



Granville Sports College is committed to:

- Raising standards of achievement and creating opportunities for all pupils, regardless of needs to develop their full potential and improve their life chances
- Raising the aspirations of the whole school community by creating a culture of continuous learning that celebrates success at all levels
- Developing a school that is the pride of the local area where pupils, parents, staff, governors and wider community feel valued, listened to and welcomed for the diverse contribution they make to our school life

## **Crisis Management Policy**

Co-ordinator: Mrs J Kingswood (Head teacher)  
Start date: February 2016  
Review date: February 2018 (or to be reviewed sooner in line with new guidance)

## **Links with Other Policies**

- Health & Safety Policy
- Equal Opportunity

## **Introduction**

A policy and procedure is to meet critical incidents and emergencies that are unusual and beyond the ordinary control of the School.

## **Aim**

The aims of this policy are to:

- Prepare governors, staff and pupils for any crises or disasters that may occur;
- Ensure that there is a plan that can be implemented swiftly in the case of an emergency caused by a disaster; and
- Guide responses to circumstances that are liable to strain the capacity of those handling the situation to think clearly.

## 1. Use of this policy and procedures

It must also be used in the aftermath of an emergency and by all members of staff managing the crisis. All staff should be familiar with the contents of this guidance so that all those involved know what to do, or what not to do, if an emergency occurs.

## 2. What can happen?

By 'disaster' or 'crisis' we mean an incident that has caused sufficient concern for the Head Teacher to declare that it constitutes a crisis/emergency.

This will include a death or serious injury to a member or members of the School's community e.g.:

In the School or in the wider Community of the School:

- the death of a student or member of staff from natural causes;
- a traffic accident involving staff or students;
- a deliberate act of violence;
- violence against staff or students;
- presence of a disease that is potentially infectious or contagious;
- a fire or major incident in a laboratory or workshop; and / or □ a serious accident of any sort involving death or mutilation.

Out of the School or in the immediate community:

- deaths or injuries on educational visits;
- tragedies involving students/children with many others (e.g. the Hillsborough disaster); and □ a bomb incident.

## 3. Factors to be considered in planning

Most aspects of disasters are self-evident but two are important to emphasise for the purpose of planning:

- **Feelings of grief, guilt and insecurity caused by the disaster.** These are felt by survivors, parents and staff alike (not only by those directly involved) and may strike at any time over a long period after the disaster. (See Post-traumatic Stress Disorder below).
- **Media interest.** This will focus on the 'human interest' and on discovering 'who is to blame'. To the media there is no such thing as an accident. Whether intended or not, the result can be to persuade people to say things in haste that they will bitterly regret at leisure.
- **Inappropriate media attention can sow discord.** In the immediate aftermath the media may interfere with communications and distract people from coping with the emergency.

#### **4. The early stages**

The following procedures are designed to deal with the problems in the early stages. It is assumed in what follows that the School's first duty is the protection and wellbeing of the School community and to support and help students, parents and staff involved.

The School must also be concerned to ensure that the handling of the disaster does not result in further damage to the School which will then cause all students and staff to lose in the long term.

It is essential that every Board knows:

- the roles to be performed by each person;
- the communications strategy; and
- the basic principles we will follow with the students and parents.

#### **5. Disaster/Emergency Team**

In term time, other things being equal, the crisis will be managed by a Disaster/Emergency team that will include:

- the Chair of the Governing Board;
- the Head Teacher
- the Deputy Head Teachers;
- Assistant Head Teachers;
- the SBM / HSM; and
- Other relevant staff, depending on the situation.

##### **The Head Teacher**

The Head Teacher, if not for some reason unavailable, will be the first contact for the Media. It is probable that as things develop the Chair of Governors will need to make a statement and written statements may be issued by others.

The Head Teacher should contact DERBYSHIRE CITY COUNCIL and the Chair before responding to the media.

##### **The Deputy Head Teacher or HSM**

The HSM will be responsible for arranging the necessary communications network including allotting duties to other support staff for typing statements etc. He/she will also be responsible for checking with insurers etc. to make sure that we do not make mistakes at that stage of the crisis.

The exact roles of others will have to be decided at the time as any crisis will undoubtedly have its own particular character and need a different reaction but among the roles will be:

- contact with parents;

- support for staff directly involved;
- liaison with remainder of staff and pupils;
- finding assistance for the school e.g. liaison with key DERBYSHIRE CITY COUNCIL personnel legal Etc; and
- Liaison with relevant authorities e.g. police/Foreign Office /Health and Safety Executive.

**Out-of-Term:** the person in charge on site will contact as quickly as possible as many members of the Emergency Team as possible.

## **6. Precautionary Rules for Activities off Site**

When a disaster occurs off site it is critical to know quickly who has been involved, therefore:

- all Educational Visit group leaders will make sure that there is a list in the School Office with the names of all students and a contact number/s for parent/s; and
- every member of staff on the visit (not only the leader) will keep with them at all times a list of students on the trip. (This may be the only starting point for identifying students if the leader may be incapacitated).

It is also vital that information is passed to the School as soon as possible so that support can be given to the staff on the ground and parents and that accurate information can be given to the media etc.

**All the staff on an off-site activity will:**

- know how an alarm is to be raised; and
- have a telephone number to contact to report any disaster. This will not be the School number in case the media jam the phone lines. (Any such number must be kept absolutely confidential).  
As soon as the injured etc are properly looked after and in the hands of competent assistance then communicating the news is the priority.

Once that has been done the priority of those on the ground becomes to look after students and each other. Dealing with the media, with parents and all other issues then becomes the job of the Disaster/Emergency Team.

## **7. Immediate Action in the Case of Disaster**

The Chair of Governors will be contacted immediately or in his/her absence, a nominated Vice Chair.

Failing either, another governor will be contacted. The relevant governor will be asked to join the team at the School.

- The police will be contacted immediately to ask for help in controlling access to the School;
- DERBYSHIRE CITY COUNCIL will be contacted and asked what resources they can make available;

- The Disaster Team will convene at an appropriate headquarter;
- Roles will be allotted;
- If the disaster is abroad then a contact will be opened up to authorities in the foreign country through the appropriate embassy or the Foreign Office and arrangements made to get a senior member of staff and someone familiar with the language (if possible) out to the scene of the disaster as a matter of urgency to take charge from the staff involved;

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Parents will be contacted by mobile phone. Or it may be sensible to send someone off-site to phone from an exchange that will not be blocked or overheard by the media, and permits private telephone conversations;

- Depending on the situation, headquarter will either be in the School Office or another suitable building on or near the School depending on the circumstances; and
- If students are off-site, parents should be re-united with them as fast as possible. (The Head Teacher (or delegated representative) will determine in the circumstances whether it may be helpful for parents to view the accident site so they can share the situation with their children).

## **8. Communicating with Parents**

Only nominated members of staff/governors have the authority to contact parents. Such persons, when answering or contacting parents will have a written list of known facts issued by the Head Teacher (or delegated representative). The nominated person will only:

- say what is known for a fact;
- say how parents will be updated as information becomes more complete;
- say how parents should contact hospitals etc; and □ check whether any help is needed with transport.

While the School's main responsibility is to parents whose children are involved, there will be other parents who, for one reason or another, will want to know what has happened. Depending on the circumstances it may be appropriate to:

- send an account that is written;
- post information on the School web-site; and □ use the media to communicate with parents.

The Head Teacher (or delegated representative) will make the decision.

## **9. Communicating with Students**

If the disaster occurs during term, much will depend on whether information is available while students are in the School.

The first priority will be to make sure that students **know what is true**.

The second priority will be, as appropriate, for the School community to share its shock and/or grief.

The procedure will be:

- students will be given in tutor groups by selected staff or through an assembly;
- the plain facts - no speculation; and
- absolutely honest responses to questions that cannot be answered.

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Normally the School will use the following strategy:

hold an assembly to give out information;

- return students to tutor group bases; and
- selected staff to go round the tutor groups and answer questions.

If a disaster occurs during the holiday, there may have to be special arrangements to allow families, friends and others to come into the School, and for an appropriate senior member of staff to be available to inform and support. This will be determined by the Head Teacher (or the Head Teacher's representative) and put into place by the Disaster Team.

## **10. Communicating with the Media**

Media interest is often inevitable. How you deal with this will often have a bearing on the perceived outcome of the situation you are dealing with. It may seem intrusive and unhelpful but media organisations are simply doing their job. It is important to realise, however, that their interest is legitimate. Used properly the media can help to communicate important messages to parents and the community. It is important to do everything to be helpful short of compromising the essential interests of the School.

The Head Teacher will explain to the media what is happening but will stress that students' and parents' interests must come first.

The Head Teacher will ask for the press's co-operation in achieving this aim.

The Head Teacher and Disaster Team will liaise with DERBYSHIRE CITY COUNCIL at all times in carrying out their role.

- All statements to the media will be made after discussion with the Head Teacher (or representative).
- The Chair of Governors will make a statement at the earliest but appropriate moment;
- Governors and staff will refer all questions to the Head Teacher (or delegated representative) and must refuse to make any comment on any statement put to them by the media unless agreed in advance.
- Remember that incidents often involve multi agency arrangements and it is important to liaise with all relevant organisations when making media announcements-such as police, health, and local government.

The following will inform the School's dealings with the media:

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- It should be remembered that the media will be looking for a story and headlines. However, there are important messages in difficult situations which demonstrate leadership and control- and demonstrates effective management;
- Close-knit School community devastated by disaster;  
Staff trying to hold things together under impossible circumstances;
- Caring School trying to do what it can;
- Each situation must be reviewed based on the circumstances; and
- Even the best prepared School or institution is affected by unexpected events.

## **11. Legal factors**

It must be remembered that everyone must be careful that nothing that is said or done should increase grief or wrong-foot the School or School staff in possible legal action.

The media will normally not be invited onto the school site and if they do make their way into the site uninvited, they should be referred to the Head Teacher, who will normally ask them to leave, and will explain why. The assistance of the police could be sought if necessary.

It is often possible to make an arrangement with the media and to manage or focus interest on specific briefings.

It is the responsibility of the Head Teacher, in consultation with the Disaster team and DERBYSHIRE CITY COUNCIL advisers, to determine whether a Press Conference should be arranged in a place away from the students.

If there are signs of devastation on the school site, it may be inevitable that the press will have to be allowed to take pictures but the Disaster Team will attempt to ensure that these do not add to the grief of parents and others.

No addresses will be given to the media.

## **12. Equal Opportunities**

In implementing this policy the School will have regard to the equal opportunity policies, especially regarding the treatment of staff or students with disabilities.

## **13. Monitoring and Review**

**The Head Teacher will:**

- report any emergencies to the Local Governing Board and DERBYSHIRE CITY COUNCIL as soon as practicable;
- will keep the governors informed of the progress of any aftermath of the crisis;

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- make a report on the response to the crisis and any lessons learned to the Local Governing Board and to DERBYSHIRE CITY COUNCIL;
- keep School staff informed of any developments following an emergency.

## Guidance - Dealing with the media

The Head Teacher will say that the School will:

- tell them everything known definitely as soon as parents have been told;
- tell them what we do **not** know at this stage;
- tell them when further information will be available;
- not speculate or go along with their speculation; and
- not give any names or confirming any names until all the members involved in the crisis/visit are accounted for.

Within these limits, the Head Teacher has the responsibility to give quotable statements and go on air.

### Interview Technique

Generally it will be important to 'come in under the question', being calmer and quieter than the questioners.

Two points clearly made and repeated are worth many made in a confused way.

It is crucial to remember that you are talking to the audience beyond the interviewer while answering the interviewer's questions.

Meet aggressive questions with facts e.g.:

- 'all trips go through a vetting procedure';
- 'we have fire practices termly';
- 'we have records and once we have done our duty by our parents and pupils we will check it out'.

Generally, the School will be saying over and over again that the School will turn its attention to causes and lessons to be learned when all those concerned have done what they can do for students and parents.

## Short and Medium Term Actions

### Short Term Action

The Governing Board will meet as soon as practicable after the crisis is over to be briefed by the Head Teacher and Disaster Team, and to decide how any inquiry should be carried. The Disaster Team will seek advice on this as appropriate.

It will be the responsibility of the Head Teacher to make an announcement about any inquiry. The Head Teacher will ensure that included in any public statement will be the governors' resolve to cooperate fully with any external inquiry.

The Disaster Team will determine in the circumstances how to help the School community come to terms with the shock and grief, and which appropriate agencies to use.

The Disaster Team will bear in mind in all its decisions the importance of enabling normal life to be resumed as soon as possible without denying or minimising what has happened.

Immediate steps should be taken to restore the situation in the case of fire etc. and lessons should be as normal as possible as soon as possible.

DERBYSHIRE CITY COUNCIL advice will be sought.

### **Medium Term**

The Disaster Team will determine how best to ease the return of students involved and what support they will need.

Normally appropriate consultancy/counselling will be sought (see Appendix 2) The more detailed advice in ['Wise before the Event'](#) will be considered.

## **Appendix 2**

### **Post-Traumatic Stress Disorder and the Role of Counselling**

It must be expected that some of those involved in the disaster will suffer from post-traumatic stress disorder. This may involve panic attacks, flashbacks, feelings of depression and guilt. They may be deeply disabling and are often affect adults more than children. Expert advice will be sought on this and part of the longer term plan must include plans to support both pupils and staff members who may be unable to return to school.

It was generally thought in the past that immediate access to counselling was helpful in the aftermath of a disaster. This has been shown to be counter-productive and in some cases damaging.

Advice now suggests that counselling should be postponed until at least a month after the event and then brought in for those who have been unable to 'move on.' The main thrust of the school's policy must be not to deny the events but to emphasise that 'life goes on' and that 'we have the strength to cope with even this.' It is vital that children and adults are not disempowered in dealing with the trauma of the disaster by the suggestion that they cannot cope without help or that they must relive the disaster to come to terms with it.

Signed ..... Jo Kingswood (Head Teacher)

Signed ..... Karen Mitchell (Chair of Governing Board)