



Northern Arch

LEARNING PARTNERSHIP

Trust - Business Continuity Strategy

Accepted by: Board of Trustees July 2019

Approving Body: Board of Trustees

Trust Executive Team Reviewer: Trust Business & Operations Manager

Review Cycle: Annual

Last reviewed: November 2023

Date of Next review: November 2024

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1 Introduction

- 1.1 The Academies Financial Handbook states that Trust's must recognise and manage present and future risks, including contingency and business continuity planning, to ensure continued and effective operations.
- 1.2 The Trust will ensure that business continuity management is embedded within its culture and that all those connected with the delivery of services, including partners and key suppliers are fully aware of their roles and responsibilities in ensuring business continuity.
- 1.3 Whilst no amount of planning can totally prevent accidents and problems occurring, it is recognised that some can be prevented and the effects of others minimised by taking sensible precautionary measures. The Trust expects that all staff will be familiar with the routines and procedures for dealing with emergencies. It is not possible, or desirable, to write a plan for every possible disruption. No matter what the cause of the incident, the effect can generally be summarised as:
 - An inability to carry out daily and/or critical activities
 - Loss of life or serious injury to Trust staff and students/pupils or members of the public
 - Loss of buildings, or part of or access to them
 - Loss or failure of ICT systems
 - Loss/shortage of staff
 - Loss of critical suppliers or partners
 - Adverse publicity and/or reputational impact
- 1.4 In the event of a critical incident the priorities of those in charge of the school or trip will be to:
 - Preserve life
 - Minimise personal injury
 - Safeguard the interests of all pupils and staff
 - Minimise any loss to property and to return to normal working as quickly as possible.

2 Scope

- 2.1 This strategy covers all the schools and central trust services which are operated by the Trust.

3 Definitions

- 3.1 The term "the Trust" refers to Northern Arch Learning Partnership.
- 3.2 The term "school(s)" refers to all the academies and QE Sixth form College which make up Northern Arch Learning Partnership.

4 Aims

- 4.1 This strategy sets out the Trust's approach for planning and responding to major incidents which affect the continuity of its business and the safety of its staff, pupils and stakeholders.

5 Responsibilities

- 5.1 The actions required under this policy and the persons identified as responsible are set out in the paragraphs below.

6 Planning for and Managing Emergencies or Critical Incidents

- 6.1 Each school and the Central Services Team will carry out an assessment of critical activities to identify key risks to its operations and the safety of its pupils, staff and stakeholders. This assessment will be led by the respective Principal/Head Teacher/Head of School and Trust Operations & Business Manager and will inform the business continuity planning process.
- 6.2 Each school and the Central Services Team will maintain its own Business Continuity Plan to address and respond to the key risks identified.
- 6.3 This plan will be activated in the event of a critical incident or an emergency i.e. when an incident occurs that impacts on the delivery of our critical activities or the safety and well-being of our pupils, staff and other stakeholders; and when normal responses, procedures and coping strategies are deemed insufficient to deal with the circumstances.
- 6.4 Planning should be based on the principle that in the first instance and where possible other staff, sites and premises within the Trust should be utilised to support immediate responses and the return to normal operations.
- 6.5 As a minimum the plan will include:
- Stakeholder information and key contact details
 - Business continuity response team membership and their responsibilities.
 - Business impact analysis on essential services and the impact of disruption.
 - Communications plan (Where an incident involves the closure of a school then the CEO and Chair of the Board of Directors should be informed as part of this response)
 - Contingency plans and strategies for possible risk scenarios such as a loss of site or loss of staff.
 - Details of alternative premises if access to the school site is prevented
 - Any documents that will assist in dealing with the situation, such as media advice, IT recovery plans, location of emergency shut-off valves etc.
 - Somewhere to record all decisions and actions (to protect against litigation post-incident).
- 6.6 A copy of the respective plan should be maintained by and stored the incident management team for each school to allow access out of normal working hours. The Principal/Head Teacher/Head of School and Trust Operations & Business Manager will be responsible for the school plan.
- 6.7 A copy of the latest version of each school and central services plan should also be forwarded to the Trust Operations & Business Manager who will maintain a central record of all plans.

7 ICT Disaster Recovery

- 7.1 An ICT disaster recovery procedure should be established for each school and central services in line with the respective business continuity plan. This will be the responsibility of the Schools/College ICT Managers.
- 7.2 The plan should also identify actions to take in the event of loss of ICT hardware, software, infrastructure or connectivity, or the loss of key ICT related staff.

8 Testing and Review

- 8.1 It is the responsibility of the Trust Operations & Business Manager to ensure that plans are reviewed on a regular basis and always reviewed and appraised upon the conclusion of an incident.
- 8.2 As a minimum all plans must be subject to some form of review at least once in every twelve-month period.

9 Risk Management

- 9.1 The approach to business continuity planning recognises the links with the Trust's Risk Policy and the risks arising from critical incidents will be included when developing and monitoring the Risk Register.

10 Breaches of this policy

- 10.1 It is the responsibility of all employees of the Trust to familiarise themselves with the contents of this policy and to note where a responsibility within the policy is assigned or delegated to them.
- 10.2 Failure to carry out the responsibilities set out within this policy may lead to disciplinary proceedings which will be conducted according to the Trust's Disciplinary Policy.

11 Further Guidance

DfE Guidance – Academy trust risk management – Updated August 2024

<https://www.gov.uk/government/publications/academy-trust-financial-management-good-practice-guides/academy-trust-risk-management>

12 Equality Statement

- 12.1 Those within Northern Arch Learning Partnership who have responsibilities defined within this policy will carry out their duties with regard to the Trust's Equality Statement and commitment to abide by the Equality Act 2010:
- Accepting our legal duty to ban unfair treatment and achieve equal opportunities in the classroom, the workplace and in wider society.
 - We have regard for our duty to:
 - Eliminate unlawful discrimination, harassment and victimisation
 - advance equal opportunity
 - Foster good relations

13 Legal Considerations

- 13.1 The Trust recognises its duties as set out in the "Academies Trust Handbook"