Business Continuity and Critical Incident Policy

Last updated: October 2021

1.0   Policy statement

Dixons Academies Trust is committed to protecting the welfare of our entire academy community and, as such, understands that clear and effective procedures need to be in place to outline the academy's response in a variety of situations. The reputation of the Trust and individual academies within it are of paramount importance, and as such any decisions to close one or more academies, or other actions taken to protect students and staff, will always be made with the welfare and safety of everyone in mind.

This policy should be read in conjunction with an individual academy's Business Continuity and Critical Incident Policy and Procedures.

Associated documents:

- Bomb Threat Procedure
- Adverse Weather Procedure
- Fire Safety Action Procedure
- Lockdown and Evacuation Procedure
- Infection Control Procedure
- Strike Action Procedure
- ICT Disaster Recovery Plan

2.0   Scope

The Trust understands the importance of being proactive and preparing for potential critical incidents. As it is not possible or desirable to write a response for every possible disruption, the effect can generally be summarised as:

- an inability to carry out daily and / or critical activities
- loss of life or serious injury to staff, students or members of the academy community / public
- serious damage to, or loss of, a part of / full building or access to a building
- adverse publicity and / or reputational impacts
- loss or breach of IT systems and / or data
- loss or shortage of staff
- loss of critical supplier or services

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.

3.0   Academy Business Continuity and Critical Incident Policy and Procedures

All Dixons academies should use the Trust template for the creation of the Business Continuity and Critical Incident Policy and Procedures to make it easier to identify gaps or common approaches across each academy within the Trust. This will also make the review process for all academies much easier. Each academy must ensure that their business continuity planning is informed by an assessment of the critical activities in order to identify key risks specific to its operation and the safety of its students, staff and others. This assessment will be led by the Principal.

In line with the Trust's Data and E-Security Breach Prevention and Management Procedure, the Trust ensures that only relevant individuals have access to Academy Business Continuity Procedures, with particular reference to the tables providing an overview of data held within the Procedure, to uphold data security.

4.0   Strategy (based on risk ratings)

4.1   Minor

These are events or circumstances that the local academy can deal with using its procedures which do not affect the academy or the Trust adversely or prevent it from carrying out its day to day activities. SLT (including Executive Principal) will be notified and the incident monitored locally with possible activation of the local Business Continuity Procedure.

4.2   Significant

These are events or circumstances that cause or threaten disruption to the academy on such a scale that it prevents the academy from carrying out its day to day activities. These incidents typically would require Trust support. The local Business

Continuity Procedure is likely to be activated partially, or in full, and notification must be made to a member of the Executive

Board. The LGB Chair should be notified if there is a risk of adverse publicity or reputational damage.

4.3

Major

These are events or circumstances that disrupt the whole academy and possibly the local community. An initial assessment by the academy Principal / Executive Principal will establish if the incident is a major incident and activation of the local Business Continuity Procedure, where necessary. The LGB Chair and CEO must be notified. The CEO will inform Trustees if there is a risk of adverse publicity or reputational damage.

4.4

Crisis

A crisis would typically be an event that impacts multiple academies within the Trust or has the potential to threaten the future operation of the Trust. A Crisis Management Team (CMT) will be established at the declaration of a crisis to assist in managing the response. The membership of the CMT may vary as different skills will be required depending on the nature of the incident, but will always be established and chaired by the CEO or Deputy CEO.

5.0 Roles and responsibilities

5.1 **The Principal or their Deputy is responsible for:**

- the overall implementation and coordination of academy business continuity and critical incident procedures, including appropriate and immediate escalation if the incident is unable to be handled using local procedures

- maintaining the academy policy and procedures in an up-to-date format, delegating responsibility to the academy Operations and Business Manager for updates

5.2 **The Trust expects that:**

- all staff and students will be familiar with the academy procedures for critical incidents to respond quickly

- identified staff will be familiar with responsibilities for initial response, business continuity and recovery procedures

- Leaders in the Trust will be prepared to lend support to any other academy during and after a critical incident. Similar staffing structures in academies and the Trust leadership structure enables appropriate staffing to be allocated at short notice when required

- all staff monitor and support the emotional wellbeing of the immediate and broader community during and after a critical incident, being attentive to ongoing difficulties, particularly amongst those directly affected and reporting any concerns to the senior leadership team

5.3 **Crisis Management Team (CMT)**

Led by the CEO or Deputy CEO, the Crisis Management Team includes at least one other Executive Team Member, a Governor (preferably the Chair), Principals from other academies where appropriate, and appropriate Central Functional Leads. Additional members will be recruited to match the specific needs of the incident.

The CMT is responsible for acting under the direction of the CEO to restore critical activities as soon as possible and minimise any potential impact to the Trust and academies within the Trust.

5.4 **Staff**

- All staff are required to co-operate in support of business continuity and critical incident procedures.

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

- Staff and student data (contact numbers) can be accessed on-line and communication will be through the website and text as used in any school closure.

6.0 Review

This document will be reviewed periodically, whenever the Trust takes on another school and after any significant incident by the Executive and the Trustees. The review should consider the following:

- What went well / what was most helpful?

- What didn't work well / were there any gaps?

- Is there any unfinished communication or referrals, e.g. insurance, media

- Have all records been secured?

- Have any training needs been identified?

- What changes to policy and procedures are required?