

**Emergency planning and response for education, childcare, and children’s social care settings**

Department for Education

Every emergency is different. In all cases, you should consider educational, and wellbeing impacts before taking any actions. You should do your best to minimise the amount and length of any disruption to education or childcare. This includes maximising the number of children, pupils and students who are in face-to-face provision.

Safeguarding and promoting the welfare of children remains of paramount importance. You must continue to follow any statutory safeguarding guidance that applies to you and your setting.

**Making an emergency plan**

All education, childcare, and children’s social care settings should have emergency plans in place. Your plan should explain how you would respond if you needed to take any temporary actions in the event of an emergency.

The aim of an emergency plan is to help you and your staff plan for and respond effectively to an emergency. The emergency could happen at the setting or on an educational visit or outing.

Your emergency plans should be generic enough to cover a range of potential incidents. Incidents could happen during, and outside, normal working hours including weekends and holidays. These incidents include:

* public health incidents (for example, a significant infectious disease incident)
* severe weather (for example, extreme heat, flooding, storms or snow)
* serious injury to a child, pupil, student, or member of staff (for example, transport accident)
* fire risk and any hazards
* significant damage to building (for example, fire or structural incident requiring temporary structural supports to the building or closure)
* criminal activity (for example, a bomb threat)
* loss of power or telecommunications
* disruption to normal services
* cyber incident or data breach
* the impact and lasting effects of a disaster in the local community

A good plan should cover:

* roles and responsibilities
* when and how to get advice if you need it
* details on the types of steps you might take in the event of an emergency and the actions you’d take to enact them quickly
* a list of key contacts
* how you would ensure every child, pupil or student receives the quantity and quality of education and care they’re normally entitled to, including through remote education where appropriate
* how you would communicate any changes to children, pupils, students, parents, carers and staff
* how you would respond if your advice were not accepted

**Building partnerships**

Part of effective emergency planning includes establishing and maintaining relationships locally which may be needed in an emergency situation.

This might include, for example:

* nearby education and childcare settings
* the police
* your local authority
* the [local resilience forum](https://www.gov.uk/guidance/local-resilience-forums-contact-details)

Establishing these links, gathering intelligence and understanding others’ plans can inform the development of a plan that reflects local and national arrangements.

**The planning process**

Preparing for emergencies is an ongoing process involving:

* awareness
* risk assessment
* contingency planning
* staff training
* exercises and tests (for example, fire drills)
* reviewing protocols and communication
* coordination and planning with relevant bodies

Make sure you consult members of staff, management boards and governors when developing your emergency plan.

Evaluations should form part of the process after a crisis has occurred. Consider doing a lessons learnt exercise and incorporating those lessons into future planning.

**Significant public health incidents**

A single suspected outbreak or incident of infectious disease will not normally constitute an emergency. You can manage most infectious diseases by following the guidance on <https://www.gov.uk/government/publications/health-protection-in-schools-and-other-childcare-facilities>

Emergency plans should include:

* a range of steps that you might take in the event of a significant public health incident
* details of when you might consider getting specialist advice from your<https://www.gov.uk/guidance/contacts-phe-health-protection-teams>. Registered medical practitioners in England and Wales have a statutory duty to notify their local authority or local UKHSA health protection team of suspected cases of certain (notifiable) infectious diseases. Your local health protection team will contact you if you need to take any actions.

In large-scale public health incidents where government makes decisions about actions to take at a national level, we’ll work with:

* the Department of Health and Social Care (DHSC)
* UKHSA
* the Chief Medical Officer
* other government departments, as needed
* relevant local authorities
* directors of public health

**Severe weather**

During severe weather conditions, you should keep your setting open and let as many children, pupils or students attend as possible, where safe to do so. Severe weather conditions include:

* extreme heat
* flooding
* storms
* snow

However, it might be necessary to close temporarily due to inaccessibility or risk of injury. You should do all you can to reopen as soon as possible.

If you’re temporarily closed during severe weather, consider [providing remote education](https://www.gov.uk/government/publications/providing-remote-education-guidance-for-schools). Providing remote education does not change the imperative to remain open, or to reopen as soon as possible.

Schools that are a member of the [risk protection arrangement](https://www.gov.uk/guidance/the-risk-protection-arrangement-rpa-for-schools) can contact the team to get help with damage and other issues.

If you are a children’s social care provider and have moved to temporary premises:

* tell your relevant placing local authorities immediately
* check to see if you need to [register your new premises with Ofsted](https://www.gov.uk/government/publications/how-to-register-on-the-early-years-register)

Use the [Met Office’s severe weather warning system](http://www.metoffice.gov.uk/public/weather/warnings/#?regionName=uk&tab=map&map=Warnings&zoom=5&lon=-3.50&lat=55.50&fcTime=1450828800) to check for severe weather conditions in your area.<https://weather.metoffice.gov.uk/guides/severe-weather-advice>

**Security-related incidents**

It is important to have a policy and plan in place to manage and respond to security-related incidents.

Your security policy should complement your safeguarding policy. This is important for any measures you put in place to protect students. It should also address the threat of serious violence. It should form part of your suite of policies to ensure the health, safety and well-being of students and staff.

Make sure your staff and students are familiar with your security policy and plan. Senior staff should have an awareness of relevant security networks. They should be able to evaluate and assess the impact of any new initiatives on your security policy and its day-to-day operation.

The guidance on [school and college will help you to consider the risk from a range of security related threats. This includes crime and terrorism security](https://www.gov.uk/government/publications/school-and-college-security/school-and-college-security),<https://www.gov.uk/government/publications/school-and-college-security/school-and-college-security>.

When considering your plan, you may find it useful to read guidance on:

* [cyber security standards for schools and colleges](https://www.gov.uk/guidance/meeting-digital-and-technology-standards-in-schools-and-colleges/cyber-security-standards-for-schools-and-colleges)- <https://www.gov.uk/guidance/meeting-digital-and-technology-standards-in-schools-and-colleges/cyber-security-standards-for-schools-and-colleges>
* [preventing extremism in the education and children’s services sectors](https://www.gov.uk/government/publications/preventing-extremism-in-schools-and-childrens-services/preventing-extremism-in-the-education-and-childrens-services-sectors)

<https://www.gov.uk/government/publications/the-prevent-duty-safeguarding-learners-vulnerable-to-radicalisation>

* [controlling access to school premises](https://www.gov.uk/government/publications/school-security)

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**Wellbeing and support**

Some children, young people and adults may experience a variety of emotions in response to an emergency. For example, anxiety, stress, or low mood. You can access useful links and resources of support on the [MindED](https://www.minded.org.uk/) learning platform for professionals. <https://www.minded.org.uk/>

Other mental health resources for children and young people include:

* guidance on [promoting and supporting mental health and wellbeing in schools and colleges](https://www.gov.uk/guidance/mental-health-and-wellbeing-support-in-schools-and-colleges) <https://www.gov.uk/guidance/mental-health-and-wellbeing-support-in-schools-and-colleges>
* [Every Mind Matters](https://www.nhs.uk/oneyou/every-mind-matters/) <https://www.nhs.uk/every-mind-matters/>
* NHS guidance resources and services for [mental health, learning disabilities and autism](https://www.england.nhs.uk/coronavirus/community-social-care-ambulance/mental-health/) <https://www.england.nhs.uk/mental-health/mental-health-learning-disability-and-autism-inpatient-quality-transformation-programme/>

We recommend that you work collaboratively with the families of children and young people who are anxious to reassure them. Discussions should focus on the welfare of the child or young person and responding to the concerns of the parent, carer or young person.

Should you require any additional information or support with emergency planning please contact:

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