



Emergency

Policy Document No. 14

This document contains five Appendices

**Eastcourt Independent School
August 2013**

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1. MAJOR EMERGENCIES OCCURRING IN LONDON

In the normal course of the school day, teachers will be among the last to hear of national emergencies via radio or television.

In 2001 the news of 9/11 was initially conveyed by the day caretaker; in 2005 the 7/7 London bombings by the kitchen assistant. It is quite possible that telephone calls from parents will be the first point of contact or information in the event of an emergency.

In the event of such a national emergency, the main priority of staff must be to

avoid distress among children at all costs

Distress is caused principally by:

- witnessing members of staff being themselves distressed;
- the spreading of rumours by and among children;
- witnessing radio or television coverage inappropriate to the age of the children

Whatever the case, the position adopted by staff must be understood clearly and undertaken without question. The following will therefore apply:

- Staff must at all times remain totally professional in their conduct vis-à-vis the children. This means behaving throughout in a calm manner that gives rise to no distress.
- The routine of the day, including lessons, should not be interrupted unless authorisation to do so comes from the headteacher.
- It is not the priority of staff to ascertain or keep up with the latest news of an emergency while children are in their care.
- Staff must not question children to ascertain the possible whereabouts of members of their family.
- Radio, television or other news media should not be accessed by staff without permission of the headteacher, and then under the strict understanding that no children are to be present.

- Staff who learn that they are closely involved in an emergency, or feel that they might be, should contact the headteacher immediately to establish their best course of action.
- In the event that children question staff on the details or latest news of an emergency, staff should reply calmly and non-committally, avoiding speculation, and appropriately to the age of the child.

Consistent with local or national emergency regulations, the headteacher will at her discretion allow parents to remove children from school before normal home-time.

Children who are not picked up at home-time will remain in the care of the headteacher and other volunteers until such time as they are called for. Provision will be made for meals, *etc.*

2. LOCAL INCIDENT OR EMERGENCY CLASSED AS MINOR

These can be dealt with by the emergency services and local authorities as part of their day-to-day activities. They comprise Accidents, Fire, Flooding, Security and Personal Safety, Medical Conditions, and Missing Persons.

Common to all such emergencies are the following precepts for teachers:

- Avoid distress among children at all costs
- Your priority is always first to the children, rather than to the incident.

Accidents

Accidents to staff or children on the premises may be deemed sufficiently serious to call for an ambulance, a decision taken only by either:

- The Headteacher
- Mrs Bishop (hereinafter 'Designated Staff')

Procedure for serious **playground** accidents is covered in the Staff Handbook and reproduced here:

- be aware of the symptoms of serious injury: seek immediate adult assistance through more than one runner to:
 - the nearest available teacher (to control the other children until you are available)
 - Mrs Bishop (staff member i/c health and safety)
 - Mrs Redgrave (to co-ordinate further procedure)
- contain the emergency area as far as possible: it may be counter-productive to involve your colleague in the other playground
- be aware of all possibilities:
 - evacuating the playground entirely
 - allowing access for emergency services
 - the need to prepare accurate reports of what you know for both immediate and later use

In the case of serious accidents in the **classroom**, teachers will

- remain calm at all times, defusing clamour, hysteria or panic
- follow the procedure in the first section above
- consider the immediate evacuation of the rest of the class to the nearest empty room, the nearest classroom or the corridor in that order of priority as most convenient

Once Designated Staff have arrived on the scene, the teacher's duty to the casualty is discharged, and she will take charge of the remainder of the class. She will follow any further instructions given by Designated Staff, for example where the class is to be taught. It will be the teacher's duty to ensure that the children, who may well be distressed, do not spread alarm or rumour. The facts and consequences of the accident should not be the subject of discussion with the children, so far as is possible. It will be the Headteacher's decision as to what and how much they are told.

The teacher involved will as soon as possible be given time away from the children. She may need to prepare an accurate report of what happened for both immediate and later use, and to be available to report to medical personnel when they arrive.

All decisions as to what is subsequently reported, to whom and when, are taken by the Headteacher alone.

Procedure in the case of a teacher becoming seriously ill, or of any accident taking place elsewhere than in the playground or classroom, will with necessary changes be equivalent to the above.

Fire

Procedure in the case of fire is clearly designated in each classroom, and fire drills are undertaken each half term. Non-teaching staff are familiar with these procedures.

Flooding

This is more likely to occur as a result of a plumbing accident than from adverse weather. In the case of standing water or its imminent likelihood in any part of the school, the Headteacher must be informed immediately, and the area cordoned off as far as is practicable. In a severe case it may be necessary to evacuate a classroom or an entire floor before assistance arrives. Since physical danger is usually less urgent, emphasis must be on sensible behaviour from the children.

The Fire Brigade will be summoned to prevent serious damage to the fabric or structure of the school.

Security and Personal Safety

- The Centenary Gates are kept locked or under the supervision of a teacher or parent during school hours.
- Front door entry to the school is via entryphone at no.1. The front doors to nos. 3 and 5 are not used.
- Teachers must ensure that their windows are secured before they leave after school. (Our insurers require in addition that window keys be removed from sight.)
- Items such as video recorders, computers, televisions, *etc.* are not to be left in a position where they might be seen by passers-by.
- No child leaves the premises during school time unless accompanied by a parent or carer for reasons which have been specified and are known to staff.
- No adult should interrupt a school lesson or activity without permission from the Headteacher. All *bona fide* visitors will be wearing an identity badge obtained from the office. If an adult not showing this badge should enter a classroom, the teacher should, consistent with good manners, establish their identity. She may consider (a) placing herself between the adult and the children, or (b) accompanying the adult out of the classroom while doing this. If she is at all

worried, she should inform the nearest member of staff of the situation, who should go to the office immediately.

- No child responds to provocation from any person outside the school premises (*i.e.* verbal or visual provocation from adjoining properties or thoroughfares). Such incidents are reported to the teacher on duty, or to the Headteacher.
- It is a school rule that no personal belongings of value are to be brought by pupils to school. This extends to mobile phones, apart from exceptional cases where they are deposited in the school office upon arrival.

Medical Conditions

Children with medical conditions which may affect their welfare while at school are known to Mrs Bishop, and incidents relating to these conditions come under the same procedures listed in “Accidents” above.

Missing Persons

Where children are absent from school without explanation, parents are contacted as soon as possible. In the event that no such contact can be made within a reasonable amount of time, the Education Office, the Social Services and the Police will be notified.

3. MAJOR LOCAL INCIDENT AND EMERGENCY

The Redbridge Major Incident Plan (REDMIP, v.8, 2012) uses the following definition:

“Any emergency that requires the implementation of special arrangements by one or more of the emergency services and will generally include the involvement, either directly or indirectly, of large numbers of people.”

It makes no reference to children in schools. The following scheme is derived from the former website Teachernet.

What could go wrong?

The Redbridge type-list is as follows: pandemic flu; explosives, bombs and other IEDs; flooding; extreme weather; heatwave; CBR incidents (chemical, biological, radioactive); pipeline safety; notifiable animal diseases.

How likely is it to happen?

Arguably the last local incident to fall under the REDMIP definition was in March 1945, when V2 rocket bombs exploded within a hundred yards of Eastcourt (although it is possible that the school had not re-opened by this time). The Birmingham tornado of 28/7/05 caused damage which, if translated to the local area during school hours, may have satisfied the Redbridge definition of 'major incident'. Nevertheless, the default position has by experience and precedent to be "not very likely".

How can you reduce the chances that it will?

Most of the major incidents listed above are by their nature out of the control of a junior school. Standard health and safety procedures within the school (including maintenance of equipment and utilities), together with evacuation procedures as detailed in the fire drill, would seem to be the only ways in which we can reduce the chance of anything going wrong on the scale envisaged by Redbridge.

How can you mitigate the consequences if it does?

At school level, any such incident occurring at or near Eastcourt would presumably result in all procedure devolving immediately to emergency services and the borough authorities. Contact with emergency services would be made from the school office through the 999 telephone land-line, or if that were disabled, by way of mobile phone.

If (as in the events of 7/7), mobile phone networks are down through overloading or otherwise, the school will await contact from emergency services.

By the very nature of major incidents, immediate planned reaction is likely to be confined to alerting the emergency services and safeguarding the children to whatever extent possible until they take over. In the moments between dialling 999 and relinquishing authority at the school to emergency services, ad hoc decisions based on immediate perception of danger would be taken by the Headteacher.

The problem of **collection of children from schools** following a major incident elsewhere in the vicinity is not addressed in REDMIP. In the event of the public being given instructions to collect their children from school by car, traffic flow near schools may be controlled. More likely are individual decisions taken by worried parents and not subject to any controls or guidelines, in response to an emergency, real or perceived, having

occurred, occurring, or about to occur in another part of the area up to a radius of, say, 10 miles. In such a case, children would remain within the school building unless it was obviously unsafe to do so, and be released to parents on an ad hoc basis. The Headteacher will decide if a situation is grave enough to warrant release of children to their parents during the school day. Contact with local police would be made if significant numbers of parents indicated their immediate intention to arrive at the school, or in fact did so.

If the school buildings were for any reason considered unsafe, evacuation procedure would place the children in Eastwood Road, as it does in the case of fire-drills. However, this may be an unsuitable place from which children might be collected by car because of its narrowness, on-street parking, and speed-bumps. In such a case Seven Kings High Road, Barley Lane, or Barley Lane Recreation Ground could be considered. Again, this could only be an ad hoc decision based on immediate considerations, and may not anyway be a matter for the school to decide.

Who should be assigned roles?

Mrs Redgrave is wholly responsible for the welfare of the children and the immediate safety of the school premises. In an emergency she may delegate areas of responsibility to members of staff; for example, those trained in First Aid.

In the case of absence or incapacitation of Mrs Redgrave, authority will devolve to Miss Redgrave.

4. PANDEMIC

The guidelines regarding teaching staff conduct outlined in the section 'Major Emergencies Occurring in London' (p3 above) are relevant in the event of a pandemic such as that identified by the World Health Organisation (WHO) in 2009. Discussion and comment on local or national news is avoided in order not to alarm children. Requests by children to elaborate on what they have heard or read must be gently deflected, or, where they may be persistent, re-directed to Mrs Redgrave.

Explanatory notes were made by the government during the 2009 swine flu outbreak while at phase 5, and circulated to parents. Cleaning staff were instructed to increase

general diligence when cleaning surfaces, and have special regard to hard surfaces, such as door-handles, *etc.*, particularly in toilet areas, likely to have been touched by children. All staff were instructed to remain at home if they developed symptoms of cold or flu. In the event of further outbreaks, Eastcourt will follow government direction, monitoring daily news via the internet, and acting upon advice circulated by the government Chief Medical Officer and the DfE.

Eastcourt Independent School does not undertake to circulate personal details to parents unless instructed by government to do so (for example, where children have holidayed, or which children have absences attributable to flu).