

Business Continuity Strategy

Category:	Trust-wide Policy
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Version:	2
Status:	Ratified
Issue Date:	November 2023
Next Review Date:	November 2026

Version Control

<u>Ver.</u>	<u>Date</u>	<u>Comment</u>
1	January 2020	Strategy written to set the framework and to complement the schools' Business Continuity Plans and the BC arrangements across the Trust.
2	October 2023	Update to reflect new school-based incident management plans, reflecting the learning from the 20202-21 Covid-19 pandemic

This policy will be subject to ongoing review and may be amended prior to the scheduled date of the next review in order to reflect changes in legislation, statutory guidance, or best practice (where appropriate).

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1. Purpose and scope

The purpose of this document is to define how the Eden Academy Trust (the Trust) will ensure that all conditions for the continuation and resumption of teaching and learning activities in the case of disaster or other disruptive incident are met. It underpins the Business Continuity (Incident Management) Plans for each of the Trust's schools, settings and satellites.

The Board of Trustees (the Board) own this strategy and delegate activities through executive directors, Heads and other senior leaders as well as other designated staff in the Trust's schools and central team as outlined below and in the individual site plans.

The site plans should be read in conjunction with the schools' other evacuation plans and emergency procedures that deal with the immediate response to an emergency and deal with no-notice disruptions most likely to occur including:

- Loss of premises (through fire, flood etc);
- Loss of utilities (electricity, gas, water, fuel);
- Failure of IT and telephony;
- Failure of supply;
- Staff shortage;
- Pandemic;
- Bomb threat;
- Terrorist incident.

The impact of any serious disruption may manifest itself in terms of:

- Safety/welfare;
- Delivery of teaching & learning;
- Financial consequences;
- Reputation damage;
- Environmental consequences.

2. Principles

The strategy, supported by the individual site plans, is designed to achieve the following strategic objectives:

- To safeguard the safety and welfare of pupils, staff and visitors;
- To resume provision of education services at the earliest opportunity and, where possible, secure a continuation of learning;
- To maintain the community and identity of the Trust;
- To return the Trust or the individual school to normal operations.

The Trust's overarching business continuity strategy is developed to harness the delegated decision-making authority of the 3-tier structure of organisation and control as indicated in section 3.

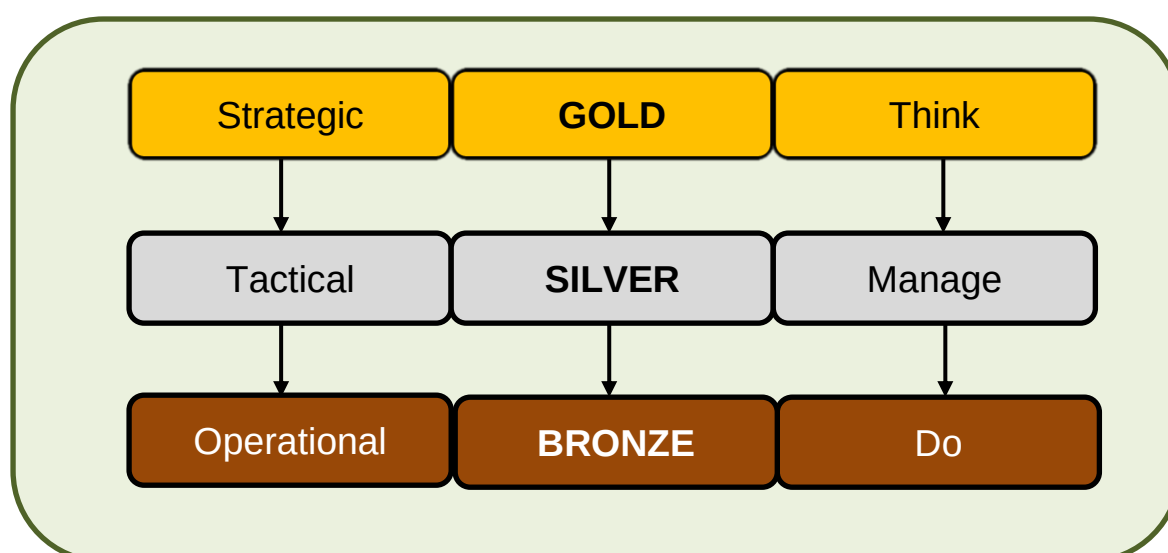
Overall accountability resides with the Board with the management of the incident delegated through a Strategic Leadership Team to the Head of the site impacted. Where the incident affects more than one of the Trust's schools or sites, tactical management of the incident (and the associated role of Business Continuity Manager) may be transferred to the CEO or another cabinet member as appropriate.

3. Organisation and control

The 3-tier structure of organisation and control works on the principle of Gold, Silver and Bronze.

These levels tend to refer to the Strategic, Tactical and Operational responses which can, in turn, be considered as 'Think', 'Manage' and 'Do'.

This is shown in the diagram below.



The *Strategic Thinking* is undertaken by the a Strategic Leadership Team which comprises the CEO (who chairs the team), Chair of the Board of Trustees, Director of Schools and Educational Services, Chief Operating Officer and Regional Directors for the most serious incidents within the Trust, perhaps the complete loss of a site; or where there are significant casualties or the serious injury/death of a pupil, staff member or visitor. The Strategic Leadership Team will take advice or soundings from Trustees and Members as appropriate. This is very much about thinking for the wider Trust.

The *Tactical Management* would rest with the Head¹ and school leadership teams. The Head would assume the role of Business Continuity Manager. They would

¹ For the purposes of this document, Head refers to Executive Head, Headteacher or Head of School/Setting/Satellite as appropriate

work very closely with a number of colleagues who provide support for key areas, perhaps most importantly, at least immediately, the Site Manager acting as the immediate, local Incident Manager providing the on-the-ground management of the incident, and a Deputy or Assistant Head leading on the people aspects. They would also be supported in terms of communications by a central resource.

The Head, should they need it, has access to additional resources to support them. These provide the resource for the *Operational Doing*. These are likely to encompass such activities as:

- Incident Management
- People Support
- Communications
- Premises
- Teaching & Learning
- Administration
- Therapies
- Finance
- ICT
- Compliance.

Each area will have a designated lead. Their role is to provide the resource to deal with the many and varied tasks required to respond to and manage an incident and to restore both the infrastructure and everyday operations. Their role is to lead the activities, with designated colleagues where appropriate, thus removing the operational delivery from the BCM (Head) so that they can focus on wider issues. For example, the teaching and learning lead would be responsible for restoring/continuing the delivery of teaching & learning as/when appropriate, organising what can be delivered, by whom, how and when and then making sure it happens.

3.1. Providing financial resources

The central finance team will ensure that appropriate financial resources are available to support the school in responding to the incident and restoring operations.

A separate ledger code will be established to track additional expenditure which may be recoverable from our insurers.

4. Incident response structure

The responsibility for invoking the incident response arrangements lies with the Head or, if not available, the next designated senior member of staff.

Upon invocation of the arrangements and associated site incident management plan, the Head, or their nominated deputy, will form an Incident Management Team (IMT).

The primary objective of the IMT is to manage the developing situation and minimise harm and danger to:

- pupils;
- staff;
- visitors to the site;
- building, contents and other assets;
- the Trust's ability to provide education; and
- the Trust and/or school's reputation.

The roles and responsibilities of all those involved are set out in Appendix 1 and the individual school plans.

It is important to remember that the focus at this stage is on **what has happened**, the **impact** and the **implications**. Considerations of why it occurred are for later.

5. Resource strategy

This strategy applies to all the Trust's schools, settings and satellites. As outlined above, the Board owns strategy and each school will have its own incident management plan, based on the same model.

5.1. Incident control centres

In the event of a serious incident and invocation of the incident management plan, an incident control centre will be established at the school in question where the IMT will be located. Where this is not possible, the IMT will relocate to alternative location. These will be identified and documented in the school plans.

5.2. Support activity resourcing

Each of the main support roles will have an identified lead, detailed in each site plan along with a designated alternate. The individual site plans should also identify those staff who have been identified to support those activities in the event of a plan invocation.

Where it is obvious during the initial phase that the incident, that everyone has been accounted for, there will be no further teaching and learning that day and the children have been sent home, consideration should be given to whether staff are required to support one of these teams before sending them home. Once released, it will be difficult to contact them again until at least the following day.

6. Communications strategy

The Trust will have a Crisis Communications Plan to supplement this strategy and the individual site BCPs. This sets out the principles for communicating during an incident that affects Eden pupils, staff and/or sites.

In the event of an incident, internal and external communications will be led, managed and co-ordinated by the Marketing and Communications Manager, in consultation with the IMT and Strategic Leadership Team.

6.1. Own the situation and own how it is presented

In the event of a serious incident requiring invocation of the incident management plan, the Trust has a duty to communicate with internal and external audiences in a timely, accurate, frequent, clear and coordinated way. A negative issue or event will become public knowledge as soon as it breaks, especially over social media, and Trust's long-term reputation will depend on how we are seen to manage the situation.

We must make sure that we are communicating as quickly as possible so that ours is the dominant voice in how the story of the incident is told.

6.2. Basic rules of communication during an emergency

- Stick to the script - don't speculate, repeat rumours or say anything you don't know to be the case;
- Keep current – update as soon as we have confirmed information or agreed advice;
- Be human – don't use jargon, show we care about those affected and are grateful to those working to manage the situation;
- Do not confirm fatalities or injuries until police have released the information – even if it is circulating on the web/social media;
- Treat all communications as external – internal messages will leak.

6.3. Drafting and approving communications

The Communications team will be responsible for drafting internal and external communications in conjunction with the BCM who will have the most up to date understanding of the current position. The draft communications will then be approved by the Strategic Leadership Team prior to being issued.

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7. Distribution of plans

To make the plans easier to navigate, all school plans will follow the same format.

The appendices for the Communications, Strategic Leadership, Finance, ICT and Compliance will be generic for all schools.

8. Management and maintenance of the strategy and the site plans

The strategy will be reviewed every three years, or if there is a significant change in the structure of the Trust in the interim.

The Head will ensure that their site's Incident Management Plan is maintained and that the assignment of responsibilities and that contact information is up to date. In addition, they will formally review their plans on an annual basis or when there is a significant change in the structure of the school/setting/satellite or its senior leadership team. Any changes will be notified to the Head of Governance, Policy & Compliance.

9. Training and testing

All staff with a designated lead role in the plans should receive appropriate training, both in the implementation of this strategy, the operation of the supporting plans and in basis incident management techniques. This may include an appropriate desktop exercise.

10. Reviewing incidents

Following all invocations, a full review will be undertaken of the incident including why it happened, how the school/Trust responded, what lessons can be identified and what changes should be made to the arrangements and plans.

Appendix 1: Roles and responsibilities

The Incident Management Team (IMT) will require information and support from the following roles or teams:

- a) Business Continuity Manager
- b) Incident Manager
- c) People Support
- d) Communications
- e) Premises
- f) Teaching & Learning
- g) Administration
- h) Therapies
- i) Finance
- j) ICT
- k) Compliance
- l) Strategic Leadership Team (Cabinet + Chair of Trustees)

a) Business Continuity Manager

Role holder

- Head or designated alternate

Responsibilities:

- Decide whether to invoke the Incident Management Plan;
- Convene and chair the IMT;
- Manage the response, continuity and recovery phases;
- Liaise with Chair of the Local Advisory Board;
- Allocate resources - human, physical and financial;
- Agree communications with the Communications Team for approval by the Cabinet;
- Agree key information and instructions to be given to pupils and by staff.

b) Incident Manager

Role holder

- Typically the Site Manager or designated alternate.

Responsibilities

- Meet and liaise with emergency services;
- Undertake the actions set out in the Incident Manager action checklist;
- Liaise and share information with the BCM;
- Instigate and manage incident, continuity and recovery actions at the incident site as instructed by the emergency services and the IMT;
- Co-ordinate the damage assessment function involving the premises and ICT teams.

c) People Support

Team Leader

- Typically a Deputy or Assistant Head

Responsibilities

- Ensure all pupils, staff and visitors are safe and accounted for;
- Marshalling of pupils, staff and visitors at the evacuation rendezvous point in conjunction with fire marshals;
- Arranging for transfer of everyone to place of safety;
- Arrange for warm, dry shelter (refuge) for everyone in the short term;
- Liaise with first aiders in relation to injuries, casualties and fatalities and collate information for IMT;
- Liaise with fire marshals and other staff in relation to pupils/staff/visitors unaccounted for and collate information for IMT;
- Deal with immediate welfare matters e.g. distress, domestic responsibilities;
- Co-ordinate the sending home of pupils and immediate care of those whose parents/carers cannot be readily contacted.

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d) Communications

Role holder

- Communications Manager or designated alternate for serious incidents
- Head for other incidents.

Responsibilities

- Drafting of all internal and external communications for approval and release by the Cabinet

- Updating of the website and social media

e) Premises

Role holder

- Typically the Site Manager or designated alternate.

Responsibilities

- Site Security
 - Authorising and managing access to the building(s)/area(s);
 - Supervision of salvage operations including initial salvage of critical documents/equipment if this can be done safely
 - Security and safeguarding of school assets.
 - Liaison with neighbours
- Building and Office Services:
 - Managing the reinstatement of the affected building(s)/area(s);
 - Managing the cleaning of affected building(s)/area(s).
 - Sourcing office equipment and supplies in conjunction with admin and finance & operations colleagues
 - Support for transfer to alternative premises.

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f) Teaching & Learning

Role holder

- Typically a Deputy or Assistant Head supported by additional teaching and support staff as required.

Responsibilities

- Identifying priorities for the continuation and restoration of teaching and learning across the school/designated curriculum area(s), and implement these such that teaching & learning is restored in the most effective and efficient manner;
- Identifying the priorities and resources required to deliver teaching & learning across the school/curriculum area(s) to inform development and maintenance of the plan;
- Implement the school's remote learning arrangements where appropriate/necessary;
- Liaison with and support for the IMT
- Implementing actions set out in the plan to deliver the continuity and restoration of teaching and learning.

g) Admin Support to IMT

Additional dedicated support may be required for support teams/activities, e.g. People Support

Role holder

- Office Manager or Senior Administrator + at least 1 further administrator

Responsibilities

- Management of information to/from the IMT (and Support Teams);
- Maintenance of Status Boards;
- Maintenance of Decision Logs;
- Maintenance of Action Logs;
- Call screening;
- Meeting management;
- Management of grab bags;
- Organisation of catering as required.

h) Therapies

Role holder

- Therapy Services Manager supported by clinical leads.

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Responsibilities

- Identifying priorities for the continuation and restoration of therapy provision and implement these such that therapy is restored in the most effective and efficient manner;
- Implement the remote/alternative therapy arrangements where appropriate/necessary;
- Liaison with the school's external therapy providers as necessary;
- Liaison with and support for the IMT
- Implementing actions set out in the plan to deliver the continuity and restoration of therapy
- Inform development and maintenance of the plan.

i) Finance & operations

Role holder

- Business Manager, supported by:
 - Central finance team
 - Regional finance team

Responsibilities

- Establishing emergency procedures for cost control;
- Providing funding and financial assistance to the IMT and support teams;
- Liaise with insurers and the premises team to arrange access to the affected site(s) for insurers and loss adjusters;
- Review and arrange revised insurance cover;
- Ensuring that the Trust can account for all costs which it is entitled to recover under the insurance policies;
- Arrange for opening of alternative premises;
- Co-ordinate fitting out alternative premises with furniture and equipment;

This function will operate remotely from the IMT location

j) ICT

Role holder

- ICT Manager

Responsibilities

- Arrange for continuity/reinstatement of ICT services
- Organise retrieval and restore of data from back up takes/system.
- Arrange for the provision of additional/new ICT equipment

This function will operate remotely from the IMT location

k) Compliance

Role Holder

- Head of Governance, Policy & Compliance.

Responsibilities

- Support for the IMT on the invocation and application of the IMP;
- Support for the Strategic Leadership Team (Cabinet + Board Chair);
- Co-ordination of the updating of the BCP and support plans;
- Ensure external agencies (e.g. DfE, ESFA) have been notified as appropriate.

l) Strategic Leadership Team

Role holders

- Cabinet
- Chair of Trustees
- Regional Director(s), supported by:
 - Head of Governance, Policy & Compliance
 - Communications & Marketing Manager

Responsibilities

- Media management
- Stakeholder engagement
- Liaison with DfE
- Liaison with ESFA
- Liaison with Charities Commission
- Assessment of long-term and academy-wide implications