



Oxford International Study Centre
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Crisis Management Plan

Scope

The College has adopted policies and procedures to minimise risks to pupils and staff, and has a Health and Safety policy and procedures that are regularly reviewed. The Directors recognise that not all circumstances are under the control of the College and that emergencies and disasters may happen. This crisis management policy aims to outline our response to major incidents that affect the health, safety and welfare of our students.

Aims

The aims of this policy are:

- To prepare Directors, staff and students for any disasters that may occur;
- To ensure that there is a plan that can be implemented swiftly in the case of an emergency caused by a disaster;
- To help all involved in identifying when this policy should be activated; and
- To be a guide to actions in circumstances that are liable to strain the capacity of those handling the situation to think clearly.

Use of this Policy and Procedures

This set of guidelines is to be checked before a College offsite visit takes place. It will also be used in the aftermath of an emergency. All administrative staff and Directors should be familiar with the contents of this guidance. Where necessary, in the wake of any such incident, advice will be distributed to teaching staff.

Potential Incidents

By 'crisis' we mean an incident that has caused death or serious injury to a member or members of the College community (staff, students, adults and others visiting OISC, or closely associated with the business of the college) or events that have the *potential* to result in death, serious injury and disruption to business continuity, eg.:

In College:

- the death of a pupil or member of staff from natural causes;
- a road traffic accident (RTA) involving staff or pupils;
- a deliberate act of violence against staff or pupils;
- a College fire
- a serious accident of any sort involving death or mutilation.

Out-of-College:

- deaths or injuries on College journeys;
- tragedies involving children with many others (for example, the Hillsborough disaster or the Bradford City stadium fire);
- pandemics that threaten life and threaten to become internal)
- a bomb incident or threat.

Please note that Appendix D to this document (Avian ‘flu’ and similar pandemics) is published separately for ease of operation. The principles outlined in this policy also apply to Appendix D.

Most aspects of disasters are self-evident but two are important to emphasise for the purpose of our response:

Feelings of grief, guilt and insecurity caused by the disaster. These are felt by survivors, parents and staff alike (not only by those directly involved) and may strike at any time over a long period after the disaster (see Post-Traumatic Stress Disorder below).

Inevitable media interest. This will focus on the ‘human interest’ and on discovering ‘who is to blame’. To the media there is no such thing as an accident. Whether intended or not, the result can be to persuade people to say things in haste that they will bitterly regret at leisure. The media can sow discord and prevent healing. In the immediate aftermath the media may interfere with communications and distract people from coping with the emergency.

It is assumed in what follows that our first duty is to support and help pupils, parents and staff involved. We are also concerned to ensure that the handling of the disaster does not result in damage to the College (business continuity) which will then cause all pupils and staff to lose in the long term.

Roles and Responsibilities

In term time, other things being equal, the crisis will be managed by a team that will include:

- the Directors;
- the Principal;
- other relevant staff, depending on the situation.

The Principal, if not disabled in the disaster, will be first contact for the Media. It is probable that as things develop the Directors will need to make a statement and written statements may be issued by others. Statements will only be authorised by the Directors and the Principal.

The Principal will be responsible for arranging the necessary communications network, including allotting duties to other support staff for typing statements, etc. The Principal will also be responsible for checking with insurers etc. to make sure that we do not make mistakes at that stage of the crisis.

The exact roles of others will be decided at the time (as any crisis will undoubtedly have its own particular character and need a different reaction) but among the roles will be:

- contact with parents;

- support for staff directly involved;
- liaison with remainder of staff and pupils;
- finding assistance for the College, e.g. legal etc; and
- liaison with relevant authorities e.g. police/Foreign Office /Health and Safety Executive.

Out of Term, the **first** thing for the person in charge on site to do will be to contact as many members of the Emergency Team as possible.

Links to trips and visits (off-site safety) policies

When a disaster occurs off site it is critical to know quickly who has been involved, therefore:

- all trip leaders will make sure that there is a list in each of the College Offices with the names of all pupils and a contact number/s for parent/s; and
- every member of staff on the trip (not only the leader) will keep with them at all times a list of pupils on the trip. This may be the only starting point for identifying pupils and the leader may be incapacitated.

It is also vital that information is passed to the College as soon as possible so that support can be given to the staff on the ground and parents and that accurate information can be given to the media.

All the staff on a trip will:

- know how an alarm is to be raised;
- will have to hand a number to contact to report any disaster. This will be the Principal's mobile phone number. This will not be the College number in case the media jam the phone lines. Any such number must be kept absolutely confidential;
- Give priority to looking after the injured and ensuring that they are in the hands of competent assistance. Once that has been done, the priority of those on the ground becomes to look after pupils and each other. Dealing with the media, with parents and all other issues must be handled by the Crisis Management Team.

Data recovery and business continuity

Financial and personal data relating to the college, its students and staff is held securely and electronic data backed-up remotely. In the event of a crisis that might potentially threaten data, Derrick Llewelyn should be informed immediately.

Immediate Action in the Case of Crisis

1. The Directors will be contacted immediately.
2. The police will be contacted immediately to ask for help in controlling access to the College, if required;
3. The Crisis Management Team will convene at the St Aldates Office. Should this premises be unavailable due to the nature of the crisis, they will convene at the Blue Boar St. Building.
4. Roles will be allotted according to the guidance within this policy;
5. If the disaster affects our students while they are abroad, then a contact will be opened up to authorities in the foreign country through the appropriate embassy or the Foreign Office and arrangements made to get a senior member of staff and someone familiar with

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- the language (if possible) out to the scene of the disaster as a matter of urgency to take charge from the staff involved;
6. Parents will be contacted by mobile phone;
 7. If children are off-site, parents should be re-united with them as fast as possible. (It is the duty of the Principal - or Principal's delegated representative - to determine in the circumstances whether it may be helpful for parents to view the accident site so they can share the situation with their children.

Communicating with Parents

Only nominated members of staff/Directors have the authority to contact parents. Such persons, when answering or contacting parents will have a written list of known facts issued by the Principal (or Directors). The nominated person will only

- say what is known for a fact;
- say how parents will be updated as information becomes more complete;
- say how parents should contact hospitals, etc; and
- check whether any help is needed with transport.

While the College's main responsibility is to parents whose children are involved, there will be other parents who, for one reason or another, will want to know what has happened. Depending on the circumstances, the Principal (or Directors) will decide to:

- send an account that is written;
- post information on the College web-site; and
- use the media to communicate with parents.

Communicating with Pupils

If the disaster occurs during term, the first priority will be to make sure that pupils know what is true. This is important, as the media often target students and their families at this time, even if not directly involved. The second priority will be, as appropriate, for the College community to share its shock and/or grief.

The procedure will be:

- pupils will be given plain facts (no speculation) by selected staff or through a full college meeting;
- to give absolutely honest responses to questions that may be difficult to answer immediately.

If a disaster occurs during the holiday, there may have to be special arrangements to allow families, friends and others to come into College, and for an appropriate member of staff to be available to inform and support. This will be determined by the Principal (or the Directors) and put into place by the Crisis Management Team.

Communicating with the Media

Media interest will seem intrusive and unhelpful. It is important to realise, however, that their interest is legitimate. Used properly the media can help to communicate important messages to parents and the community. It is important to do everything to be helpful, short of compromising the essential interests of the College. Under direction from a consulted Public Relations company, if appropriate, the Principal will explain to the press what is happening but will stress that pupils'

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and parents' interests must come first for us. He will ask for the press's co-operation in achieving this aim.

All statements to the media will be made after discussion with the Principal (or Directors). In ideal circumstances, the Principal will act as press officer. If he is not present, he should be contacted if possible. The Directors will make a statement at the earliest but appropriate moment. Directors and staff will refer all questions to the Principal (or delegated representative) and must refuse to make any comment or react to any statement put to them by the media.

It should be remembered that the media will be looking for a story and headlines. A 'story' only lasts for a short time in media terms so they will be looking for a quick result: grief to dramatise or blame to allot. They only polarise. However, there are possible stereotypes which can help to get sympathetic treatment. As such, the following will be the principles to guide dealings with the press:

- Close-knit College with charitable ends, devastated by disaster;
- Staff trying to hold things together under difficult circumstances;
- Caring College trying to do what it can; and
- Bolt from the blue overwhelms all sensible precautions.

NB. We must remember that we have to be careful that nothing we say should increase grief or wrong-foot ourselves in possible legal action.

The media will normally not be invited onto the College site and if they do make their way into the site uninvited, they should be referred to the Principal, who will normally ask them to leave, and will explain why. The assistance of the police could be sought if necessary.

It is the responsibility of the Principal in consultation with the Crisis Management Team to determine whether a Press Conference should be arranged in a place away from the students. If there are signs of devastation on the College site, it may be inevitable that they will have to be allowed to take pictures but the Crisis Management Team will attempt to ensure that these do not add to the grief of parents and others.

Pupils will be kept away from the media, for their own protection, and the importance of this will be explained to the pupils. No addresses or personal details will be given to the media.

Appendix A: Guidance to the Principal (or representative) on dealing with the media

The Principal will say that the College will:-

- tell them everything known definitely as soon as we have told parents;
- tell them what we do not know at this stage;
- tell them when further information will be available;
- not speculate or go along with their speculation; and
- not be giving any names or confirming any names until all the members of a trip are accounted for.

Within these limits the Principal has the responsibility to give quotable statements and go on air.

Interview Technique

Generally it will be important to 'come in under the question', being calmer and quieter than the questioners. Two points clearly made and repeated are worth many made in a confused way. It is crucial to remember that you are talking to the audience beyond the interviewer while answering the interviewer's questions. Meet aggressive questions with facts, e.g.

- 'all trips go through a vetting procedure';
- 'we have fire practices termly';
- 'we have records and once we have done our duty by our parents and pupils we will check it out'.

Generally the College will be saying over and over again that the College will turn its attention to causes and lessons to be learned when we have done what we can do for pupils and parents.

Appendix B: Short and Medium Term Actions

Short Term Action

The Directors will meet as soon as practicable to be briefed by the Principal and Crisis Management Team, and to decide how any inquiry should be carried. The Crisis Management Team will seek advice on this as appropriate. It will be the responsibility of the Principal to make an announcement about any inquiry. The Principal will ensure that included in any public statement will be the Directors' resolve to co-operate fully with any external inquiry.

The Crisis Management Team will determine in the circumstances how to help the College community come to terms with the shock and grief, and which appropriate agencies to use. The Crisis Management Team will bear in mind in all its decisions the importance of enabling normal life to be resumed as soon as possible without denying or minimising what has happened.

Immediate steps should be taken to restore the situation in the case of fire, etc. and lessons should be as normal as possible as soon as possible. The Principal will make alternative accommodation arrangements for teaching, to maintain the continuity of learning.

The Principal (or Directors) will seek legal advice, as appropriate.

Medium Term

The Crisis Management Team will determine how best to ease the return of young people involved and what support they will need. Normally appropriate consultancy/counselling will be sought (see Appendix C).

Appendix C: Note on Post-Traumatic Stress Disorder and the Role of Counselling

It must be expected that some of those involved in the disaster will suffer from post traumatic stress disorder. This may involve panic attacks, flashbacks, feelings of depression and guilt. They may be deeply disabling and are often affect adults more than children. Expert advice should be sought on this and part of the longer term plan must include plans to support both pupils and staff members who may be unable to return to College.

It was generally thought in the past that immediate access to counselling was helpful in the aftermath of a disaster. This has been shown to be counter-productive and in some cases damaging.

Advice now suggests that counselling should be postponed until at least a month after the event and then brought in for those who have been unable to 'move on.' The main thrust of the College's policy must be not to deny the events but to emphasise that 'life goes on' and that 'we have the strength to cope with even this.' It is vital that children and adults are not disempowered in dealing with the trauma of the disaster by the suggestion that they cannot cope without help or that they must relive the disaster to come to terms with it.

Appendix D

INFLUENZA (FLU) VIRUS POLICY

The following policy applies to severe outbreaks or pandemics of the Influenza Virus such as H1N1 ("Swine flu") or H5N1 ("Avian flu").

The School will, at all times, follow advice from Government agencies regarding the outbreak of a serious flu virus and its possible consequences. This will be done by reviewing Government information from the DCSF, the Health Protection Agency (HPA) and information sent to the School by the Independent School's Association (ISA), as well as information from other agencies.

In the event of a concern about a pandemic, it is important that pupils should be reassured both by parents and staff.

The School will also retain a supply of the following items at all times:

- soap, tissues, hand cleaning gel, signage regarding hygiene

In the event of a flu virus threat or a pandemic, the following actions will be taken, as required and appropriate:

In the event of illness

- Any student or member of staff who feels unwell in school should see a First Aider (Benjamin Llewelyn, Dawn Tohill, Gill Gornall, or Marianna Brazda).

If the symptoms are those of the flu virus then parents will be contacted and the student sent home.

- Any student who is unwell should not attend college and their GP should be consulted, if appropriate. This is the College's normal policy on pupil absence, but the College emphasises to parents that this is particularly important during the period of a possible pandemic to prevent any possible spread of the virus.

- Pupils who have come into contact with children or adults known to be infected with the virus should remain at home until they have received advice from their GP or other health agency.

- Staff who feel unwell should also remain at home and consult their GP or other health agency. They should inform the College of their absence in the usual way.
- Parents of any pupil diagnosed with the identified flu virus (rather than a general flu virus) and any member of staff diagnosed must contact the College immediately.

Closing the College

In the event that the College is advised by the Government agencies that it should be closed to prevent further spread of the virus then the following procedure will take place:

- 1) The Principal, in consultation with the Directors, will make the decision whether to close the School.
- 2) A message will be posted on the College's website: www.oxintstudycentre.com
- 3) If the College is informed during school hours that it must close then students will be informed. An e-mail will be sent to inform parents. Parents will also be able to confirm details by viewing the College's website.
- 4) In the event of this decision being made outside normal school hours, then the message will be put on the website and pupils will be met upon arrival at college, parents will be contacted by e-mail.
- 5) If the Government advice is to distribute a vaccine or preventative drugs then arrangements will be put in place for collection of these from College for students and staff. Details will be posted on the website and in the letter sent home. Students, parents or guardians will collect these, as required.
- 6) The Senior Management Team should continue to attend school as normal unless informed otherwise.
- 7) In the event of a closure, students should remain at home and updates will be posted on the College's website and e-mails sent regarding the period of closure and the date of reopening.
- 8) For students sitting public exams, the College will follow advice from the Examination Boards and students and parents will be informed accordingly. Where possible, examinations will continue as planned.
- 9) In the event of the College being advised not to have staff on site, a telephone message will be left on the College system informing those who contact of arrangements. Details will also be posted on the College website and e-mails sent.