

**Title** Critical Incidents and Crisis Management

**Associated Policies** • Health and Safety (TPO/HS/03)

**LAST REVIEW: March 2025**

**NEXT REVIEW: March 2028**

### 1. Policy Statement

**1.1** Brooke Weston Trust is committed to ensuring that a safe and secure environment is provided to all students, staff and visitors within our academies. Unfortunately, incidents can occur which can result in significant distress for all individuals involved, as well as for the school as a whole. The purpose of this policy is to outline how the Trust and academies will respond to such crises or tragedies.

**1.2** A critical incident is one which arises suddenly, either on- or off-site, and where the result is likely to seriously disrupt the running of the Academy, or where there is a threat to the safety of staff, students or others, or where there is likely to be significant public and or media attention on the Academy. This could include a range of potential incidents such as:

- Public health incidents (e.g. significant infectious disease incidents)
- Severe weather (e.g. flooding)
- Serious injury to a child, student or member of staff (e.g. transport incident)
- Significant damage to property (e.g. fire)
- Criminal activity (e.g. bomb threat)
- The effects of a disaster in the local community

This could be extended to any incident occurring within the academies' extended services, such as school breakfast clubs, after school clubs or holiday activities, open days, transition days or live performances with audiences.

**1.3** A crisis is an event, or events, usually sudden and which involve a person experiencing significant personal distress to a level which potentially overwhelms normal responses and procedures, and which is likely to have emotional and organisational consequences. The Brooke Weston Trust aims to manage a crisis well by being prepared. This document contains planned and staged responses to follow in the case of a crisis.

**1.4** There can, of course, be no rigid formula for responding to such incidents, but broadly speaking, it is assumed that where damage to people or premises is the case, the Chief Executive of the Brooke Weston Trust and the Principal will take the leading role in managing the crisis, in collaboration with the Vice Principals, Governors and other agencies.

**1.5** Examples of on-site critical incidents:

- A serious accident to a student or adult
- The death of a student or member of staff through natural causes
- A traffic accident involving a member of the Academy
- Violence or assault within the Academy
- A fire or explosion on site
- Destruction of a part of the building or part of the building becoming unsafe as a result of fire, flood or other incident
- Abduction of a student

- A student absconding
- A major incident within the community served by the Academy
- An outbreak of an illness such as meningitis
- A major failure of Academy systems, e.g. power, or communications

### 1.6 Examples of off-site critical incidents:

- Death of a student or member of staff through natural causes
- An accident to a student or adult while out of school on a visit or activity
- Death or injuries on Academy journeys or excursions
- A more widespread disaster in the community
- Civil disturbances, including extreme violence or terrorism

1.7 Serious incidents or near misses not classified as a 'critical incident' should still be fully recorded and investigated. Details of such incidents should be reported to the Academy's Health and Safety Committee and escalated to Trust's Health and Safety Committee via the Risk and Compliance Manager.

1.8 This policy does not form part of any employee's contract of employment and is entirely non-contractual. It may be amended, withdrawn, suspended or departed from at the discretion of the Trust.

## 2. Who does this policy apply to?

2.1 This applies to all staff, students and visitors of the Trust and its academies.

## 3. Who is responsible for carrying out this policy?

3.1 The implementation of this policy will be monitored by the Head of Estates and will remain under constant review by the Brooke Weston Trust (Health & Safety Committee).

3.2 **The Trust Executive Leadership** team has responsibility for:

- Developing and implementing a Trust level emergency plan which incorporated Business Continuity and ensuring that this is activated should there be an incident that involves a Trust-wide response, including identification of a Critical Incidents Team
- Ensuring that individual academies have emergency plans and other associated plans and procedures in place
- Ensuring that these emergency plans and procedures are regularly reviewed and updated based on previous incidents and risk assessments of threat levels posed to the Trust and its academies

The Critical Incidents Team will comprise all or some of the following personnel:

- Chief Executive of the Brooke Weston Trust
- CORO
- Director of Education
- Principal of the Academy
- Chair of Governors and any relevant/available Governors as required
- Members of the school's Senior Management Team
- Designated Safeguarding Lead
- Health & Safety Representative

- Site Manager
- Members of the Trust's Senior Management Team
- Communications team personnel

**The Principal and Senior Leadership Team** has responsibility for:

- Developing and implementing a school-level emergency plan using the documentation supplied by the Trust and associated procedures and ensuring that this is activated should an incident occur
- Ensuring that the emergency plan and associated procedures are regularly communicated by the senior leadership team to staff, students and other key individuals
- Ensuring that staff and students are suitably prepared for handling emergency situations, for example by completing drills, being educated about potential risks and threats

**The staff** within the academies and the central team have a responsibility for:

- Ensuring that they are fully aware of the emergency plans and associated procedures and ensuring that these are following during those incidents
- Where appropriate to their role, supporting the senior leadership team with the implementation of the emergency plan

**The governors of each academy**, have a responsibility for sending representation to the Local H&S committee and:

- Ensuring that the emergency plans and procedures are in place and regularly reviewed
- Reviewing how the emergency plans and procedures have been implemented and the effectiveness of these plans for future use

**The Health and Safety Committee** has a responsibility for the monitoring and implementation of this policy.

- 3.3** The role of the team is to direct and review the handling of the critical incident and the response and recovery process in order to:
- Ensure the safety and security of staff, students, other users of the premises and visitors
  - Minimise the loss to the Academy in physical, human and financial terms
  - Manage an incident to minimise disruption to regular operations
  - Liaise with appropriate agencies, including the media

#### 4. What are the principles behind this policy?

- 4.1** In accordance with DfE guidelines, the Academy will have an emergency plan prepared, agreed by the CEO, to cover all foreseeable major incidents which could put at risk the occupants or users of the academy. This plan will indicate the actions to be taken in the event of a major incident so that everything possible is done to:
- Save life
  - Prevent injury
  - Minimise loss.
- 4.2** Individual class teachers, support staff and tutors have an important role to play in managing critical incidents and may be the best people to deal with the students in their classes.
- 4.3** The Brooke Weston Trust will involve specialist agencies, where need dictates, to support staff or students who require further assistance to deal with incident.
- 4.4** By outlining appropriate actions to be taken in the event of a critical incident, the Brooke Weston Trust aims to reduce the effect.

### 5. Procedures

#### Notification

- 5.1 If there is any doubt whether an incident should be classified a 'critical incident' and therefore managed in line with this policy, the Principal should contact the Chief Executive immediately for clarification.**
- 5.2** When a critical incident occurs, the Critical Incidents team will, dependent upon the nature of the incident itself, be concerned with any of the following issues:
- Adequate assessment of risks, hazards and situations which may require emergency action
  - Analysis of requirements to address these hazards, including liaison with relevant emergency services and development of an effective management plan
  - Whether the Academy can adequately cope with the incident alone or should involve other agencies to secure the safest and most effective response
  - Effective and efficient deployment of staff
  - Provision of a safe, quiet area for students and adults
  - A safe relocation site if necessary
  - Dissemination of planned procedures to relevant stakeholders/personnel
- 5.3** The person receiving the notification that a critical incident has occurred should obtain and record as much relevant information as possible, including:
- What has happened
  - Whether or not the emergency services have been informed/are attending
  - The precise location, and any access problems if not on site
  - Details of any casualties
  - Details of any actions taken so far
  - Name (and contact details if not on site) of responsible person at the scene
  - Assessment of what assistance is required
- 5.4** The member of staff receiving the alert should notify the relevant emergency services if necessary and the CORO immediately.

#### Critical Incidents Team

- 5.5** The Principal will inform the Chief Executive and convene the Critical Incidents Team (outlined in 3.2 above) as soon as possible.
- Clear leadership is essential to ensuring a co-ordinated response. The Principal will lead the Academy's response in consultation with the Chief Executive and the chair of governors.
  - Relevant members of the Critical Incidents Team will convene to decide strategies, be allocated individual responsibilities and collect, record and convey information
  - The rest of the staff will be informed as soon as is practicable
  - Students will be given information simply and sensitively
  - Prepare and send out a briefing for parents and/or update the Academy/Trust website with relevant details

- The Academy will endeavour to keep to the normal routine as far as possible
- Once the immediate emergency is under control, a longer term plan should be drawn up, dealing with these possibilities:
  - On-going or subsequent disruption to the normal operation and routine of the Academy
  - Staff tiredness or exhaustion
  - Shock, distress or psychological disturbance of staff and/or students
  - Demands from the media
  - Impact on the Academy's image and public relations

### Initial Actions

- 5.6** The Principal or nominated representative of the Critical Incidents team should (Using the material supplied):
- 5.6.1** Open and continue to maintain a personal log of all factual information received, actions taken, and the time of those events. Make every attempt to clarify exactly what has happened and establish who needs to be contacted and informed of the incident.
  - 5.6.2** During term time, unless there is overwhelming pressure, avoid closing the Academy and endeavour to maintain normal routines and timetables.
  - 5.6.3** If outside term time or Academy hours, arrange for the Site Manager to open certain parts of the building as appropriate and to be available (and responsive) to requests and for immediate administrative support.
  - 5.6.4** Consideration should also be afforded to dress code, in case of being unavoidably drawn into a TV interview. If the crisis does attract media attention, try to postpone comment until there has been enough time to consider possible statements, the Trust Operations and Communications Manager must sanction the media.
  - 5.6.5** Establish arrangements to manage visitors and for their presence on site to be recorded.
  - 5.6.6** Make arrangements for all staff to be called into the Academy if necessary and be briefed at an early stage.
  - 5.6.7** To arrange for all students to be told in simple terms at an early stage, ideally in small groups by form tutors.
  - 5.6.8** Establish strategies to support staff and students through the incident.

### Communication

- 5.7** The following procedures should be followed in communicating about the incident:
- The Principal, CORO, Chief Executive and Chair of Governors must be informed as soon as possible. The Chief Executive will inform relevant members of the Trust's central team, including the Chair of the Health and Safety Committee & the Audit and Risk Committee. The Chief Executive will also inform the Chair of the Brooke Weston Trust Board. Serious incidents or near misses not classified as a critical incident may still be communicated to members of the Trust Board or other stakeholders as decided by the Chief Executive.
  - Prepare brief up to date statements for staff answering telephone calls or liaising with visitors [in doing so liaise with legal advisers/insurance as appropriate to ensure no admission of liability is provided which may be detrimental to the Trust.]
  - Ensure that the Trust/Academy websites are updated.
  - An appropriate number of telephonists will be identified to use the Academy phone (for incoming calls) and a mobile phone (for outgoing information/staff use) if required

- The office area will be used for enquiries
- Parents/carers of affected students will be contacted as necessary and arrangements made to bring them to the Academy if appropriate
- The Chief Executive or the Principal will be the designated 'press officer'. All enquiries made to other members of staff should be redirected
- There will be no access to the Academy site to press/TV reporters without the explicit consent of the Chief Executive
- It is especially important that the names of those who may have been involved in the incident are **not** released or confirmed to anyone **before** those identities are **formally** agreed and parents/carers informed.

### Follow up actions

- 5.8 Once the emergency is over all staff should be debriefed. Care should be taken to ensure they are fully informed of the causes, nature and impact of the incident.
- 5.9 Key members of staff involved in responding to the incident should be individually debriefed to collect information that can be analysed to provide lessons for future prevention or management of such incidents.
- 5.10 Arrangements should be made to make contact with any students or members of staff at home or in hospital. Sensitive and individual arrangements may need to be made for a phased return to the Academy.
- 5.11 The effects of some incidents can continue for some time. Thought should be given to:
- Informal monitoring of staff and students
  - Clarification of procedures for referring people for individual help and support
  - Ways in which new staff may be made aware of which students were affected and how
  - The way that legal processes, enquiries and news stories may resurrect interest and cause temporary upset within the Academy.
- 5.12 A full incident report should be prepared for the Governing Body and the Brooke Weston Trust. This should be shared with the Chair of the Health and Safety Review Group.

## 6. Policy Review

- 6.1 This policy will be reviewed on a three-year cycle or as required by legislature changes. The Academies will review the Emergency Plan annually updating any contact information at sharing updates with the local H&S committee. The updated plans will be shared the Risk & Compliance Manager who will inform the HSWC and ARC.

### Document Control

Date of last review:	March 2025	Author:	HoES
Date of next review:	March 2028	Version:	4.0
Approved by:	SDG	Status:	Non-statutory

### Summary of Main Changes: v 4.0

- Clarification across the document regarding lines of reporting, responsibilities, and review cycle.
- Addition of Appendix A – Academy Emergency Plan template, incorporating Business Continuity Plan.

## Appendix A – Academy Emergency Plan template

Please note the Academy Emergency Plan consists of the following sections:

### **1 Section 1: Contact details**

- 1.1 Academy Information
- 1.2 Contact details – academy staff and governors
- 1.3 Contact details- extended services
- 1.4 Contact details – Brooke Weston Trust Executive Team and Heads of Profession
- 1.5 Contact details - local radio stations/media
- 1.6 Contact details- other organisations
- 1.7 Contact details- for completion during an emergency

### **2 Section 2: Activation**

- 2.1 Notification of incident
- 2.2 Initial action

### **3 Section 3: Roles and Responsibilities**

- 3.1 Roles and Responsibilities – Co-ordination
- 3.2 Roles and Responsibilities – business continuity
- 3.3 Roles and Responsibilities – communications
- 3.4 Roles and Responsibilities – log-keeping
- 3.5 Roles and Responsibilities – media management
- 3.6 Roles and Responsibilities – resources
- 3.7 Roles and Responsibilities – welfare
- 3.8 Roles and Responsibilities – educational visit leader

**Appendix 1** – Post incident support

**Appendix 2** – Business Continuity

**Appendix 3** – Site information

**Appendix 4** – Evacuation

**Appendix 5** – Shelter

**Appendix 6**- Lockdown

**Appendix 7**- School Closure

**Appendix 8** – Communications

**Appendix 9** - Bomb Threat

**Appendix 10**- Suspicious Packages

**Appendix 11** – Log-keeping Guidelines