BEECHEN CLIFF

DISASTER MANAGEMENT PLAN

INTRODUCTION -

Beechen Cliff School is a densely populated site containing children, young adults and adults. The School has a duty of care to all members of its community and must have in place a plan for the management of any disaster. In addition the School has a responsibility to the local community. A disaster may include any situation involving significant threat, damage or injury to individuals or property.

No amount of planning can completely prevent disasters occurring but a comprehensive approach will help the School to prepare for any eventuality.

Types of school crises -

There are many types of crisis that can affect schools which broadly fall into two categories:

In-school/on-site crises

- death of a pupil or member of staff through accident or illness
- fire or flooding of buildings (or other destructive force)
- a deliberate act of violence such as a knife attack or the use of a firearm

Out of school/off-site crises

- deaths or serious injuries on school trip
- national tragedies affecting many schools
- civil disturbance, including acts of terrorism

A disaster could occur during the school day, at night or during school holidays and it is important that the correct responses are followed by the designated staff. The Disaster Management Plan will ensure:

- that the plan is easily understood
- that designated staff understand their tasks and are competent to carry them out
- that consideration and sensitivity is shown by all
- that confidentiality of sensitive information is respected
- that pupils, staff and parents are protected from press intrusion
- that normality returns as soon as possible
- that it is realised that total recovery may take a long time

The Disaster Management Plan must also contain -

- emergency contact numbers
- details of potential on-site hazards
- the location of fire-fighting equipment, stop cocks and gas cut-off points.

The Governors' Health and Safety Committee, in conjunction with the Senior Management Team, will review this plan annually to ensure that all information is up to date and correct and that personnel involved understand their roles and are competent to perform them.

Measures that need consideration -

- a full risk assessment of the School
- professional advice to be taken when hazards are identified
- evacuation procedures are established and practised regularly

It is also important to establish disaster management roles :

- a senior member of staff, **not the Headmaster**, should be responsible for co-ordinating emergency procedures and liaise with the emergency services once they arrive on site
- another senior member of staff, **not the Headmaster**, should deal with pupils and staff on site
- another member of staff should deal with those directly affected by the incident compiling details of casualties
- a member of the secretarial staff should be designated to keep a written log of all events
- **the Headmaster will communicate with the media**

In addition:

- identify a designated room as the incident centre and this should contain a telephone line
- ensure that staff are able to deputise for any role
- ensure that teachers leave contact details of any group they are taking out of school
- ensure that designated staff receive training

Stages of Disaster Management -

Stage 1 - Planning

- ensure that a disaster management plan is in place and that all staff are aware of the key points
- carry out risk assessments
- practise the evacuation of the school
- prepare a plan for dealing with pupils and staff if the school buildings are out of action

Stage 2 – Incident Management

- gather details of the crisis
- relay information to the Senior Management Team
- manage the media
- avoid speculation and rumour – deal in facts
- prepare a draft written statement – acknowledge the problem or crisis and explain that when more details are available, further statements will be made.

Stage 3 – Post Disaster Recovery

- be aware of the range of symptoms that pupils and staff may exhibit following a traumatic event
- never attempt to ignore or forget what happened
- consider marking anniversaries
- return to school routine as soon as possible
- restore the sense of security and safety
- establish support systems including counselling teams
- monitor the situation
- look for "survivor guilt"
- be aware of the groups most likely to be affected by the crisis – those who were at the greatest risk, those who witnessed the incident, vulnerable and SEN pupils

STAGE 1 – PLANNING -

The Disaster ManagementTeam comprises -

- The Headmaster
- Deputy Headmaster and Pastoral Team Line Manager
- Site Manager/Caretakers
- A designated representative of the School Office
- The Chairman of Governors or his/her Deputy

The Main Threats are considered to be -

- injury or death to pupils or staff
- the loss of buildings/rooms
- the loss of school records
- the loss of equipment

Precautions include -

- risk assessments
- planned evacuation of the School
- procedures that are known to all staff

Prevention of threat

- fire extinguishers regularly serviced
- use of fire doors and fire exits
- buildings and site kept secure
- security system to be maintained
- essential records kept in fire proof safe
- equipment audits maintained using assets registers and inventories
- security marking of equipment
- regular maintenance of fire-fighting equipment, stop cocks and gas/electricity cut-off points

STAGE 2 – THE MANAGEMENT OF INCIDENTS

When an incident occurs the following procedures must be followed -

During school hours:

- safe and controlled evacuation of the school – Pastoral Team Line Manager
- all staff, pupils, students and visitors accounted for – Heads of Houses/Tutors
- emergency services contacted by school office
- emergency services received by the Site Manager / Caretakers and directed to scene of incident
- first aid administered – First Aid team
- shut down electricity, gas and water – Site Manager / Caretakers
- inform the Local Authority Incident Team

Outside school hours:

- confirm that buildings are empty – Site Manager / Caretakers
- emergency services contacted – Site Manager / Caretakers
- Headmaster and Pastoral Team Line \manager contacted
- emergency services received by Site Manager / Caretakers and directed to the problem
- first aid administered
- shut down electricity, gas and water

The Disaster Management Team will need to assess the extent of the damage and the impact of any loss of life or injury. If buildings and rooms have been damaged, or records lost and equipment destroyed, a decision will be taken about whether the School should be closed. Only in exceptional circumstances will the Headmaster reach this decision. School closure should only last for a short period. The Emergency Contact list will be used to keep all staff informed about such decisions.

In the event of loss of life or injury, either in school or during a school trip, the following procedures must be followed -

- the Headmaster must be informed immediately of any disaster
- the Headmaster will inform the Local Authority
- the Headmaster will convene the Disaster Management Team. This may include the school based trip co-ordinator in the event of a disaster on a school trip
- a careful and accurate record of the event must be maintained
- Parents will be contacted
- Staff, pupils and students will be informed
- Headmaster will issue a prepared statement to the media. Statements should be factual and avoid speculation. The statement should be about 400 words and cover who, what, when, how. If speaking over the telephone ask for statement to be read back
- the Disaster Management Team will work with the Senior Management Team and Heads of Houses to ensure that the School returns to normality as soon as possible

Information will be passed to staff via the Emergency Contact Procedures and Staff Meetings. Information to parents will be passed via the school website and local media.

STAGE 3 – POST DISASTER RECOVERY

The Headmaster and the Disaster Management Team will re-open the school and return to normality as soon as possible. It may be necessary to involve counsellors from the Local Authority to work with staff and pupils, and the Senior Management Team and Heads of Houses will need to be aware of the range of symptoms that staff and pupils may exhibit following a traumatic event. Groups most likely to be affected include those who witnessed the incident, or were at the greatest risk, and children with SEN or who are considered vulnerable. The School may also wish to mark anniversaries and should never ignore or forget what happened.

KSM
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