

# OWLCOTES MULTI-ACADEMY TRUST

## Business Continuity Policy



**June 2018**

**Reviewed: December 2024**

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## About Owlcotes Multi-Academy Trust (OMAT)

**OMAT** is committed to the development of inclusive schools, sharing a common purpose to provide excellent education and improved outcomes for pupils.

**OMAT** strives to provide high-quality education for all children within our local communities by inspiring innovation, creativity and aspiration through an enriched curriculum.

**OMAT** is committed to the principles of co-operation, collaboration and sharing best practice with a strong focus on staff development.

**OMAT** is also committed to the preservation of the unique identity of all schools within the trust: each school will have a Local Governing Board (LGB) which is involved in decision making at school level, with autonomy to make decisions for its own school in line with the scheme of delegation.

All trustees and any schools joining must agree to share and uphold all of these principles now and in the future.

## Business Continuity Plan

### 1.0 Introduction

The Owlcotes Multi-Academy Trust Business Continuity Policy has been written for those who will be involved in re-establishing the operational delivery of services following a major incident.

### 2.0 Definitions

An emergency is any event which causes, or has the potential to cause; injury, loss of life, damage to property or significant business disruption.

***“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 Policy Principles

Risks to business continuity can occur either across all schools in the MAT or occur on a localised basis to an individual school. This policy states the business continuity principles that all schools are expected to follow in the event that this policy is activated and also provides a framework to quality assure the Trust’s and our school’s business continuity arrangements. This assurance will be achieved by:

- Business Continuity Policy for individual Owlcotes schools
- Periodic Business Impact Assessments for individual Owlcotes school
- Periodic BCP testing per school
- Training for members of staff identified as the Crisis Management Team for their school

#### 3.1 **Associated Documents/information**

- Business Continuity Policy for each school in OMAT

- Fire Evacuation Plans for each school in OMAT
- Fire Risk Assessment for each school in OMAT
- Telephone Tree for each school in OMAT and at MAT level.

### 3.2 Emergency Contact Information

An Emergency Information Pack is kept at the OMAT central office and by the CFO and includes:

- Copies of this document
- The Telephone Trees for each school and for OMAT

Access to staff and student data (those on roll) with home phone numbers and next of kin information can be accessed on-line from Arbor. All information on Arbor should be regularly reviewed by school office staff to ensure it contains up-to-date next of kin contact details for all members of staff and each pupil.

## 4.0 Strategy

If a disaster is declared by the OMAT CEO or CFO, or in some circumstances, by the Headteachers of individual schools in OMAT, the Business Continuity Policy will be activated.

Staff communication will be via telephone and emails.

The following organisations may need to be advised of the implementation of the Business Continuity Plan or may provide advice as appropriate.

- |                                      |              |
|--------------------------------------|--------------|
| • Crisis Line for School Emergencies | 0113 3783645 |
| • Buildings Team                     | 0113 2475264 |
| • Press Office                       | 0113 3950244 |
| • Health and Safety Executive (HSE)  | 0300 0031747 |
| • HR (Wellspring)                    | 01226 720747 |
| • British Gas Emergency              | 0800 111999  |
| • Yorkshire Water                    | 0845 1242424 |
| • Northern Power grid                | 0800 375675  |

## 5.0 Roles and Responsibilities

### 5.1 Incident Management Team (IMT)

Incident Management Team includes the CEO, the CFO, the CIO, Heads of schools and the premises teams as appropriate. Additional members of the team will be recruited to match the specific needs of the incident.

The IMT is responsible for restoring normal conditions as soon as possible.

### 5.2 Headteacher or Deputy Head

The Headteacher of each school is responsible for the implementation and co-ordination of the BCP as relates to their school including:

- Immediately contacting the OMAT CEO and/or CFO and/or CIO if the disaster relates to the built environment or the ICT infrastructure to establish if the building can be re-occupied and/or service delivery reinstated
- Co-ordination of status reports/communication for the benefit of all audiences (including staff, parents, LA, Academies Team at DFE, press)
- Maintaining the BCP in an up-to-date format by delegating responsibility to the CFO for updates.

### **5.3 Staff**

Staff are required to co-operate with the IMT in support of the BCP. In the event that staff are sent home, they should remain available during normal working hours to assist with necessary tasks.

## **6.0 Procedure for closing a school in OMAT**

### **6.1 Closure in advance of a School Day**

The school can be closed in advance of a normal school day using the following system:

- 1) Closure authorised by the Headteacher after discussion with the CEO
- 2) Notification of a school closure using the Local Authority on-line website
- 3) Sending out text messages to parents
- 4) Implementing the school staff 'Telephone Tree' and email
- 5) Recording the closure on the home page of the school website and the OMAT website

### **6.2 Closure during a School Day**

In extreme circumstances, it may be necessary to close the school during a school day. This it can be done using the following procedures:

- 1) Closure authorised by the Headteacher in consultation with the CEO. Pupils will continue to be supervised by staff until they are collected or parents authorise them to leave.
  - a. Parental authorisation can be provided by text message or email from a parental phone number or email address directly.
  - b. Consider use of Places of Safety (as described below).
- 2) Notification of the school closure using the website.
- 3) Recording the closure on the home page of the school website.
- 4) Sending out text messages to all parents via 'Keep Kids Safe' and awaiting collection of pupils.

### **6.3 Immediate Places of Safety**

In the event of a major incident on site requiring the school to be closed, pupils will assemble at the primary assembly points. If these are not useable, staff will escort students to an alternative assembly point.

### **6.4 Off-Site Place of Safety**

If it becomes necessary to evacuate the site completely, pupils will be escorted to a pre-arranged nearby place of safety where they can be collected or from where they can be released to make their own way home with the permission of parents (see section 6.2 above).

Short- and medium-term places of places of safety are described in each school's Business Continuity Policy.

## **7.0 Lockdown Procedure**

It is now possible to envisage circumstances where the school may wish to lock itself in, to secure staff and pupils from an outside threat. This circumstance is described as a 'lockdown'.

If a lockdown is declared:

- The relevant site staff or member of the SLT will be advised to implement the lockdown via word-of-mouth, by mobile phone or by using a walkie-talkie.
- The school will be advised that it is in 'lockdown' by word-of-mouth or by the use of a loud hailer and lockdown siren.
- All staff will remain in classrooms and keep pupils calm and away from windows
- All pupils in the playgrounds, MUGA or playing fields will return to their classrooms.

The lockdown will proceed in the following priority:

- The external gates of the school will be locked ensuring no one can enter or leave the premises
- The following doors will then be locked:
  - Main building front entrances
  - Any entrances accessed from the outside without a swipe card, fob or key pad entry system.

*Monitoring the Site Entrances:*

Once the site is secure, staff should return to the building and monitor the entrances via CCTV, and discretely from the school side windows. The gates should only be opened by senior staff when visual confirmation of the presence of the Emergency Services can be confirmed.

## **8.0 Silent Evacuation**

If it ever became necessary to complete a silent evacuation. Notification of a silent evacuation would be made by word-of-mouth. Doors will be unlocked by nominated staff following an instruction from IMT.

## **9.0 Business Recovery in the Event of a Loss of Buildings or Site Space**

### **9.1 General**

Replacement of the buildings and facilities that have been damaged or made unavailable will be the responsibility of OMAT with advice and support from the DfE. Necessary insurance cover is in place. Temporary working facilities are the responsibility of the Owlcotes Multi-Academy Trust for which it holds insurance (see below).

### **9.2 Insurance**

The schools hold insurance (RPA) which would cover the cost of temporary accommodation.

### **9.3 Replacement Site Facilities**

The size and scope of facilities required for the school will vary according to circumstance. In the first instance contact should be made with the OMAT RPA Insurance on 0113 2462040.

## **10.0 Pandemic Threat / Mass Staff Unavailability**

Loss of staff is considered a generic threat to operations. The spread of a virus capable of impacting on operational service delivery is considered genuine and serious.

In the event of mass staff illness, which cannot be covered by any other means, the IMT will shut the school to pupils using the same procedures described above.

In the event of a pandemic, any staff displaying symptoms or those who have been in recent close contact with symptomatic individuals must remain off work in order to minimise the virus spread.

It is important that staff who are not at work be supported throughout this period through the provision of advice and guidance:

- Staff who display symptoms during the working day should be sent home and advised not to return to work until they have undergone a period of isolation and have fully recovered.
- On the first day of absence, staff should notify their school of their absence in the normal procedure, as described in the school's Managing Staff Absences Policy.
- Guidance will be issued by OMAT on any changes to the standard self-certification arrangements.
- Staff who are isolating will be paid under their normal sick pay arrangement

It may be necessary for OMAT schools to monitor and provide information on staff and pupil absence levels to the Department of Health and Social Care or to the Department for Education, who may be monitoring the pandemic situation across all education establishments. To support this, key contacts for all OMAT schools will be appointed to exchange information with the relevant organisations.

Upon official Government communication that the pandemic threat has subsided and normal operations can be resumed, normal sickness management procedures will apply, as described in OMAT school's Managing Staff Absences Policy.

### **10.1 Management of Staff with a Pre-existing Medical Condition**

During the threat of a pandemic virus, individuals with a pre-existing medical condition may be seriously adversely affected if they are infected. Staff in certain areas of school, for example class teachers, may be at increased risk of exposure to a pandemic virus.

The types of pre-existing medical conditions which may put staff at increased risk of adverse health effects are:

- Chronic respiratory diseases
- Coronary heart disease
- Immune compromised
- Renal disease
- Diabetes

Please note this list is not exhaustive.

Staff who have a pre-existing medical condition are advised to discuss the situation with their Headteacher as soon as possible to enable their needs to be taken into account when decisions are made about deployment of staff.

The Headteacher will inform Leeds City Council Health and Social Care team in order to carry out a risk assessment for the member of staff in question.

## **10.2 Management of Staff Absences due to Emergency Childcare, Dependant Care or Transport Problems**

OMAT is committed to supporting staff throughout any period of increased pressure due to a pandemic virus. It is acknowledge that the following facilities may close in the event of a public health emergency:

- Schools
- Nurseries
- Day care centres

Such emergency closures will affect staff with responsibilities for dependant(s) individual(s), and affected staff may have to take time off work in order to provide care.

OMAT defines a dependant individual as someone who depends on the member of staff for day-to-day support and is likely to be a:

- Spouse or civil partner
- Child
- Parent
- Sibling
- Individual living in the household as part of the family (not a lodger, tenant or boarder)
- A person who reasonably relies on the member of staff for assistance

All requests for time off will be considered on its merits. Heads of School should take into consideration the following when deciding if time off can be granted:

- Whether the member of staff is sole carer of the dependant individual(s)
- The member of staff's position in the school or Trust and the effect that their absence will have on operations.

A supportive and pragmatic approach should be taken in these situations and an open discussion, between the Headteacher and staff member, should take place regarding the options open to both the staff member and the school. Consideration should also be given to the following:

- The feasibility of the member of staff working from home
- Temporary changes to working hours and work patterns
- Alternative childcare options, if appropriate
- Alternative transport options
- The ability to get to other OMAT schools

Due to exceptional circumstances, and in accordance with OMAT school's Leave of Absence and Annual Leave Policy, any authorisation of paid leave that is beyond the entitled paid leave outlined in OMAT school's Leave of Absence and Annual Leave Policy will be at the Headteacher or OMAT CEO's discretion.



All periods of maternity, adoption, and paternity, will be honoured.

Upon official Government communication that the pandemic threat has subsided and normal operations can be resumed, normal leave of absence procedures will apply, as described in OMAT school's Leave of Absence and Annual Leave Policy.

### **11.0 Management of Recruitment**

During a time of major emergency, OMAT will still have an obligation to maintain critical functions. It is therefore important that all recruitment activities be reviewed to ensure that any recruitment is focused upon the critical core functions of the schools.

### **12.0 Cybercrime**

OMAT is aware of the risk of cybercrime to school operations. School systems being compromised by a malware designed to disrupt operations or extort money is considered genuine and serious.

In the event of school computer systems being seriously compromised by cyber-attack(s), the IMT will shut the school to pupils using the same procedures described above.

OMAT has proportionate controls in action across all sites in order to mitigate the risk and impact of cyber-attack(s) on school computer systems. These controls include:

- Regular back-ups of important files;
- Email filtering to alert users to suspicious emails or attached executable files;
- Safe browsing lists within school web browsers which can prevent access to websites known to host malicious contents;
- Staff keeping devices up-to-date with latest operating system and security updates;
- Central management of school devices in order to only permit applications trusted by the IT provider to run on school devices.

In the event of a cyber-attack on OMAT school systems, a member of the IMT will inform the National Cyber Security Centre and the Education and Skills Funding Agency (ESFA).

In the event of a ransomware cyber-attack, OMAT would seek permission from the ESFA to pay any ransom demands. Payment of ransoms has no guarantee of restoring access or services, and may result in the increased likelihood of repeat incidents.

### **13.0 Other Threats**

The following other threats have been considered:

- Phone and ICT Communications Loss
- Finance Process Breakdown – payments to staff & suppliers fail
- Utilities / Energy Supply failure
- Key Supplier Failure – Catering

- Evacuation due to nearby Incident
- Extreme Bad Weather
- Strikes
- Terrorist Attack or Threat

#### **14.0 Additional Information**

Each individual school within Owlcotes Multi-Academy Trust may also have their own site-specific procedures for evacuation, lockdown.

Each school will also have their own specific providers for telephone systems and ICT infrastructure.

**This Business Continuity Policy was adopted by Owlcotes Multi Academy Trust  
on 18/06/2018**

Chair of Trustees: Mrs Judith Norfolk		
Signature:		Judith Norfolk:
Frequency of review:	2 years	
To be reviewed by:	FRAC	
To be approved by:	OMAT Full Board	
Date of next review:	December 2026	

**REVIEW RECORD**

Date of review	Reason for review	Date of next review
02/07/2020	Agreed review schedule and amendments to section 10.	July 2022

Name :		Signature:	
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**on behalf of OMAT Full Board**

Date of review	Reason for review	Date of next review
12/05/2022	Addition of section 12.	December 2026

Name :		Signature:	
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**on behalf of OMAT Full Board**

Date of review	Reason for review	Date of next review
12/12/2024	Amendments to sections 3, 5 and 6.	December 2026

Name :		Signature:	
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**on behalf of OMAT Full Board**

## Appendix 1 – Draft Recovery Action Plans

Operational Threat	Steps to Restore Normal Working	Action by Whom	Comments/Notes
Phone and ICT Communications Loss	<ol style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Contact service provider and establish time frame for normal service to be resumed.</li> <li>Communicate situation with parents via letter home depending on extent and duration of the problem.</li> </ol>	School Business Manager	
Finance Process Breakdown – payments to staff & suppliers fail	<ol style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Contact Lloyds bank for advice on contingency payments.</li> <li>Contact Leeds Payroll for support to pay staff pending a return to normal banking</li> </ol>	CFO	
Utilities / Energy Supply failure	<ol style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Contact utility suppliers and establish time frame for normal service to be resumed.</li> <li>Locate emergency lighting/ torches etc as appropriate.</li> <li>Notify parents by text message if school needs to close during the school day or in advance of a school day (see 6.1 or 6.2)</li> </ol>	School Business Manager Site staff	
Building Loss – partial or complete (Fire, Flood etc.)	<ol style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Evacuate as necessary to a place of safety if occurring when school operational (See 6.3 and 6.4)</li> <li>Notify parents by text message if school needs to close during the school day or in advance of a school day (see 6.1 or 6.2)</li> <li>Notify staff via email or telephone tree</li> <li>Contact RPA insurance (See 9.2 and 9.3)</li> </ol>	Headteacher  IMT  CFO	
Building Denial leading to short term lack of access	<ol style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Notify parents by text message if school needs to close during the school day or in advance of a school day (see 6.1 or 6.2)</li> <li>Contact RPA insurance (See 9.2 and 9.3)</li> </ol>	Headteacher/Business Manager  CFO	
Service Delivery Loss of General Nature – OMAT is unable to provide buildings or ICT support	<ol style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Contact RPA insurance (See 9.2 and 9.3)</li> <li>Notify parents by text message if school needs to close during the school day or in advance of a school day (see 6.1 or 6.2)</li> <li>Notify staff via email or telephone tree</li> </ol>	CFO Business manager	

Operational Threat	Steps to Restore Normal Working	Action by Whom	Comments/Notes
Key Supplier Failure other than OMAT Academy – e.g., Catering,	<ol style="list-style-type: none"> <li>1. Contact Leeds Catering Agency for advice.</li> <li>2. Contact alternative provider- e.g. Sandwich King</li> <li>3. Notify parents by text message/ letter re arrangements for forthcoming days</li> </ol>	Business Manager	
Evacuation due to Nearby Incident	<ol style="list-style-type: none"> <li>1. Contact police or fire service for advice</li> <li>2. See 6.4</li> </ol>	Headteacher IMT	
Lockdown due to Nearby Incident	<ol style="list-style-type: none"> <li>1. Phone 999 and follow advice</li> <li>2. See 7.0</li> </ol>	Headteacher IMT	
Fire	<ol style="list-style-type: none"> <li>1. Phone 999</li> <li>2. Evacuate as necessary to a place of safety if occurring when school operational (See 6.3 and 6.4)</li> <li>3. Notify parents by text message if school needs to close during the school day or in advance of a school day (see 6.1 or 6.2)</li> <li>4. Contact RPA insurance (See 9.2 and 9.3)</li> </ol>	Headteacher IMT  Business Manager  CFO	
Bad Weather prolonged	<ol style="list-style-type: none"> <li>1. Ascertain safety issues with site</li> <li>2. Contact CEO</li> <li>3. Consider partial opening if appropriate</li> <li>4. Notify parents by text message if school needs to close during the school day or in advance of a school day (see 6.1 or 6.2)</li> </ol>	Headteacher  IMT Business Manager	
Strikes	<ol style="list-style-type: none"> <li>1. Ascertain whether there are enough staff to ensure safety of all pupils in school.</li> <li>2. Contact CEO</li> <li>3. Consider partial opening if appropriate</li> <li>4. Notify parents by letter with reminder by text message (6.2)</li> </ol>	Headteacher	
Terrorist Attack or Threat	<ol style="list-style-type: none"> <li>1. Follow all advice from police.</li> </ol>	IMT	