



## MAT Business Continuity Plan

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# 1. Introduction and Purpose

1.1. This plan has been written for those who will be involved in re-establishing the operational delivery of services following a major incident. It should be read in conjunction with:

- The fire evacuation plan (the operation of which does not necessarily activate the BCP) for each Academy;
- The Trust's Emergency Plan.

# 2. Definitions

2.1. An emergency is any critical incident which causes, or has the potential to cause injury, loss of life, damage to property or significant business disruption. The central MAT Team and all academies have an emergency plan. Emergencies are seen as short-term instances that may or may not have a medium to long term impact on business continuity. Examples of an emergency might be:

- 2.1.1. The sudden collapse, injury or death of a staff member or child;
- 2.1.2. An explosion or infrastructure collapse where evacuation of staff and children is required;
- 2.1.3. A malware attack to one or more users on the network.

2.2. A disaster is the escalation of an emergency to the point where normal conditions are not expected to be recovered for at least 24 hours. Examples of a disaster might be:

- 2.2.1. The destruction of a school or Trust building or site;
- 2.2.2. A pandemic;
- 2.2.3. An earthquake, flood or major storm.

2.3. The Trust and its academies publish policies to provide further guidance in the event of a specific emergency or a disaster. These include (but aren't limited to):

- 2.3.1. Responding to a bereavement policy;
- 2.3.2. Health & Safety Policy;
- 2.3.3. Fire Evacuation Plans.

## 3. Strategy

- 3.1. If a disaster is declared by the Chief Executive Officer and/or academy Headteacher or their deputy this Business Continuity Plan will be activated.
- 3.2. Staff communication will be via the Trust and school email, and the website if this is operable. The central Trust Emergency Plan includes details of a backup personal email and phone numbers, should Trust email and telephony be affected by any emergency or disaster.
- 3.3. The following organisations may need to be advised of the implementation of the Business Continuity Plan as soon as possible (contact details in appendix A):
  - 3.3.1. Nexus MAT Directors;
  - 3.3.2. Director of Children's Services or their named representative, at the appropriate Local Authority;
  - 3.3.3. Police;
  - 3.3.4. Fire Service;
  - 3.3.5. The DfE's Risk Protection Arrangement;
  - 3.3.6. The DfE Regional Director's Office.

## 4. Matrix of leadership

### 4.1. MAT Level

- 4.1.1. The Chief Executive Officer holds overall accountability for the running of the academy Trust and its constituent academies and is professionally and personally accountable for the effective discharging of these responsibilities to HM Parliament. This is a statutory post.
- 4.1.2. In all instances, the Chief Executive Officer will be responsible for ensuring the Trust and/or academies are achieving business continuity in the face of a disaster. If the Chief Executive Officer is absent, then the Chair of the Nexus MAT Board of Directors must ensure that an interim appointment/arrangement is in place that enables the Trust to meet its legal duties.
- 4.1.3. The following matrix of leadership outlines the steps the Board will take to respond to the unexpected/short notice absence of the appointed Chief Executive Officer:

Absence Period	Action(s) to be taken
Short term 1 day – 4 weeks	No change to leadership arrangements. In the event of a disaster, the succession plan (detailed in section 2 of appendix A of this document, and also in the Trust’s Emergency Plan) will take effect.
Medium Term 4 weeks – 12 weeks	Acting arrangements are put place, with one of the Executive Directors appointed as Acting CEO. Directors may otherwise choose at this stage to appoint an external candidate.
Long Term 3 months+	Either acting arrangements are amended to “interim” or Directors seek an external candidate to undertake the role of interim CEO.

4.1.4. In any instance where the substantive Chief Executive Officer is absent for a prolonged period (medium or long term), Directors may wish to seek support for any acting or interim appointee by contacting local support partners, such as the DfE or Teaching School Hubs. The MAT’s Head of Human Resources can advise in all instances.

## 4.2. Individual academy/school level

4.2.1. At academy level, the Headteacher is responsible for the implementation and co-ordination of their BCP and is accountable in all their actions to the Chief Executive Officer, including:

4.2.1.1. Immediately contacting the Chief Executive Officer and/or the assigned line manager;

4.2.1.2. Co-ordination of status reports/communication for the benefit of all audiences (including Trust, staff, pupils, parents, LA, Regional Director Team at DfE);

4.2.1.3. Maintaining the local BCP in an up-to-date format.

4.2.2. The Headteacher should establish an Incident Management Team (IMT), which includes all Senior leaders and the Site Supervisor. Additional members of the team will be recruited to match the specific needs of the incident.

4.2.3. The IMT is responsible for acting under the direction of the Headteacher (or their Deputy) to restore normal conditions as soon as possible.

4.2.4. Any press releases must be approved by the Chief Executive Officer prior to being issued by the academy.

### 4.3. Staff

4.3.1. Staff are required to co-operate with the IMT in support of the BCP.

4.3.2. In the event that staff are sent home, they should remain available during normal working hours to assist with necessary tasks.

## 5. Academy closure – short term

5.1. An academy can be closed in advance of a normal school day or during the school day in the event of a disaster, with the Headteacher having prerogative to act in the best interest of the school community. Where possible, Headteachers should discuss and agree any short notice, short term closures with their line manager prior to communicating the closure.

5.2. In the event of a short-term closure due to a major infrastructure issue at school (e.g. an area of the school site becoming unsafe) then the academy insurance (Risk Protection Arrangement) and the local authority (as the holder of the peppercorn lease and therefore the legal landlord) should be informed. It may also be necessary to inform the Health & Safety Executive. More advice should be sought from the Trust's named Competent Person.

5.3. In the event of a major incident on site requiring the school to be closed, pupils will assemble at the primary assembly point(s). If these are not useable, staff will escort pupils to the secondary assembly point(s). Specific details will be included in each academy's emergency plan.

5.4. If it becomes necessary to evacuate the site completely, pupils will be escorted to a safe area from where they can be collected or from where they can be released to make their own way home. Specific details will be included in each academy's emergency plan.

## 6. Academy closure – medium term

6.1. Any medium-term closure of an academy in the event of a disaster (i.e. for a period longer than 2 school days but no longer than 2 working weeks) must be agreed by the Chief Executive Officer and Directors must be informed immediately.

6.2. The responsible local authority (i.e. the holder of the peppercorn lease) must be included in an urgent strategy meeting to plan for the re-opening of the

school as soon as possible, within 48 hours of the medium term closure becoming apparent.

- 6.3. The DfE must also be informed of any medium-term closure and updated regularly on steps to return to business as usual. If the closure relates to a capital issue, contact to the DfE Emergency Condition Improvement Fund team should be considered.

## 7. Academy closure – long term

- 7.1. Any anticipated long-term closure of an academy (i.e. longer than 2 working weeks) will likely result in the MAT defaulting on its commitments in the master funding agreement it has with the Secretary of State, as well as any element 3 funded SEND places with commissioning local authorities.
- 7.2. As such, the Chair of the Board must be invited to any and all strategy meetings in response to this.

## 8. Information Governance & ICT Disasters

- 8.1. In the event of an information governance or ICT disaster, Headteachers should contact the Trust's Head of Digital Technologies and the named Data Protection Officer. The Trust has contracted 3<sup>rd</sup> party providers who are required to have their own business continuity plans in the event of a disaster.
- 8.2. Executive officers have an ICT master backup document for all Trust systems and networks, should this be required in the absence of the Head of Digital Technologies.

## 9. Major disasters

- 9.1. In the advent of a major disaster in a locality area, the Trust CEO will seek further advice, guidance and direction from the Department for Education and local category 1 and 2 responders as per the [Civil Contingencies Act](#).

## 10. Recipients of this document

- 10.1. This document will be shared with the following:
  - 10.1.1. MAT Directors;
  - 10.1.2. The Central MAT Team (though only those included in the order of succession, as per Appendix A);

10.1.3. Headteachers.

10.2. The contact details included in appendix A of this document should be kept private and confidential, as these are individuals' home/personal contact details. However, it is necessary to share these details with all the personnel occupying the positions outlined above to ensure alternative lines of communication are available to named Trust employees in the advent of a disaster.