**Business Continuity**

**Guidance for schools and education settings**

|  |  |
| --- | --- |
|  | **Use the templates below to supplement your Business Continuity Plan (BCP) if you need to.**  Please also refer to our [Business Continuity information for schools](https://www.milton-keynes.gov.uk/sites/default/files/2025-04/MKCC%20BC%20Information%20for%20Schools%202025.pdf) and our [Business Continuity Plan template](https://www.milton-keynes.gov.uk/sites/default/files/2025-05/MKCC%20Schools%20Business%20Continuity%20Plan%20Template%202025.docx).  Additional information can be found on our website by visiting the [Business continuity and resilience page](https://www.milton-keynes.gov.uk/business/business-continuity-and-resilience). |

**Introduction**

**A Business Continuity Plan (BCP) helps you to:**

**• Identify risk areas – Business Impact Analysis (BIA)**

**• Prepare and react, to any incident – Incident Management**

**• Maintain delivery of critical activities/services during an incident - Business Continuity**

**• Recover to its pre-incident capabilities – Recovery**

**Contained below are additional appendices you may wish to include when developing the BCP for your school or education setting.**

**All templates included in this guide are examples and final versions should be specific to your school and branded with your own logo and details.**

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**Incident Management Team initial meeting agenda**

|  |  |
| --- | --- |
| **1** | **Convene the Team (either virtually or face to face)**   1. Appoint Chair 2. Appoint Log Keeper 3. Determine if others need to join 4. Confirm the facts – what type of Incident are you dealing with:   Denial of access/disruption to workplace premises  Prolonged interruption of utilities/essential supplies  Human disasters – serious injury or death  Natural disasters (e.g., extreme weather, flood, earthquake)  Terrorist attack  Pollution  Health/Pandemic  Cyber attack  Financial crisis  Other, please state:   1. Call home (if necessary) 2. Notify Milton Keynes City Council (if necessary) |
| **2** | **Facility Status**   1. Safety – account for all staff, pupils, visitors, and contractors 2. Notify key teachers and send warning messages to put other staff on standby 3. Establish Emergency Services liaison (if required) |
| **3** | **PR and Communications**  Use holding statement template for guideline of information required and contact MK Council (Children’s Services Incident Management Team) for support. |
| **4** | **Status of IT (INFORMATION TECHNOLOGY) Infrastructure**  Network / Applications  Power  Telecoms / Website / social media |
| **5** | **Status of External Infrastructure**  Utilities  Medical Supplies (where appropriate)  Mail / Courier Services |
| **6** | **Communicate with external business functions**  Parents / Carers/ Guardians  Suppliers  Out of Hours Hirers |
| **7** | **Employee Issues**  Staff briefing  Staffing arrangements (key skills/ shifts)  Payroll / Cash availability |

**Grab bag checklist**

A Grab Bag contains the resources you may need to manage an incident in its early stages. It is good to have at least two bags – one on-site that is easily accessible, and one kept off-site.

**Be sure to check and update them both regularly.**

|  |  |
| --- | --- |
| Person responsible for our grab bag(s) |  |
| Location of grab bag (s) |  |
| **Documents and Data** |  |
| Business Continuity Plan – including up to date Contacts list |  |
| Maps and Locations (utility mains supply, hazardous areas, secure areas, alternative sites, routes, assembly areas) |  |
| Incident Log Sheets |  |
| Relocation Agreement(s) |  |
| Notebook and pens |  |
| **Finance** |  |
| Petty cash / p card |  |
| Access to banking facilities |  |
| **Personal Protective Equipment** |  |
| Torch and batteries |  |
| First Aid Kit |  |
| **Communications** |  |
| Mobile phone charger(s) |  |
| Radio |  |
| Camera (to record incident and outcome – will assist with potential claims) |  |

**Building Evacuation Manager Information and Briefing Pack**

As the Building Evacuation Manager your duty is to meet the emergency services as they arrive and provide an initial briefing on the location and situation. You will act as the single point of contact between the school and Emergency Services.

You should keep a written record of all conversations and pass them onto the school’s Incident Management Team as soon as possible.

**Key Questions asked by Emergency Services**

|  |  |
| --- | --- |
| Are persons present in the building? | **This will form a decision to risk committing emergency services resources into the danger to preserve life. Provide the most accurate information available - if you don’t know say so.** |
| How many, where are they, what are their names, are they injured? | **Be as specific as possible but do not guess or speculate- if you don’t know say so.** |
| What happened? | **Brief description of the event and what you are doing about it.** |
| Who is in charge? | **Explain you are the official and single representative of the Council, that you have immediate access to the IMT (Incident Management Team) leader for decisions, that you have Incident Management plans and that you will remain at the ICP.** |
| What protection systems are there? | **[amend as appropriate for your building] FM200, sprinklers, alarms, PA systems, automatic locks, fume extraction, ventilation systems, risers, fire doors and curtains, stairs and lift shafts, designated shelter in place areas.** |
| Where is everyone going to evacuate to? | **[amend as appropriate for your building] Primary and secondary assembly areas, emergency operations centre (EOC), Other reciprocal locations.** |
| What other information should I know? | **[amend as appropriate for your building]**  **Contained in the pack or specific to the event.** |
| What are the main building hazards? | **Storage Areas - Chemicals (cleaning materials, paint, aerosols), Car parking, Underground areas, Plant rooms and boilers, Asbestos, construction areas and building hazards (bays, drops, low ceilings, racking, flood areas, contamination**  **Neighbours - Tenants and sub-tenants, Details of the neighbours if they pose a specific risk**  **Landlord details and Keyholder details if multi-occupancy, Position of CCTV, or witnesses**  **Aerial power cables** |

**Staff, Pupils, Parents and Carers Briefing Statement**

**Once the facts are confirmed, a briefing to staff should be done as soon as possible** by the most senior person available. It is important to provide accurate and detailed information to counter any rumours.

|  |  |
| --- | --- |
| **Select what is appropriate** | **✓ if relevant** |
| The Facts. What happened (description of the incident, when, where and to whom in accordance with MK Council Communications Team) |  |
| Accounting for missing staff/pupils |  |
| Details of any casualties and the medical and welfare support they are receiving |  |
| What associates may do in terms of cash collections, sending flowers and cards, visiting and contact with casualties and what the corporate arrangements are. |  |
| Death in service issues - funeral arrangements, corporate representation, quiet time, time off, emotional issues, religious rituals, wishes of the family, symbols of remembrance, condolence book, financial/insurance support etc. |  |
| Sickness benefits, healthcare, counselling, family welfare, job security and recuperation for those staff off sick. |  |
| Investigation/inquiry timetable, criminal consequences, personal responsibilities, and cooperation with the authorities |  |
| New preventative measures to prevent re-occurrence |  |
| Use of expenses for increased costs during the disruption to normal processes |  |
| Personal expenses issues (for loss of private car, use of mobile telephones, travel, accommodation, and subsistence |  |
| Discipline and grievance procedure |  |
| Travel arrangements to alternative office/site |  |
| Where to report and when for which tasks by whom |  |
| Welfare support for confidential, optional emotional support, psychological debriefing, counselling, and group activities |  |
| Occupational health considerations. Symptoms, prevention of infections, treatment, cleanliness. |  |
| Health and safety and environmental considerations. Fault reporting, contamination, hazards, routes, access, personal protective equipment. |  |
| Security considerations. Vigilance, information security, regulatory issues, political/economic/social factors, email, and web for personal use |  |
| Media handling reminder (take note of reporter’s details and pass them on to the IMT. Provide MK Council Communications team contact details to refer enquiry to most appropriate spokesman. It is not advised to say ‘No comment’ |  |
| Issue briefing in writing to avoid speculation, interpretation, or uncertainty. |  |
| Next briefing/meeting or helpline update (date, time, place, etc.) |  |

**Incident Log**

|  |  |  |  |  |  |  |  |
| --- | --- | --- | --- | --- | --- | --- | --- |
| **Date** | **Time** | **Originator** | **Occurrence** | **Reported** | | **Action** | **Verified** |
|  |  |  |  | **To** | **When** |  |  |
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|  |  |  |  |  |  |  |  |
| **Date** |  | Date occurrence was logged | |  |  | **NB: Handover/takeover of log taker to be recorded** | |
| **Time** |  | Time occurrence was logged | |  |  | **NB: Handover/takeover of incident controller to be recorded** | |
| **Originator** |  | Person by name, organisation and contact details that originates the occurrence | | |  |
| **Reported to** | | To whom this was escalated or disseminated | |  |  |  |  |
| **Action** |  | Tasks or objectives agreed with measurable results | |  |  |  |  |
| **Verified** |  | Independent check to validate the accuracy of the occurrence | |  |  |  |  |

**Media Statement**

The following details will be needed by **Milton Keynes City Council Communications Team** to release an initial holding statement to the media. Once you have this information, please contact a member of the MK Comms Team (contact details are set out in the contacts section of the BCP).

**What has happened?** Brief description of incident

**Where**  Location (including building name)

**When**  Date and time

**Who - affected** (No names or details unless permission granted by a police press officer)

**Who – supporting** Who oversees the incident?

Which emergency services / authorities / staff teams are involved?

**More details** Timeframe for more news, if known.

When / where / from whom will more information be available?

**Your contact details**  (This is just for the use of the communications team)

**Further contact** Agree a timeframe for any planned updates

**If you have been contacted directly by the media, please also take the name, and contact details of the journalist, including which media outlet they are calling from.**

Before a holding statement is issued, if you are asked for details by the media, remember:

* You should direct media to the communications contacts listed above. Never use ‘no comment’ or ‘no cameras,’ but just reiterate that ‘our media relations team are there to answer your questions.’
* If pressed, particularly if you are on the scene, be clear that the council’s priority is the safety of those involved and that the media will be given an update as soon as possible.
* Don’t speculate about what you don’t know, including the cause of the incident.
* The exception is if you are asked about an incident as a member of the public rather than as a representative of the council. Here, you may give your personal record of events. Bear in mind that if you are in uniform, you will be regarded as a representative of the council regardless of how you are answering.
* No attempt should be made to censor the media despite potential justification.
* Journalists might not announce themselves as such. They could be dressed as the public or as doctors / emergency services personnel to gain unauthorised access.

**Reference Documentation**

**Copies of the documents below are held by the following persons or kept in the following locations;**

|  |  |
| --- | --- |
| **Document** | **Location** |
| 1. Health and Safety Policy | **[Insert school specific location]** |
| 1. Property Handbook for School | **[Insert school specific location]** |
| 1. Employer’s Liability Certificate | **[Insert school specific location]** |
| 1. Emergency Evacuation Procedures | **[Insert school specific location]** |
| 1. Emergency School Closure | **[Insert school specific location]** |
| 1. Accident/Incident Reporting | **[Insert school specific location]** |
| 1. Violent Incident Reporting | **[Insert school specific location]** |
| 1. Bomb Threat Procedure | **[Insert school specific location]** |
| 1. Staff Lists | **[Insert school specific location]** |
| 1. Student Lists | **[Insert school specific location]** |
| 1. Inventories | **[Insert school specific location]** |
| 1. Dangerous Chemicals Guide | **[Insert school specific location]** |
| 1. Site Plans | **[Insert school specific location]** |
| 1. BT Telephone Directory for MK | **[Insert school specific location]** |
| 1. Asbestos Log | **[Insert school specific location]** |
| 1. Call Chart | **[Insert school specific location]** |

**Specimen Letter to Parents/Carers Following Incident**

**It is vital to keep parents up to date with what is happening at your school, even more so in times of an emergency. The below is a specimen letter that you may wish to use and adapt.**

*Dear Parent or Carer*

*You will be aware of the recent incident that has affected our school. We are currently working closely with the Local Authority to ensure that disruption is kept to the minimum. However, as you will appreciate, it will be a while before we are back to normal. For the immediate future we have made the following arrangements, which will come into effect from………………………*

*As from today we will be using ……………………………as the school office:*

*Please note that our contact numbers are Tel numbers …………………………………………………………………*

*You will, no doubt, hear differing information from various sources. Any information not provided by the school or Milton Keynes City Council must be treated with considerable caution. We will provide updated information as frequently as possible both via a notice board at the entrance to the school and a weekly update letter to every family.*

*ted information as frequently as possible both via a notice board at the entrance to the school and a weekly update letter to every family.*

*Thank you for your support and understanding during what has been a difficult time for us all.*

*Yours sincerely, etc.*

**Suggested First Aid Kit Contents**

**There is no standard list of items that should be included in a first aid kit. Dependent upon the activities taking place at the premises, the following is a suggested guide of the minimum stock of first aid items for those where there is no special risk in the workplace.**

Use this checklist to ensure the first aid kit is replenished appropriately.

|  |  |
| --- | --- |
| Leaflet giving general guidance on first aid, e.g., HSE (Health and Safety Executive) (Health and Safety Executive) leaflet “basic advice on first aid at work” |  |
| 20 x individually wrapped sterile adhesive dressings (assorted sizes) |  |
| 2 x sterile eye pads; |  |
| 4 x individually wrapped triangular bandages; |  |
| 6 x safety pins; |  |
| 6 x medium sized (approx. 12cm x 12cm) individually wrapped sterile unmediated wound dressings; |  |
| 2 x large (approx. 18cm x 18cm) individually wrapped sterile unmediated wound dressings; |  |
| 1 x pair of disposable gloves |  |

Should you have any specific requirements, please contact the Milton Keynes City Council Health & Safety Team.

**Business Interruption Insurance Log**

As part of its insurance programme the Council has Business Interruption Insurance to cater for most large scale, critical incidents – these are associated to incidents that involve damage to the Council’s property. As such any increased costs of working associated to managing such an incident may be claimed for.

1. Record all additional expenditure incurred because of a critical incident for your school.

2. Send your completed spreadsheet to the Risk and Insurance Team

(Note: additional costs could include, but not limited to: - overtime payments; temporary employee costs; taxi fares; overnight accommodation; etc.) In the event of a large critical incident involving more than one school, the Milton Keynes City Council Insurance Team will collate all expenditure relating to that incident across the Council.

|  |  |  |  |
| --- | --- | --- | --- |
| **Date** | **Description** | **Amount** | **Cost Centre to be reimbursed** |
|  |  |  |  |
|  |  |  |  |
|  |  |  |  |
|  |  |  |  |
|  |  |  |  |
| **(Note:** additional costs could include, but not limited to: - overtime payments; temporary employee costs; taxi fares; overnight accommodation; etc) | | | |
| **Remember: it is also important to involve a loss adjuster as quickly as possible following a major incident, therefore contact with the Risk and Insurance Manager should be made as soon as possible to ensure appropriate arrangements are made.** | | | |

**Fuel Disruption**

**General Business Continuity Considerations:**

* Be aware of notifications relating to potential fuel crisis
* Refer to your Business Continuity Plan to identify critical functions that must be maintained
* Identify which resources support those critical services
* Would staff be able to travel? Do they have alternative means of transportation?
* Are non-critical employees able to safely cover those critical roles?
* Consider how a reduction in service could be achieved whilst still delivering the critical services
* Be aware of where your employees live
* Consider car-sharing
* Consider use of communal travel, if appropriate, e.g., taxi people carriers or minibus
* Be aware of other demands on employees (e.g., childcare issues, other schools may have to close; staff sickness)
* Can mutual aid (sharing expertise or resources, such as other Local Authority) to help deliver critical services. Would staff be able to work at other schools, and vice versa?
* Consider keeping a supply of critical specialist equipment – suppliers may struggle to deliver
* Keep details of alternative suppliers should your primary supplier fail

**Hints and Tips to save fuel when driving:**

* Drive smoothly
* Use higher gears
* Keep the windows closed - use your car's internal ventilation system.
* Use cruise control
* Avoid excess idling
* Avoid over-revving
* Avoid high speeds
* Use air-conditioning sparingly
* Avoid rush hour
* Keep a constant speed

**Lockdown Guidance**

Procedures for the evacuation of a building are, overall, well-known, and well-practiced. It is the intention of this guidance to ensure that a lockdown is treated with the same time and attention. All schools should consider the need for robust and exercised school lockdown procedures.

Lockdown procedures should be seen as a sensible and proportionate response to any external or internal incident which has the potential to pose a threat to the safety of staff and pupils in the school.

Lockdown procedures may be activated in response to any number of situations, but some of the more typical might be:

* A reported incident / civil disturbance in the local community (with the potential to pose a risk to staff and pupils in the school)
* An intruder on the school site (with the potential to pose a risk to staff and pupils)
* A warning being received regarding a risk locally, of air pollution (smoke plume, gas cloud etc.)
* A major fire in the vicinity of the school
* The proximity of a dangerous dog roaming loose

There are several variables that will dictate exactly how an individual school responds to those situations identified, for example:

* Access to school bell controls to raise an alarm in an emergency
* Other means of internal communications - messenger, two-way radios, mobile phone, internal e-mail, texts etc.
* School site plan e.g., the layout of building(s) and their proximity to one another
* Age of students
* Geographical location – urban/rural, presence of secure perimeter fence

It is of great importance that the school’s lockdown procedures are familiar to members of the senior management team, school administrators, teaching staff and non-teaching staff.

To achieve this, a lockdown drill should be undertaken at least once a year. Depending on their age, pupils should also be aware of the plan. (Regular practices will increase their familiarity).

**Lockdown Arrangements**

It is recommended that schools develop their own unique lockdown procedures. However, here are two examples of a partial and full lockdown for information.

**Example 1: Partial Lockdown**

This may be a result of a reported incident / civil disturbance in the local community with the potential to pose a risk to staff and pupils in the school.

Immediate action:

* All outside activity to cease immediately, pupils and staff return to building. (There need to be a means of communicating the alert to duty staff at break times, as well as PE teaching staff on school fields, etc)
* All staff and pupils remain in building and external doors and windows locked
* Free movement may be permitted within the building dependent upon circumstances

‘Partial lockdown’ is a **precautionary measure** but puts the school in a state of readiness (whilst retaining a degree of normality) should the situation escalate.

**Example 2: Full Lockdown**

This signifies an **immediate threat** to the school and may be an escalation of a partial lockdown.

Immediate action:

* All pupils return to base (classroom, tutor room or other agreed location e.g., sports/dining hall)
* Front office staff to ensure that their office(s) are locked, and Police called if necessary. (Schools can also contact the MKCC Children’s Services Management Team – contact details to be found in your business continuity plan.)
* External doors locked. Classroom doors locked (where a member of staff with key is present). Windows locked, blinds drawn, pupils sit quietly out of sight (e.g., under desk or around a corner)
* Staff (and Pupils) should be encouraged to set mobile phones to silent to avoid unnecessary attention being drawn to their location. Similarly, lights, Smart boards and computer monitors should be turned off.
* Register taken -the office will contact each class in turn for an attendance report Staff and pupils remain in lockdown until it has been lifted by a senior member of staff / emergency services.

**Nobody should move around the school.**

* If a lockdown occurs whilst a group of staff/pupils are offsite they should be informed as soon as possible to ensure they do not return to the school site whilst the lockdown is in place.
* At any point during the lockdown, an agreed signal, perhaps the fire alarm or a PA system, may sound which is a cue to evacuate the building.

**Examples of discreet communication channels:**

* Where staff have access to an internal e-mail system then they could access their account and await further instruction. In practical terms, staff would need to be familiar with accessing their account through a variety of means e.g., laptop, smartphone, or tablet, and be able to do this discreetly without drawing attention to themselves.
* Where a school uses ‘Parentmail’ or similar, then staff could be put into a defined user group.
* School lockdown procedures, especially arrangements for communicating with parents, should be routinely shared with parents either by newsletter or via the school website.

**Parents/carers should be given enough information about what will happen so that they:**

* Are reassured that the school understands their concern for their child’s welfare, and that it is doing everything possible to ensure his/her safety
* Do not need to contact the school. Calling the school could tie up telephone lines that are needed for contacting emergency providers
* Do not come to the school. They could interfere with emergency provider’s access to the school and may even put themselves and others in danger
* Wait for the school to contact them about when it is safe for parents/carers to collect their children, and where this will be from. The communication with parents needs to reassure parents that the school understands their concern for their children’s welfare and that everything that can possibly be done to ensure children’s safety will be done. However, it may also be prudent to reinforce the message;

***‘..the school is in a full lockdown situation. During this period the switchboard and entrances will be un-manned, external doors locked and nobody allowed in or out…’***

**Emergency Services**

It is important to keep lines of communication open with Emergency Services as they are best placed to offer advice as a situation unfolds. The school site may or may not be cordoned off by Emergency Services depending on the severity of the incident that has triggered the lockdown. Emergency Services will support the decision of the Headteacher with regarding the timing of communication to parents.

In the event of a prolonged lockdown or more severe scenario, Milton Keynes City Council’s Emergency Planning Team has the capacity to provide humanitarian assistance by establishing a Reception Centre for friends and family outside of the cordoned area.

**Next steps and further advice**

It would be good practice to:

* Conduct a number of table top exercises with the senior management team to exercise the procedures against various scenarios
* Rehearse lockdown arrangements with all staff and pupils
* Display lockdown drill information in every classroom alongside information relating to fire drills and on the website for parents and carers information

If you have any questions, please contact [businessresilience@milton-keynes.gov.uk](mailto:businessresilience@milton-keynes.gov.uk)