



Emergency Policy

This is a whole school policy.

Author: Ian Lloyd

Action	Responsibility	Date
Reviewed	Mr I Lloyd	January 2021
Approved	Mr A. Allman	
Next Review	Mr Ian Lloyd	September 2022

Definition of an Emergency

When a pupil, member of staff or other accompanying individual in the course of an officially recognised activity is killed, suffers a life threatening injury or is in peril.

General Statement of Policy

The policy aims to provide staff at the School, or someone acting as a point of contact, with guidelines on how to respond to an emergency. The policy recognises that by the nature of emergencies they will happen unexpectedly and possibly when the School is not fully staffed. The policy is therefore not prescriptive, but aims to give a member of staff confronted with an emergency a starting point. The policy mainly assumes the worst case position, which is when the School is closed.

Health and Safety Policies

There is a policy covering Educational Visits. This policy provides guidelines to Staff on what to do in the event of an emergency and the need for a contact point. The guidelines will co-ordinate with this Policy providing guidance both to staff in the field and at School.

Notification

The School or the Activity Contact (who could be a member of staff or member of staff's family) may be notified of an emergency in a number of ways. Examples are:

- By telephone, text or email from the leader or other member of staff.
- By telephone, text or email by any party member.
- From a parent.
- From the police.
- From the tour operator or their liaison person in the country in question.
- From the Foreign and Commonwealth Office.
- Through the Media.

Immediate Action

Be aware that the person passing the information may be involved in the emergency and could be in a state of shock. Initially, accidents can appear much worse than they actually are. Therefore, it is important to understand the possible state of mind of the person reporting the incident and to keep matters in perspective until hard facts are known. The immediate action is to get as much information as possible from the person notifying the incident; for example:

- Contact telephone numbers.
- Email or fax numbers.
- Location of the incident.
- Names of Hospitals where party members are and, if available, telephone numbers.
- Number of local emergency services.
- Location and contact number of where the rest of the party is.

This information, along with the circumstances of the emergency, should be written down.

Follow Up Action

As soon as practicable, the first member of staff on receiving the information should move to the General Office. If not already at School, staff should be called as follows:

Headmaster
Senior Deputy Headmaster
Deputy Headmistress
Assistant Headmistress
Head of Prep School, if Prep School pupils involved
Head of House

A member of the Senior Leadership Team (SLT) is always in the locality of the School during holiday periods when pupils are away on School trips.

Consideration should be given to calling in the following staff, if the School is closed (use the latest staff telephone list available):

- Administrative staff
- Some or all Heads of House
- The Operations Manager to open up the School, to switch on the heating and organise security
- Teaching Staff (some or all)
- Ceidiog Hughes, for PR advice and to deal with the media

Reaction

Significant news will spread quickly by phone and social media. The important factor at this point is not to become “swamped” with information. Equally the worst should not be assumed until there is confirmation. This should be the message to naturally worried parents or staff.

Parents and staff relatives can be invited to the School though it would initially be preferable if they were to stay at home with the promise of regular updates. However, parents of boarding pupils may wish to travel to the School. Such situations will need very delicate handling.

Follow Up Actions

- Obtain emergency information phone numbers if available.
- Call for more information from the party contact.
- Have available, for emergency services, names of party members, contact numbers at the School (confirm by fax or email if possible).
- Call in Staff as required, see above.
- Notify the local police and consider requesting assistance in managing the press and other interested persons, to give arriving parents the necessary privacy.
- If the School is in session, identify any brothers/sisters of party members and consider using House staff to take them home if day pupils, or finding somewhere for them to be placed, with a member of staff, if boarders. In some cases they may be better left with their peers.
- Give written guidelines to staff operating the switchboard and others likely to receive phone calls in respect of dealing with parents.
- Give the name of a Senior Person at the School to the tour company emergency co-ordinator, if applicable.
- Arrange for a meeting of senior staff.
- Open the kitchens.
- Provide a separate room for the relatives arriving at the School.
- Delegate a member of staff to work with Ceidiog Hughes, to handle Press enquiries. **All** Press enquiries to be handled through this channel alone.
- Provide Ceidiog Hughes’ name and contact number to the press.

GOLDEN RULE – **Do not** confirm anything about the incident and those involved unless based on absolute fact. Confirmation on those involved may take a long time to come, in particular if from overseas. Great care must be taken about giving out any information about a pupil without parental permission.

Hold a Senior Leadership Meeting

If the School is closed this may have to be delayed until appropriate staff arrive. The Senior person present, as a matter of course, should delegate to allow him/her to oversee, co-ordinate and be available to meet relatives.

The following duties should be delegated:

- Media Management.
- Liaison with relatives.
- Liaison with unaffected parents and pupils.
- Site Security
- Catering.
- Provision of overnight accommodation.
 - local B&B's
 - hotels
 - School – last resort
- Keeping a log.
- Planning for the future.
- Detailing Deputies for Senior Staff to enable suitable rest.
- Selecting Staff to travel to hospitals, including abroad, to bring back pupils.
- Making contact with the School's Insurers and, if appropriate, the Travel Insurance Company.

Offers of Assistance

In some circumstances there will be a lot of offers of help from well meaning people. Do not in the first instance allow them to detract from establishing the real situation. Other than assistance from the emergency services, Insurers, School Medical Officer and Solicitor, log the offers and return to them as the situation becomes clear. It may be appropriate to consider whether outside agencies should be called in to assist. This will depend on the scale of the problem. Such agencies could include organisations that provide counselling services and media management.

Media

The aim should be to:

- Control information.
- Provide one authoritative source.
- Be consistent.
- Retain good will.

When practicable provide the press with their own room and details of accommodation. Have pupil photographs available if a decision to provide them is taken in conjunction with parents. Parents should not be available to the media unless they so request. Ian Lamming is available, even if on holiday. He should be the first point of contact by the media designated member of staff.

Information Release

Consider how reliable is the information being received at the School.

Try to clarify the position as to who may be dead, very seriously ill, i.e. in a life threatening situation and those seriously or less seriously ill.

Determine how to break the news to parents, staff and pupils.

Give thought as to travel to the scene, this will increasingly become an issue. (Staff can be asked to use School transport, if the distances are not too great.) Alternatively, look at the option of hiring a coach from local operators.

Breaking the News

The Senior Leadership Team have experience in dealing with bereavement and life threatening situations.

Families should be told separately as to the known position of their children or relatives. If nothing has been confirmed to an acceptable level, then great care must be taken. When discussing the known information with parents, staff should be aware that people react very differently to bad news. Lack of reaction should not be taken at face value. Some relatives may wish to leave immediately and this is their right. In other cases hysteria may result requiring medical assistance.

If the School is in session teaching staff will have a valuable role to play in monitoring the impact on pupils. Some staff, however, may take the news badly and, in the interests of the children and themselves, should be allowed to go home. Maintaining as much School routine as possible will be the preferred option for the bulk of pupils.

Public Outcry

The School's safety record, existence of Health and Safety policies and the experience of staff involved in the activity will come under immediate scrutiny. Loose words to parents, pupils and media at the initial stage will exacerbate the problem. "Rumours" should not be commented on. All staff, including all non-teaching staff, must have this message reiterated to them by senior staff.

Time Scale

In the event of a major emergency, consideration will need to be given to keeping the School open overnight. There will be a need to replace staff in the key functions, even though they may resist this. However, everyone involved should be aware that such situations are emotionally draining as well as physically demanding. Staff will, therefore, need to rest even if it is at School.

After 24 hours, emergencies settle into a pattern. Matters to consider after this time are:

- Briefing to staff.
- Special Assembly.
- Visit to site.
- Handling of information.

- Responding to media demands.
- Responding to local and national agencies.

Conclusion

Experience shows that, when confronted by an emergency situation, those involved face some very difficult decisions, the more so because of the absence of “hard” information. If you are the initial point of contact, it is important not to be overwhelmed, but to take matters one at a time, be prepared to think problems out and not to provide a knee jerk response. You or other School staff will not be in a position to influence the outcome of the majority of emergencies. School staff however can make a difference to the lives of relatives, the party leader and the pupils, both on the trip and at School.

Administrative Details

This policy will be given by Trip Leaders to all those designated as points of contact. The Headmaster’s Secretary is to be notified prior to any overnight trips of the designated point of contact. This person should hold details of all staff and pupils on the trip. Copies of this policy will be kept in the General Offices. Copies will also be provided to Senior Staff, both teaching and non-teaching and copies are accessible on the staff network.