the year, ensuring that plans, resources, training and contact information remain current and reflect the evolving needs of the school.

Findings from audits, exercises, incidents and routine monitoring will be used to strengthen the school's emergency preparedness and business continuity arrangements, ensuring Riverside Bridge School remains resilient and well prepared to respond to future challenges.

Section 07

EMERGENCY MANAGEMENT PROCESS

Assessing rapidly. Coordinating response. Moving towards recovery.

Riverside Bridge School adopts a structured and proportionate approach to managing emergencies. Whilst every incident presents unique challenges, the school follows a consistent process to ensure that decisions are timely, coordinated and focused on protecting pupils, staff and visitors whilst maintaining critical services wherever possible. The nature and scale of the response will always reflect the severity of the incident. Minor incidents may be managed through routine operational procedures, whilst significant emergencies may require activation of this plan, involvement of external agencies and implementation of business continuity arrangements. The emergency management process consists of five key stages.

Identification and initial assessment

Any member of staff who becomes aware of an emergency or significant incident must take any immediate action necessary to protect life and safety, including contacting the emergency services without delay where required, and must notify the Headteacher or a member of the Senior Leadership Team as soon as it is safe to do so.

The first priority is to establish:

- the nature of the incident;
- whether there is an immediate threat to life or safety;
- who may be affected;
- whether emergency services are required;
- whether immediate protective actions are necessary;
- the likely impact on the school's operation.

Information will be reviewed continuously as the situation develops, recognising that decisions may need to be revised as further information becomes available.

Immediate protective action

Where an immediate risk exists, appropriate protective measures will be implemented without delay. Depending upon the circumstances, this may include:

- evacuation of all or part of the school;
- lockdown procedures;
- shelter-in-place arrangements;
- first aid or emergency medical intervention;
- contacting the emergency services;

- securing hazardous areas;
- accounting for pupils, staff and visitors;
- implementing individual emergency arrangements for pupils requiring additional support.

The safety and wellbeing of people will always take precedence over the protection of buildings, equipment or resources.

Incident co-ordination

Once the immediate situation has been stabilised, the Headteacher or delegated senior leader will coordinate the ongoing management of the incident. This may include:

- allocating responsibilities to members of the leadership team;
- maintaining communication with emergency services and partner agencies;
- ensuring safeguarding arrangements remain effective;
- monitoring risks as circumstances change;
- coordinating internal and external communications;
- recording significant decisions and actions;
- determining whether business continuity arrangements should be activated.

Business continuity activation

Where disruption is likely to continue beyond the immediate emergency, the Headteacher will determine whether business continuity arrangements should be implemented.

The priority during this phase is to maintain, or restore as quickly as reasonably practicable, the school's critical functions, including:

- safeguarding;
- education and learning;
- medical support;
- communication with families;
- therapeutic provision;
- site safety;
- information technology and communication systems;
- essential administrative and operational services.

Recovery arrangements will remain proportionate to the nature and duration of the disruption.

Recovery and review

Once the immediate emergency has concluded, the school will coordinate a structured recovery process to restore normal operations safely and effectively.

Recovery may include:

- supporting the emotional wellbeing of pupils and staff;
- restoring educational provision;

- repairing or reinstating facilities;
- reviewing safeguarding arrangements;
- communicating with families and stakeholders;
- identifying lessons learned;
- updating emergency procedures where improvements are identified.

Following any significant incident, the Senior Leadership Team will conduct a formal review to evaluate the effectiveness of the school's response. Findings will inform future training, emergency planning and business continuity arrangements.

Section 08

EMERGENCY RESPONSE PROCEDURES

Acting promptly. Following procedures. Protecting everyone.

The school maintains a range of emergency response procedures designed to protect life, safeguard pupils and staff, minimise disruption and support the effective management of incidents.

The specific response implemented will depend upon the nature of the emergency; however, all responses will be guided by the principles set out within this plan and will prioritise the safety and wellbeing of the school community.

Emergency services

Where an incident presents an immediate threat to life, health or public safety, emergency services will be contacted without delay by dialling 999.

The Headteacher, or the most senior member of staff available, will assume overall responsibility for coordinating the school's response until emergency services arrive. Once emergency services have taken control of the incident, the school will work collaboratively with them and implement any instructions provided.

No member of staff should place themselves at unnecessary risk whilst responding to an emergency.

Evacuation

Where it is unsafe to remain within all or part of the school building, an evacuation will be initiated in accordance with the school's Fire and Emergency Evacuation Procedures. Staff will ensure that:

- pupils are escorted safely from the affected area;
- individual evacuation arrangements are implemented for pupils requiring additional support;
- registers and visitor records are used to account for all persons;
- designated assembly points are used unless alternative arrangements are directed by the emergency services;
- no person re-enters the building until authorised to do so.

Lockdown

Where there is a threat within or in the immediate vicinity of the school, a lockdown may be initiated to reduce the risk to pupils, staff and visitors. During a lockdown, staff will follow the school's Lockdown Procedure, ensuring that:

- pupils remain calm and supervised;
- rooms are secured where appropriate;

- movement around the site is minimised;
- communication is maintained with the Senior Leadership Team where possible;
- instructions issued by emergency services are followed.

Lockdown arrangements will take account of the communication, sensory and regulation needs of pupils, recognising that some pupils may require additional reassurance or adapted support.

Shelter-in-place

Where external conditions make evacuation unsafe, such as severe weather, environmental hazards or incidents occurring outside the school, pupils and staff may be instructed to remain within the building.

The Senior Leadership Team will determine the safest location within the school and co-ordinate arrangements until the risk has reduced.

Medical emergencies

Medical emergencies will be managed in accordance with the Medical Needs, Medication and Allergy Safety Policy, First Aid Policy and any relevant Individual Healthcare Plan or Emergency Healthcare Plan.

Appropriately trained staff will provide first aid within the limits of their competence whilst emergency medical assistance is sought where necessary.

Individual Healthcare Plans, Emergency Healthcare Plans, Allergy Action Plans, emergency medication and relevant healthcare information

Missing or unaccounted-for pupils

Any incident involving a missing or unaccounted-for pupil will be treated as a safeguarding priority.

The school's Missing Pupil Procedures will be implemented immediately, ensuring that:

- an immediate search is undertaken;
- the Senior Leadership Team is informed without delay;
- parents or carers are contacted where appropriate;
- emergency services are contacted where the level of risk requires;
- safeguarding procedures are followed throughout.

Utilities, premises and infrastructure failure

Where disruption results from the loss of electricity, gas, water, heating, information technology, telecommunications or other critical infrastructure, the Senior Leadership Team will assess:

- whether the school can continue operating safely;
- the likely duration of the disruption;
- the impact on safeguarding and education;
- whether business continuity arrangements should be activated;
- whether partial or full closure is necessary.

Public health incidents

The school will respond to infectious disease and public-health incidents in accordance with the Infection Prevention and Control Policy and current UKHSA, DfE and local public-health advice.

Control measures will be implemented proportionately, taking account of individual pupil vulnerabilities, medical needs and safeguarding considerations.

Recording and reporting

Significant emergencies will be recorded to ensure an accurate record of:

- the nature of the incident;
- decisions taken;
- actions implemented;
- agencies involved;
- communications issued;
- lessons identified following recovery.

Records will be retained in accordance with the school's information governance and record retention procedures.

Section 09

COMMUNICATION AND INFORMATION MANAGEMENT

Communicating clearly. Protecting information. Maintaining confidence.

Effective communication is fundamental to the successful management of any emergency or significant disruption. Riverside Bridge School is committed to ensuring that information is communicated promptly, accurately and appropriately to support informed decision-making, reduce uncertainty and safeguard the wellbeing of pupils, staff and the wider school.

The Headteacher, or a delegated member of the Senior Leadership Team, will oversee all communications relating to an emergency. Information will be shared on a need-to-know basis, taking account of safeguarding, confidentiality, data protection and the evolving nature of the incident.

Internal communication

During an emergency, clear communication between members of staff is essential to ensure a coordinated response. The school will use the most appropriate communication methods available, which may include:

- face-to-face briefings;
- telephone communication;
- email;
- internal messaging systems;
- radio or mobile communication where appropriate.

Staff will receive regular updates as further information becomes available and must ensure that any instructions received are implemented promptly and consistently.

Communication with parents and carers

Parents and carers will be informed as soon as reasonably practicable where an emergency affects the safety, welfare or education of their child.

Communications will:

- provide clear and factual information;
- explain any actions required by parents or carers;
- provide updates where an incident is ongoing;
- avoid speculation or the release of unverified information;
- be issued through the school's approved communication systems wherever possible.

The school recognises that parents may experience heightened anxiety during emergencies and will seek to provide timely reassurance whilst ensuring that operational priorities remain focused on managing the incident safely.

Communication with external agencies

Where appropriate, the school will maintain communication with relevant external organisations, including:

- emergency services;
- the Local Authority;
- the Trust;
- children's social care;
- health services;
- transport providers;
- contractors;
- other agencies involved in the management or recovery of the incident.

Information shared with external agencies will be accurate, proportionate and compliant with relevant information-sharing legislation and safeguarding requirements.

Media enquiries

All enquiries from the media will be managed by the Headteacher or an authorised representative.

Staff must not provide statements, interviews or comments to the media unless specifically authorised to do so. Where necessary, the school will work with the Trust, Local Authority or emergency services to ensure that public statements are accurate, coordinated and protect the privacy and dignity of pupils, families and staff.

Confidentiality and information management

Throughout an emergency, the school will continue to comply with its responsibilities relating to confidentiality, information governance and data protection.

Personal information will only be shared where there is a lawful basis to do so, including where sharing information is necessary to protect life, safeguard children or support the effective management of an emergency.

Records relating to significant incidents, communications and key decisions will be retained in accordance with the school's records management and data retention procedures.

Section 10

BUSINESS CONTINUITY

Prioritising critical functions. Adapting provision. Restoring services.

Business continuity arrangements are designed to enable Riverside Bridge School to maintain, or restore as quickly as reasonably practicable, its critical functions following an emergency or significant disruption. The school recognises that, whilst some services may need to be temporarily adapted, the continuity of safeguarding, education and specialist support remains essential for pupils with complex special educational needs and disabilities.

Where an incident is likely to disrupt normal operations beyond the immediate emergency response, the Headteacher will determine whether business continuity arrangements should be activated. The response implemented will be proportionate to the nature, severity and expected duration of the disruption.

Business continuity priorities

During periods of disruption, the school will prioritise the continuation of services in the following order:

1. Safeguarding and immediate safety of pupils, staff and visitors.
2. Leadership, emergency coordination and communication.
3. Essential medical care, first aid and healthcare support.
4. Critical premises, utilities, security, ICT and operational infrastructure.
5. Education and specialist SEND provision.
6. Therapeutic support and wider pupil wellbeing.
7. Phased restoration of remaining functions.

Where normal operations cannot be maintained, the school will seek to provide alternative arrangements that minimise disruption whilst ensuring that safety and safeguarding standards are not compromised.

Continuity of education

The school will make every reasonable effort to maintain educational provision throughout periods of disruption.

Depending upon the nature of the incident, this may include:

- relocation of teaching to alternative accommodation;
- temporary reorganisation of classes or staffing;
- amended timetables;
- remote education, where appropriate and reasonably practicable;
- prioritisation of pupils requiring the highest levels of support;
- collaboration with the Trust, Local Authority or other education providers where necessary.

The school recognises that remote learning may not be appropriate or fully accessible for all pupils due to their communication, cognitive, sensory, physical or regulation needs. Alternative approaches will therefore be considered wherever reasonably practicable to ensure pupils continue to access meaningful learning opportunities.

Continuity of specialist SEND provision

As a specialist setting, Riverside Bridge School recognises that many pupils rely upon highly structured routines, specialist communication approaches and therapeutic interventions.

Where disruption occurs, the school will seek to maintain, as far as reasonably practicable:

- total communication approaches;
- BridgeWorks structured teaching arrangements
- individual Positive Support and regulation arrangements;
- predictable routines;
- individual Positive Support Plans;
- medical and personal care arrangements;
- therapy provision, where available;
- sensory regulation opportunities;
- preparation for adulthood programmes.

Where adaptations are necessary, these will be carefully planned to minimise distress, anxiety and disruption for pupils.

Staffing and resources

During periods of disruption, staffing arrangements may need to be adapted to ensure that critical services can continue safely.

The Headteacher and Senior Leadership Team may:

- temporarily redeploy staff;
- amend staff responsibilities;
- prioritise essential functions;
- seek additional support through the Trust or approved agencies;
- implement alternative working arrangements where appropriate;
- review staffing requirements regularly as the incident develops.

All staffing decisions will continue to take account of safeguarding requirements, staff competence and pupil needs.

Information technology and critical systems

The school recognises the importance of information technology in supporting safeguarding, communication, education and operational management.

Where digital systems are unavailable, the school will implement alternative arrangements to maintain access, wherever reasonably practicable, to:

- pupil information;
- safeguarding records;
- medical information;
- attendance records;
- communication systems;
- emergency contact details;
- essential administrative functions.

The restoration of critical systems will be coordinated with the Trust, Local Authority and relevant IT providers as appropriate.

Review of business continuity arrangements

Business continuity arrangements will remain under continuous review throughout any period of disruption. The Headteacher will determine when normal operations can safely resume and will ensure that any temporary arrangements are withdrawn in a planned and coordinated manner.

The return to normal operations will take account of:

- the safety of pupils, staff and visitors;
- the availability of staffing and resources;
- the suitability of the learning environment;
- safeguarding considerations;
- advice received from relevant agencies where applicable.

Section 11

SAFEGUARDING AND PUPIL WELFARE DURING EMERGENCIES

Maintaining safeguarding. Meeting individual need. Supporting wellbeing.

Riverside Bridge School recognises that emergencies and significant disruptions can have a disproportionate impact on pupils with special educational needs and disabilities. Changes to familiar routines, environments, staffing or communication can increase anxiety, dysregulation and vulnerability. Throughout any emergency or period of disruption, safeguarding and pupil welfare will remain the school's highest priority.

The school will continue to fulfil its statutory safeguarding responsibilities and ensure that all decisions are made in the best interests of pupils.

Safeguarding

The Designated Safeguarding Lead (DSL) and Deputy Designated Safeguarding Leads (DDSLs) will continue to oversee safeguarding arrangements throughout any emergency.

Where normal procedures are disrupted, the school will ensure that:

- safeguarding concerns continue to be identified, recorded and acted upon;
- appropriate referrals are made where required;
- vulnerable pupils remain appropriately supported;
- communication with children's social care and partner agencies is maintained where necessary;
- safeguarding records remain secure and accessible.

No emergency should result in safeguarding responsibilities being reduced or overlooked.

Supporting pupils

Staff will take reasonable steps to minimise the impact of disruption on pupils by maintaining, wherever practicable:

- familiar adults;
- predictable routines;
- communication supports,
- sensory regulation opportunities;
- positive support arrangements;
- medical and personal care arrangements;
- appropriate levels of reassurance and emotional support.

Where normal routines cannot be maintained, changes will be explained using communication approaches appropriate to each pupil's individual needs.

Pupils with additional medical or physical needs

Particular consideration will be given to pupils who require:

- emergency medication;
- moving and handling support;
- feeding assistance;
- intimate care;
- specialist equipment;
- mobility assistance;
- ongoing healthcare monitoring where this forms part of the pupil's agreed healthcare arrangements.

Clinical requirements will continue to be determined through the pupil's healthcare plan and advice from the Nursing Team or other appropriately qualified healthcare professional. The school will ensure that appropriate staffing, equipment and emergency arrangements remain available wherever reasonably practicable throughout any period of disruption.

Attendance and pupil supervision

Where the school remains operational, attendance arrangements will continue in accordance with the Attendance Policy unless alternative arrangements are directed by the Department for Education, the Local Authority or other relevant authority.

The school will maintain appropriate supervision ratios, accounting procedures and arrival and departure arrangements to ensure pupils remain safe throughout any disruption.

Emotional wellbeing

Emergencies may affect the emotional wellbeing of pupils, families and staff long after the immediate incident has concluded.

Following significant incidents, the school will consider the need for:

- additional pastoral support;
- therapeutic input;
- family support;
- staff wellbeing support;
- phased returns where appropriate;
- ongoing monitoring of pupils who may have been particularly affected.

Support will be proportionate to the nature of the incident and the individual needs of those involved.

Section12

RECOVERY, DEBRIEF AND CONTINUOUS IMPROVEMENT

Restoring safely. Learning systematically. Strengthening resilience.

Effective emergency management continues beyond the immediate response. Following an emergency or significant disruption, Riverside Bridge School will take a planned and proportionate approach to recovery, ensuring that pupils, staff and essential school functions are supported as normal operations are restored.

Recovery planning

Recovery arrangements will reflect the nature, scale and impact of the incident. The Headteacher and Senior Leadership Team will determine recovery priorities, drawing upon advice from the Designated Safeguarding Lead, Health and Safety Lead, Site Team, Trust and other relevant professionals or agencies as required. Recovery planning may include:

- confirming that the school site, or relevant areas, are safe to use;
- restoring critical services, utilities, ICT and operational systems;
- re-establishing education and specialist SEND provision;
- maintaining appropriate safeguarding, healthcare, communication, personal care and regulation support;
- supporting pupils and staff affected by the incident;
- communicating arrangements clearly to pupils, families, staff and relevant partners;
- addressing any ongoing staffing, transport, catering, premises or resource implications;
- determining when and how normal operations can safely resume.

Where full restoration cannot be achieved immediately, temporary or alternative arrangements may remain in place until the school is satisfied that normal provision can be resumed safely and effectively.

Debrief and evaluation

Following a significant emergency or disruption, an appropriate debrief will be undertaken to review the effectiveness of the school's response and recovery arrangements. The review will consider:

- what happened and how the incident developed;
- the effectiveness of leadership, decision-making and communication;
- whether safeguarding and pupil welfare arrangements remained effective;
- how effectively individual pupil needs were supported;
- the effectiveness of emergency procedures and business continuity arrangements;

- any difficulties relating to staffing, premises, equipment, information or external services;
- feedback from staff and relevant partners;
- any actions required to strengthen future preparedness or response.

Debrief arrangements will be proportionate to the incident and may include immediate operational debriefing followed by a more detailed review where appropriate.

Lessons learnt

Learning identified through incidents and subsequent review will be used to strengthen the school's emergency-management arrangements. Where required, this may result in changes to procedures, risk assessments, business-continuity arrangements, staff training, emergency resources, communication systems or other operational documentation. Significant learning will be shared with relevant staff and, where appropriate, the Governing Board, Trust or external agencies.

Monitoring and review

The Senior Leadership Team will maintain oversight of the effectiveness of the school's emergency-management and business-continuity arrangements. Relevant findings from incidents, near misses, exercises, audits and other assurance activity will inform ongoing improvement.

This plan will be reviewed annually, or sooner where a significant incident, organisational change, change in identified risk, updated guidance or learning from monitoring and review indicates that revision is required.

Section 13

RELATED POLICIES & FRAMEWORKS

Connecting practice. Strengthening consistency.

This Emergency Management and Business Continuity Plan should be read in conjunction with the school's:

- Health and Safety Policy
- Safeguarding and Child Protection Policy
- Medical Needs, Medication and Allergy Safety Policy
- Attendance Policy
- Educational Visits Policy
- Positive Support Policy
- Fire Safety and Evacuation Procedures
- Lockdown Procedures
- Missing Child on Site Policy
- Risk Management and Risk Assessment Policy
- Data Protection Policy
- First Aid Policy
- Infection Prevention and Control Policy
- Premises Management Policy
- Data Protection Policy
- Staff Wellbeing Policy

APPENDICES

Appendix A - Emergency Response checklist

Aide-memoire for the person leading the incident.

Step	Action	✓
1	Assess immediate risk to life	☐
2	Contact emergency services (999) immediately when required	☐
3	Implement evacuation, lockdown or shelter procedures	☐
4	Account for pupils, staff and visitors	☐
5	Inform the Headteacher / Senior Leadership Team, when not already involved	☐
6	Activate this Plan if required	☐
7	Contact relevant external agencies	☐
8	Begin communication with parents/carers	☐
9	Record decisions and actions	☐
10	Review recovery requirements	☐

Appendix B - Critical Functions Framework

Critical - immediate priority

- Safeguarding and safety
- Emergency leadership and communication
- Essential healthcare
- Premises/site safety

High - restore as soon as practicable

- Utilities and critical ICT
- Education and specialist SEND provision
- Essential staffing, transport and catering

Supporting - restore according to need and available resources

- Therapy and wider wellbeing provision
- Administrative functions
- Other school services

Operational emergency documentation

Detailed operational information supporting this plan is maintained separately and includes emergency contact and supplier information, the Business Continuity Risk Register, emergency preparedness and testing schedules, site-specific emergency information and individual emergency procedures. These documents are reviewed and updated as operational arrangements, contacts, risks or responsibilities change and may be amended without requiring formal revision of this plan, provided that they remain consistent with its principles and requirements.