

POLICY STATEMENT

This plan has been developed to minimise the impact of any crises at Alexanders Private School on children, parents and carers, directors and our wider community in the event of an emergency. It aims to outline the school's response to all forms of emergency.

Alexanders Private School should be able to respond to unexpected situations in a co-ordinated and effective way. Potential critical incidents include:

- Sudden death of any member of the school community
- Violence against any member of school community
- Intentional vandalism of part of the building
- Road, rail or air traffic accident involving any member of the community
- Natural disaster in the school's local or national community
- Fire or bomb threat
- Civil disturbances and/or acts of terrorism
- Extreme weather event

SCOPE OF THE POLICY

This policy applies to all staff and contract service providers, all learners and all visitors to school building as well as all parents and carers of learners registered at the school, and directors.

GUIDING PRINCIPALS

- This policy is in addition to the school's other plans including:
 1. Critical Incident plan (CIP)
 2. Emergency Evacuation Plan (EEP)
 3. Emergency Closure Plan (ECP)
 4. Lock Down Procedures (LDP)
 5. Bereavement Guidelines (BGU)

INSTANT RESPONSE

It is essential that the response to any emergency is timely, consistent, professional and co-ordinated in a way that minimises the impact to all. The response to emergencies will be dependent on the nature of the critical incident.

Immediate Evacuation or Immediate Containment

The sounding of alarms will instigate the automatic response to either:

- a potential fire/bomb threat where immediate evacuation of the buildings is required (fire bell); or
- a 'lock down' where immediate containment of all people within the building is required (hooter).

The declaration of an emergency (via the SLT WhatsApp or Whole Team WhatsApp groups) will institute an 'instant response plan':

1. The Principal (or Emergency Deputy in their absence) will declare an emergency;
2. The Principal will summon all members of SLT immediately to the SLT Office for emergency planning;
3. The SLT will take specific responsibility for key aspects of the emergency response as follows:
 - a. Headteacher – overall co-ordination of response and informing the Board of Directors
 - b. (i) Emergency Lead – overall co-ordination of staff
(ii) overall co-ordination of all aspects of internal and external communications
 - c. Health & Safety Officer – overall co-ordination of learners
4. The SLT Office will remain the focal point for our critical incident coordination and only decisions from the SLT Office will be accepted as authoritative by all members of the school community.
5. All media responses and other public communications must be co-ordinated through the SLT.

CRITICAL INCIDENT POLICY (CIP)

CIP protocols to include:

- Details of emergency services & contact details
- Incident logs
- Site security details (held by Health & Safety Officer)
- Emergency evacuation details including:
 - (i) school building / site plans
 - (ii) isolation points for main services
 - (iii) locations of chemical storage in the building
 - (iv) details of chemicals stored in the building
 - (v) learner, parent, staff and director emergency contact list (updated at all times)

EMERGENCY EVACUATION PROCEDURE (EEP)

On hearing the Fire Bell, all staff will stop what they are doing and calmly inform children that there is a fire alarm. Depending on their role, staff will undertake action to support evacuation procedures and this may include operation of the fire alarm panel, raising the alarm, calling the Fire Brigade, location and use of portable fire fighting equipment, dealing with the evacuation of members of staff or learners with specific needs, awareness of special fire hazards within school (COSHH), stopping machinery, the contents and location of the Fire Log Book and Emergency Evacuation Plan (EEP).

Staff in charge of learners are responsible for:

- Taking out with them the laminated emergency card with learner numbers (register)
- Asking learners to stand and leading them in silence immediately to the nearest safe emergency exit.
- Taking a headcount at the fire assembly point and then the register to ensure that all learners are present.
- If any learner is not accounted for, their name must be reported to the Principal or Head of Key Stage.
- Staff will not engage in conversations with other staff

All **learners** are responsible for:

- Knowing the action to be taken if they discover a fire / how to raise the fire alarm
- Knowing the action to be taken on hearing the fire bell
- Knowing the location of fire exits around the school building
- Knowing the location of the emergency assembly point
- Standing in line and in silence at the emergency assembly point
- Not engaging in conversations with other staff or learners
- Listening carefully for any instructions that their teacher is giving
- Acting as a possible "fire buddy" to children particularly vulnerable in emergencies
- Knowing the dangers of fire and the importance of fire safety within the school
- Knowing the implications of false alarms

The Principal is responsible for:

- Arranging a fire drill at least twice per annum.
Drills will be conducted in as many different conditions as possible.
- Identifying if a fire alarm is genuine or an accident.
If the cause is obvious, the Principal may choose to return to the building and silence the Fire Bell.
If the cause is not obvious, a member of the SLT will contact the Fire brigade
- Acting as Emergency Director of Operations (point of contact for emergency services)
- Coordinating the evacuation
- Informing the Emergency services upon their arrival of any unaccounted for persons
- In case of a critical incident, gathering as much information as possible.
- Evaluating and reporting on any evacuation from the school building.

Members of the Senior Leadership Team are responsible for:

- Assisting the Principal in observing the fire and other emergency drills; taking note of the time it took to evacuate the school;
- Contacting the emergency services;
- Ensuring that the gate into the playground is opened to allow access to emergency vehicles; and
- If the 'All clear' is given by the emergency services, affecting the safe return of all persons to the school building.

The Staff are responsible for:

- Checking their area for remaining learners or staff and leading them safely to the emergency assembly point
- Closing doors and windows behind them without putting themselves at risk
- Paying particular attention to children or adults who are vulnerable in case of emergencies.
- Reporting their area as SWEPT to the Principal or Head of Key Stage
- If they are attached to a class, once out of the building, re-joining that class and supporting their class.

The Support Staff are responsible for:

- Ensuring all visitors and contractors to the school sign the visitors' book and are aware of the Emergency Evacuation Procedure published in school reception
- Ensuring that any individuals or organisations taking part in out of hours activities on school premises are aware of the school's Emergency Evacuation Procedure.
- Collecting the class registers
- Collecting all medication (such as inhalers, EpiPens, insulin) that may be necessary in an emergency
- Making their way to the assembly point
- Ensuring that all visitors and staff members are accounted for
- Maintaining the Emergency Box (which should contain):
 1. Serious Incident Form (to be handed to the ambulance)
 2. Contact lists for whole school (to be updated every term)
 3. Staff Contact List (to be updated every term)
 4. a list of children's medical conditions / medication needs
 5. School building / site plan

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LOCKDOWN PROCEDURE (Immediate Containment)

Circumstances that may create an immediate containment scenario may include the presence of an aggressive, violent or armed person on site or the appearance of an uncontrolled and potentially dangerous animal. The school's priority is to secure all its community and to engage with relevant external agencies as soon as is practicable possible to resolve the situation safely.

The school will ensure that staff and students are aware of these procedures and they are practised on a regular basis. Staff will not independently decide that the lock down situation has ended.

ROLES AND RESPONSIBILITIES:

Support Staff are responsible for ensuring that:

- the main entrances and exits are locked;
- all secondary entrances to the school are locked;
- all visitors are located; and
- all learners and staff are escorted into safe areas or closed classrooms.

SLT and other staff who are not attached to a class at the time and who can assemble safely and quickly, should meet in the SLT Office unless directed to meet in an alternative location.

Any teachers attached to a class at the time of lockdown are to ensure that all classroom doors and windows are shut and locked (if possible).

PROCEDURE DETAILS:

1. The 'Hooter' (one kept in the SLT office and one kept in the reception area - will be sounded 2 times for a period of 5 seconds each time as the signal to initiate a lockdown.
This signal will activate a process of locking the school's classrooms, offices, and all outside doors.
2. The SLT - those who are not attached to a class at that time - will gather in the SLT Office unless directed otherwise.
SLT will be responsible for assessing the situation and making rapid decisions.
Contact via the classrooms will be limited. WhatsApp groups to be fully utilised.
3. At the given signal (hooter) the children remain in the room they are in and the staff will ensure the windows and doors are shut and, if possible, locked. All blinds and/or curtains should be closed.
Staff should turn off lights and seat learners away from doors and windows.
Consider seating learners in a less visible area and try to maintain a calm atmosphere.
Await further instruction. Contact will be made using the WhatsApp groups or direct calls.
4. Teaching staff or responsible adults should *remain with learners at all times*.
If the teacher is not with their class at the time, then they should only risk returning to their class if it is safe to do so.
5. Children, staff or visitors not in class for any reason will proceed to the nearest occupied classroom and remain with that class until the lockdown is over.
6. Children, staff or visitors in the playgrounds will enter the buildings and proceed to the nearest available room and staff should ensure the windows and doors are closed and locked, if possible.
7. NO ONE SHOULD MOVE ABOUT THE SCHOOL.
8. When it is ascertained that there is no threat or danger to the children, the 'hooter' will be sounded again once for a duration of 5 seconds.
9. As soon as possible after the lockdown, Class Teachers return to their home classroom and call the register. Class Teachers must notify the Head of Key Stage or Principal immediately of any students not accounted for.
10. Parents are not allowed to collect their children during a lockdown procedure.
11. SLT will decide when it is safe to release learners to parents or guardians.
12. Emergencies may arise when it is safer for members of the school to remain within the school beyond normal school hours (e.g. a factory fire with hazardous fumes). In these situations it is essential that all doors and windows be kept shut. SLT should wait for the all clear from the emergency services.

EMERGENCY SCHOOL CLOSURE

The school should be and will be open on every possible occasion. Decisions on whether or not to close the school are never taken lightly. The first consideration is always the safety of the children and staff. We also cannot safely open the school if there will be insufficient staff in school to properly supervise the children.

It is expected that where staff live within 2 kilometres radius of the school building that they are prepared to walk to the building in adverse weather conditions. There may however, be occasions when the school will find it necessary to close because adverse weather means that the school site is unsafe and poses health and safety risks to the school community. Hazardous driving conditions will also be taken into consideration for those who travel to us from outside of a 2 kilometre radius and especially those who are residing in Dolphin Beach, Long Beach and Swakopmund.

Issues that may lead to school closure include:

- Wind is reaching gale force (Beaufort Scale: 34 to 40 knots) and tree branches, fences and/or bins are being lifted and/or other flying debris makes travel conditions hazardous;
- Eastwind is reaching near-gale force (Beaufort Scale: 28-33 knots) and sand is reducing visibility and makes travel conditions hazardous;
- Temperature is equal to or above 35°C in the shade or temperatures are dropping to below 0°C inside;
- Flash flooding indicates that water is covering the ground at 3cm or deeper;

- Outside air quality is below safe levels due to pollution and/or fire and/or other incident; and
- The school is unable to meet basic staffing levels based on a class ratio of 1:16 (primary) or 1:18 (secondary) due to any of the above.

RESPONSIBILITY

Other than when by Central Government announcement or by Ministry or Education directive, the responsibility for making the final decision regarding the emergency closure of Alexanders Private School rests with the Principal. The Principal's decision will be made after the necessary discussions with the Senior Leadership Team and the Board of Directors.

In addition, contact with Principals of other local private schools such as The Dolphin Schools, International School Walvis Bay and Private School Swakopmund will ensure that an informed and united decision can be made.

All staff and parents and carers will be kept fully informed via WhatsApp Broadcast, email and via the school's website at www.alexanders-school.com

ADVERSE WEATHER

- A decision will be made between 6am and 7am (or in extended adverse weather conditions, where possible, the evening before) whether the school will remain open or will be closed.
- In the event of closure, the school will send a 'Whole School' WhatsApp Broadcast followed by 'Year Group) WhatsApp Broadcasts. An announcement will also be made on the Alexanders Private School website's home page at www.alexanders-school.com.
- When the school re-opens, the Principal and Health & Safety Officer will liaise with the support staff to ensure that the paths are cleared and that arrangements are made to ensure the safety of the children, parents, staff and visitors.
- If the school is closed during the course of the school day, the emergency contacts for any learners left uncollected will be sought contacted friends/relations. No learner will be left alone or unattended at school.

CONTINUATION OF LEARNING

Prolonged school closures could seriously affect our learner's education. It is not expected that the full curriculum will be provided during prolonged periods of school closure but that certainly children will have access to learning relevant to their age and ability where possible.

Alexanders Private school uses a number of e-platforms which provide digital learning platforms to our learners as part of our regular curriculum and these will be used as a core tool in sharing learning activities. Not all children have access to a digital device or the internet but Alexanders Private School will attempt to provide every learner access to the e-platforms through a device 'rental' scheme and an internet dongle 'rental' scheme. Paper materials will be provided to learners as far as practicably possible.

The Principal - after discussions with the SLT and Board of Directors - will decide whether staff are able to work at home or required to attend school. Factors that will guide this decision include:

- Central Government announcements and decrees;
- Ministry of Education directives;
- Childcare provisions available at home in the case of a pandemic
- Ability to travel to school in adverse weather conditions
- Whether staff are well enough to attend school
- The nature of work undertaken by each individual member of staff

Any school closure longer than one day will be counted as Planning and Preparation Time (PPT) time and must be used productively by teachers and support staff as appropriate. Staff are expected to undertake work at home during school closures and should ensure they have as much material prepared in advance in readiness for any event that would lead to a school closure.

BEREAVEMENT GUIDELINES (BGU)

In the past, people have sometimes underestimated the impact of death upon young children.

While it is true that their understanding of death develops over a prolonged period of time, it is clear that young children suffer deeply from the death of a member of their family or a friend. This suffering is more intense when they do not have opportunities to talk or to grieve openly, and do not feel that those close to them recognise their feelings - even though they themselves may not yet have the words to express them.

Many of the learners registered at Alexanders Private School are likely to encounter the death of a grandparent, other relative or family friend during their time at our school. For some, the loss will be more immediate and traumatic, involving the loss of a parent, sibling or personal friend. Reactions to bereavement may include withdrawal, open distress, tears, panic, aggression, anxiety, fear and other signs of stress. As children mature, the death is felt and questioned at new levels, emotionally and intellectually, often causing renewed grief and distress, which can appear to be deeper than the original grief.

At school we should aim to provide a stable and understanding environment in which the learner impacted by bereavement is supported during the period within which the learner comes to terms with the loss.

It is recognised by Alexanders Private School that this process is lengthy and support is likely to be required long term.

GUIDING PRINCIPLES

This BGU policy is in addition to the school's other plans including:

1. APS Behaviour Policy
2. British National Curriculum Personal Social & Health Development Framework

AIMS

- To foster a caring attitude to those suffering a bereavement.
- To encourage a consistent, yet flexible approach to the situation.
- To promote wider staff understanding and compassion in supporting children.
- To provide support and guidance to individuals as appropriate.

PROCEDURE STATEMENT:

1. All staff - including support staff - should be made aware of the situation so they can respond sensitively.
2. It may be appropriate for the class teacher to talk to the class and to create opportunities for the class to ask questions and discuss how they can help their bereaved classmate.
3. Children should be allowed time to grieve and know that tears are often an outward sign of that grief.
4. It should be made known to the learner that staff will find the time to listen and talk and will do their best to comfort when necessary.
5. It may be necessary for the bereaved learner to have a safe place to go to, especially if the grief expresses itself in rage.
6. A distressed learner should be allowed time and access to materials in order that he or she may express their feelings in their own way.
7. The family of the child should be sent a letter of condolence and then communicated with regularly to share how the child is coping.
8. Sensitivity is needed so that deep grief is not triggered at an inappropriate time. It may be appropriate to rearrange the timetable, e.g. not teaching about death rituals to a newly bereaved learner etc
9. Religious, cultural and social backgrounds, as well as parental wishes, should be taken into account when considering appropriate responses.
10. Key dates and times should be passed on to the next teacher or school.
11. Bereavement will be discussed as part of staff development with a view to supporting staff with this difficult topic and preparing them for this eventuality in the school community.

BEREAVED LEARNER WITHIN THE SCHOOL COMMUNITY

The Principal, Head of Key Stage and Class Teacher should:

- Decide how pupils should be told - this should be with an age appropriate response.
- Identify previously bereaved children in case they may need extra support during this time.
- Send a letter of condolence to the family concerned.

- Write a letter for the parents or careers of the learners in class involved to take home which outlines
- possible responses and reactions.

Before the learner returns to school:

- The learner's class should explore how they might respond to
- Their classmates should be given the time to explore loss and grief - possibly using PSHD lessons or registration time.
- If appropriate, the Class teacher could visit child at home to tell him or her that structures are in place for support and identify an adult supporter as a 'go to' member of staff for the learner.

When the bereaved learner returns to school:

- The Class Teacher and learner should have some time together.
- The learner should be told he or she can leave lessons to find supporter when needed.
- Time is set aside at the end of the day to check how things are and identify any problems.
- Although other children will want to express their sympathy in the form of cards, drawings or letters, these should rather be ***collected up placed in an envelope and given to an adult*** who cares for the child so that they can chose an appropriate time for them to be shared.

The process of supporting a child through bereavement cannot be measured in time. At sensitive times of the year (anniversaries, Christmas etc) more support may need to be provided to the bereaved learner.

A LEARNER IN SCHOOL DIES

If a learner in school dies:

- Children in their class should be informed first
- The death of the learner should be acknowledged in school through collective assembly.
- The Principal, the Head of Key Stage and the relevant Class Teacher should together formulate a whole school and class response plan.
- Friends and classmates should be provided opportunities to express their grief and be supported in this.
- The Class Teacher should be supported by colleagues and be encouraged to attend the funeral if appropriate.
- The learner's books and other belongings should be kept at school and only returned to the parents or carers at an appropriate time.

A MEMBER OF STAFF DIES

If an adult in school dies:

- This should be acknowledged in school through collective assembly as soon as possible.
- If a the member of staff who has passed away was a Class teacher, the relevant class should be informed first by a member of the Senior Leadership Team and adequate support should be provided to the class.
- Learners should be encouraged to express their grief in an appropriate manner.
- Parents and carers should be informed of the death.
- A letter of condolence will be sent from Alexanders Private School to the next of kin.
- With the family's consent a member of staff will attend the funeral.

RELEVANT CONTACTS & CONTACT DETAILS

Health & Safety Officer
Roxanne de Witt
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REFERENCES

www.jcq.org.uk

<https://www.nottinghamshire.gov.uk/planning-and-environment/emergencies-and-disruption/school-emergencies>

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<https://www.gov.uk/government/publications/exam-system-contingency-plan-england-wales-and-northern-ireland/what-schools-and-colleges-should-do-if-exams-or-other-assessments-are-seriously-disrupted>

<https://www.daisysdream.org.uk>

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