



# ELMS FARM PRIMARY SCHOOL CRITICAL INCIDENT POLICY

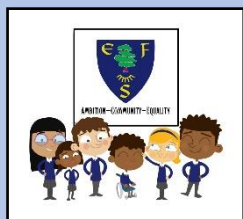
**THIS DOCUMENT IS** a statement of the aims, principles and procedures for critical incidents at Elms Farm Primary School.

**IT WAS DEVELOPED in**

**IT WAS APPROVED** by the governing body in

**REVIEW:** Yearly.

## Our School Values



**Ambition:** We are ambitious for every child to achieve their best and be ambitious about their learning and their future.

**Community:** We value everyone in our community and learn how to look after each other and our environment. We respect each other and work together.

**Equality:** We value each other, our beliefs and differences are celebrated. Everyone is treated equally and fairly.

## We are a Rights Respecting School

This policy links to the UN Convention for the right of the child:



## STATEMENT OF INTENT

**Elms Farm** is committed to ensuring that, in the event of any emergency or incident affecting the school, the school will provide an effective response, in conjunction with the emergency services, Local Education Authority and Birmingham Resilience Team to reduce the impact of the emergency on the school and the wider community. The purpose of the policy is to comply with the recommendations of the Department of Education to have in place adequate emergency arrangements to protect staff, pupils, and premises from the overall effects of an emergency. The safety of pupils, staff members and visitors on the premises is paramount, and **Elms Farm Primary School** take our duty to protect the wellbeing and welfare of these people very seriously.

The main priority is to prevent an emergency from occurring in the setting; however, this is sometimes, unfortunately, out of the hands of the school. In an emergency, staff members at the school will endeavour to take all reasonable actions in order to ensure the safety of pupils and visitors.

The procedures outlined in this policy aim to outline emergency arrangements for Elms Farm Primary School that will ensure the wellbeing and safety of all children and adults in the care of the school.



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This policy will be implemented alongside the school's invacuation policy.

## Objectives

- Establish an effective framework for emergency response.
- Ensure that all emergency contact information is current and accurate.
- Ensure that procedures are in place for communicating information about the emergency quickly and efficiently to all parties.
- Enable effective recording of actions and decisions during an emergency.
- To minimise disruption to the school and.
- To enable to school to return to normal as quickly as possible.

## LEGAL FRAMEWORK

This policy has due regard to all relevant legislation and statutory guidance including, but not limited to, the following:

- Health and Safety at Work etc. Act 1974
- The Management of Health and Safety at Work Regulations 1999
- The Regulatory Reform (Fire Safety) Order 2005
- DfE (2014) 'Fire safety in new and existing school buildings'
- DfE (2019) 'School and college security'
- DfE (2023) 'Health and safety: responsibilities and duties for schools'
- DfE (2023) 'Emergency planning and response for education, childcare, and children's social care settings'
- DfE (2024) 'Protective security and preparedness for education settings'
- The Counter Terrorism (Protection of Premises) Act 2025

This policy operates in conjunction with the following school policies:

- Emergency Plan
- Health and Safety Policy
- Bomb Threat Policy
- Full Lockdown Procedure
- Invacuation, Lockdown and Evacuation Policy
- Invacuation Procedure
- Evacuation Procedure
- Fire Evacuation Plan
- Personal Emergency Evacuation Plan
- Business Continuity Plan
- School Security Policy / Security Risk Assessment



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## DEFINITIONS

2.1 The term '**evacuation**' refers to the orderly removal of pupils, staff members and visitors from the school building; this can be as a result of a fire or other incident within the building.

2.2 The term '**invacuation**' refers to keeping staff, pupils and visitors inside the school building to ensure their safety from an internal or external incident which has the potential to pose a threat to their safety and wellbeing, e.g. toxic fumes in the air.

2.3 The term '**lockdown**' refers to the procedure of locking external doors and windows before taking immediate shelter in a secure location. This procedure is typically invoked as a response to a security threat.

2.4 The term '**critical incident**' refers to an event or sequence of events affecting pupils and/or staff which creates significant personal distress to a level which potentially overwhelms normal responses, procedures and coping strategies and which is likely to have serious emotional and organisational consequences".

Critical Incidents may include:

- Fatal road traffic accidents involving pupils or staff.
- Death or serious injuries on school trips or on school premises
- Pupil suicide
- Death or serious injury of pupils or staff as a result of criminal activity
- Death of pupil(s) in house fires

2.5 What constitutes critical for one school may not be critical for another; this will depend on their resilience and their ability to respond.

2.6 The below attempts to breakdown events that affect the school into levels to provide some guidance for when support from Birmingham City Council and other agencies may be required.

## LEVEL 1: INCIDENT

An incident that can be managed within the school but may require some support from Birmingham City Council or other agencies; no immediate threat to life but may cause some disruption to the daily routine of the school. Examples include ICT failure, water leak, local industrial action, failed heating system or supply failure (power, gas, or water).



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## LEVEL 2: EMERGENCY

- An unexpected event either within the school or outside of the school that is likely to cause some disruption to the school's functionality; likely to pose a real threat of, or actual injury or death, and requires urgent and significant support from LA and other agencies. Examples include:
  - A deliberate act of violence (e.g., knife or firearm)
  - School fire or laboratory explosion
  - Hostage situation
  - Gas leak/chemical leak
  - Destruction or serious vandalism of school premises
  - Death of a pupil or staff member
  - Transport accident involving a large number of pupils/staff
  - Civil disturbance or terrorism
  - Epidemic concerns

## LEVEL 3: MAJOR INCIDENT

- Incident affecting the wider community which could have a significant impact on the school; likely to be declared a major incident by a category 1 responder; School closure may be necessary dependent on nature and proximity of emergency. The Birmingham City Council Resilience Team will be involved as part of a multi-agency response.

Examples include:

- Serious road or rail accident/spillage
- Aircraft crash
- Factory explosion
- Terrorist action
- A Flu epidemic or viral infection leading to national alert.

Levels 2 and 3 are distinguished on how widespread their possible effect may be and the action that needs to be taken, not necessarily their potential severity. While BCC's response and coordination is likely to take effect on the two higher levels, it is considered worthwhile to notify them at a Level 1 in case the incident escalates.



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## **2.7 Relationship to other Emergency Planning Arrangements in Birmingham**

Birmingham City Council Resilience Team (BRT) writes and maintains emergency plans for a broad range of emergencies that may occur in the West Midlands Conurbation to reduce the impacts to local communities and businesses. This plan should be written in conjunction with the Critical Incident Management Guidance for Schools.

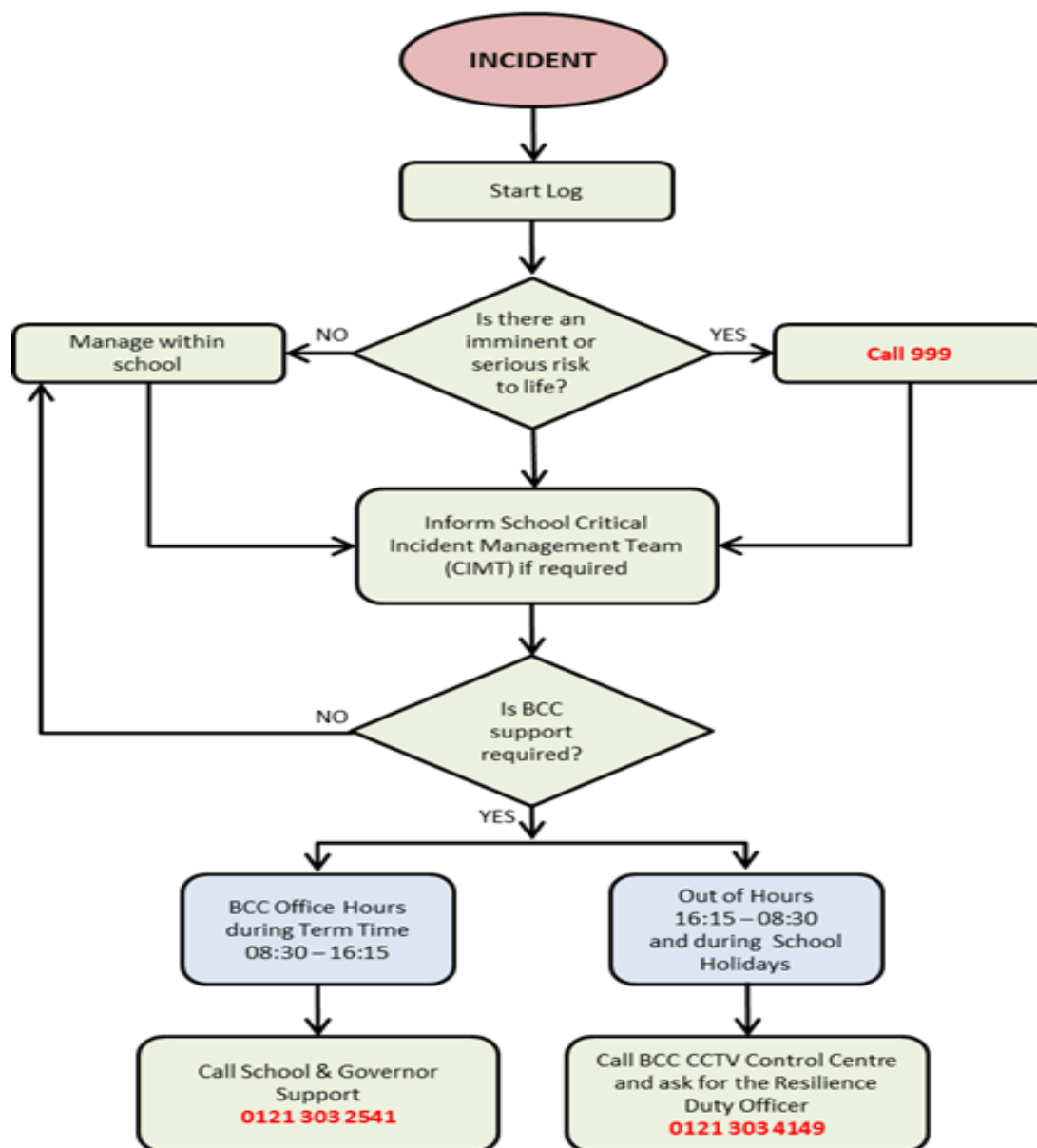
## **2.8 Business Continuity**

The process involved in ensuring that a business or organisation can continue to deliver its critical functions during and after an emergency has occurred. In the case of schools, this is the continuance of the provision of education and the measures that are required to be put in place to ensure this is possible.



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## 3.0 REPORTING CRITICAL INCIDENTS



### 3.1 Notification of incident

Information about an incident may come from a number of sources (e.g., member of staff, pupil, parent/ carer, member of the public, the emergency services, the local authority). Whoever receives the alert should ask for, and record, as much information as possible.

- Maintain a written record of your actions.
- Offer reassurance and support. Be aware that all those involved in the incident (both directly and indirectly) may be suffering from shock or may panic.
- Find out what has happened. Obtain as clear a picture as you can.



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## 3.2 CELLNET Incident Reporting Tool

When a Critical Incident occurs, regardless of the level it should always be reported to the School and Governors Support Service at Birmingham City Council. When reporting incidents to the Council, the mnemonic CELLNET (found below) should always be used to ensure that the information that is being reported is accurate and relevant. If the incident is significant enough to dictate a Critical Incident Level 3, Birmingham Resilience Team should also be notified using the CELLNET reporting system.

|   |                              |                                                                                                                                                                                                                                             |
|---|------------------------------|---------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------|
| C | Critical Incident Level      | Which Level has occurred? (As defined in the Critical Incident Management Guidance for Schools) <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Level 1: Incident</li> <li>Level 2: Emergency</li> <li>Level 3: Major Incident</li> </ul>            |
| E | Emergency Services           | Have the Emergency Services been notified and which specific services have been contacted? <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Police</li> <li>Fire and Rescue</li> <li>Ambulance</li> </ul>                                             |
| L | Location / Emergency Contact | Name of school / Nominated Emergency Contact for the school (if applicable) <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Name of school</li> <li>Address of School</li> <li>Emergency Contact (Name, Tel Number, Email)</li> </ul>                |
| L | Lockdown Procedures          | Provide details on whether the Lockdown Procedures have been activated                                                                                                                                                                      |
| N | Notifications                | Who has been notified? <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Parents</li> <li>Birmingham Resilience Team</li> <li>Chair of Governors</li> <li>Press Office</li> <li>AD/ Director/ Cabinet Member</li> <li>Head of Ed Psychology</li> </ul> |
| E | Evacuation                   | Provide details on whether the school has been evacuated                                                                                                                                                                                    |
| T | Type / Number of Casualties  | Who has been injured and how severe are the injuries? <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Staff Casualties</li> <li>Pupil Casualties</li> <li>Any known fatalities?</li> </ul>                                                           |

## ROLES AND RESPONSIBILITIES

### 4.1 Critical Incident Management Team

The School's Critical Incident Management Team (CIMT) is responsible for managing the response in a structured way. All actions and decisions carried out and made by the CIMT should be recorded.

#### Membership:

- Head teacher
- Deputy Head
- Assistant Headteachers



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- Other as required.

## **All Members of CIMT must:**

- Have a copy of the School Emergency Plan
- Be fully aware of their individual roles and responsibilities and that of others.

The CIMT meet and manage from the secure area of the school office where there is access to IT and telephony to ensure that the CIMT can contact the relevant persons to resolve the incident. CIM contact a central person which will be the head teacher or deputise the deputy head teacher if the head is not on site.

## 4.2 Head teacher

- Take overall responsibility for the emergency.
- Maintain an overview of the situation and delegate tasks to appropriate staff.
- Ensure relevant authorities are informed.
- Act as central contact for internal and external communication (including media).

## 4.2 Deputy/Assistant Head Teacher

- Obtain as much information from the Head Teacher or person informing you of the incident and start an incident log
- Assist and support the Head Teacher with notifying the Emergency Services and Birmingham City Council School's and Governors Support Service.
- Assist the Head Teacher with activating the School Emergency Plan.
- Seek direction from the Head Teacher about activating evacuation /invacuation /lockdown procedures.
- IF INSTRUCTED BY HEAD TEACHER – Make arrangements for safe evacuation or invacuation to designated muster points.
- Carry out an emergency Roll Call of all staff, pupils, and visitors in the school.
- Keep pupils and staff informed of the situation.
- Ensure the Head Teacher is advised of all requests from the Media.
- Assist the Head Teacher in providing consistent / advice to parents.
- Attend meetings of the CIMT where required.
- Assist with the recovery process.



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### 4.3 If a group is on a trip

The school trip leader should always ensure that all the relevant information from the British Embassy/Consulate, Foreign Office, Site / Tour Operator, Travel Coach Company, Insurers and Local Authority is available before the trip departs as appropriate. In case of emergency, school will follow the procedures set out in the School Emergency Plan.

### 4.4 Birmingham Resilience Team

- Assist with coordinating the Emergency Response.

Liaise with:

- Emergency Services.
- School – Head Teacher and CIMT Members.
- Schools and Governors Support Service.
- Birmingham Resilience Team Duty Officer.
- Internal Council Services.
- Elected Members.

Assist school with:

- Evacuation.
- Transport.
- Setting up an Emergency Centre.
- Provision of Emergency Feeding.
- Provision of Business Continuity Advice
- Activate multi-agency communication and response arrangements including informing the Local Resilience Forum and utilising tools such as Resilience Direct providing secure and timely communications between Partners
- Activate Birmingham City Council Emergency Control Centre if appropriate.
- Assist the coordination of media response.
- Coordinate and liaise with other services such as Legal, Health and Safety and Education Psychology.
- Assist the school with the recovery process.



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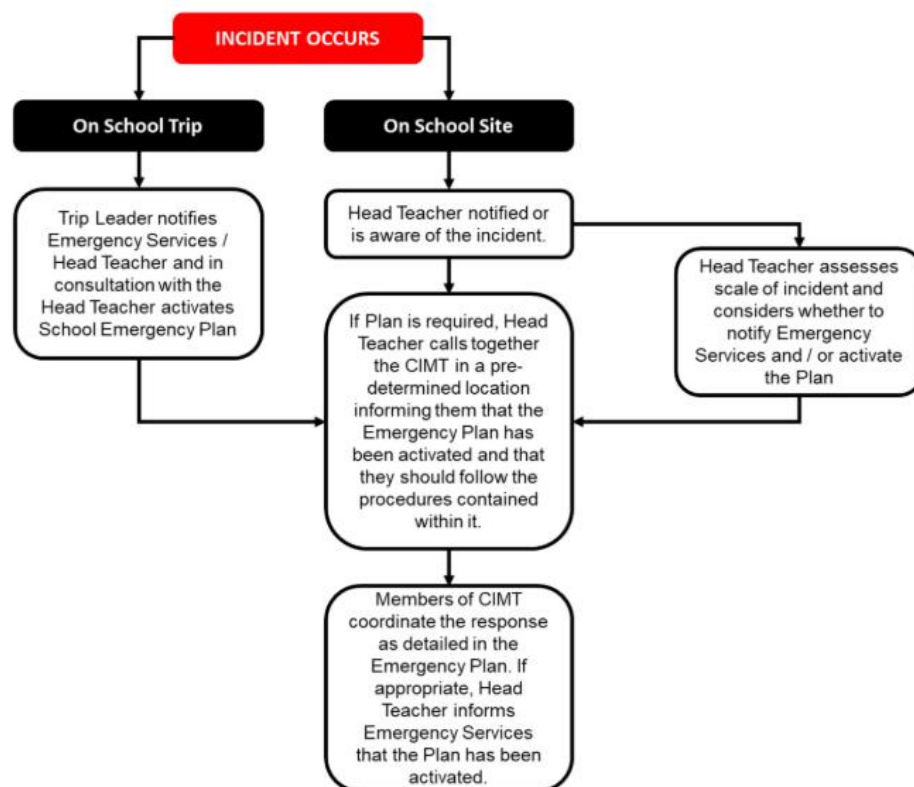
## ACTIVATION AND RESPONSE

### 5.1 Notification of an Incident

When an incident occurs at school, the Head Teacher will either be the first to know or be the first to be informed about what has happened and he or she should immediately start an Incident Log. At the earliest convenience, arrangements should be made to inform the School and Governors Support Service at Birmingham City Council using the CELLNET Incident Reporting Tool.

### 5.2 Activating the School Emergency Plan

The School Emergency Plan will be activated by the Head Teacher or nominated deputy for incidents affecting the school. If an incident occurs during a school trip, the School Trip Leader will be responsible for activating the Plan.





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## 5.4 Evacuation and Shelter

The decision to shelter indoors (invacuation) or to evacuate the school (evacuation) will be based on a number of factors. These include:

- The nature of the emergency.
- The proximity of the emergency to the school premises.
- Time available to be able to safely evacuate.
- Consideration of pupils that may have special requirements to enable them to evacuate safely (Personal Emergency Evacuation Plans (PEEP) should be written for each individual person requiring support)
- The decision of whether to shelter indoors or to evacuate will be made by the Head Teacher who may or may not have instruction to do so by the emergency services. Once the decision has been made there must be pre- planned and tested arrangements that give a clear signal to all pupils, staff and visitors of whether to evacuate, shelter or lockdown. It should also be considered how staff and pupils will be made aware if they are required to return inside immediately whilst on break or during lunchtime.

## 5.5 Special Arrangements

Specific action cards for evacuation and shelter, a Personal Emergency Evacuation Plan template and specific procedures for a range of scenarios can be found further on in this document.

### 5.5.1 Intruder

If the hazard is an intruder on the school site then a lockdown of the building will be signalled by an intermittent bell. The lockdown procedure for Elms Farm Primary School can be found within the Invacuation, Lockdown and Evacuation policy. All entrances and exits will be secured and no exceptions will be made for entry or exit to prevent an intruder entering the school.

### 5.5.2 Environmental Hazard

If the hazard is environmental and external, such as a contaminated smoke cloud or a suspected chemical leak, all children should be moved safely indoors, all doors and windows should be closed and locked and all ventilation systems turned off. The staff member responsible for turning off the ventilation systems is the site manager and in the absence of this staff member, the headteacher will assume responsibility. Once all children are safely inside and the doors are locked, tune into media (local radio / TV / Internet) for public information broadcasts.



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### 5.5.3 Fire

In the event of a fire during school hours the designated person(s) who will greet the fire appliances is the Headteacher or, in the event of their absence it will be the Deputy Head Teacher. This person will be responsible for giving any critical information, such as exact location of the fire if known and details of anyone that may need rescuing including pets and their location. This person should also know any hazards or chemicals that may affect the fire services' access to the fire.

### 5.5.4 Bomb Threat

Although bomb threats usually turn out to be hoaxes, they must always be taken seriously. It is important that reception / switchboard staff receiving the call know what questions to ask the caller so they may pass on as much information as possible. School may use a prompt card set out in the School Emergency Plan.

### 5.5.5 Suspicious Packages

The likelihood that a school will receive a suspicious package is very low, however, schools should be aware of the immediate steps to be taken following the discovery of a suspicious package or if anyone has come into contact with a hazardous biological or chemical substance.

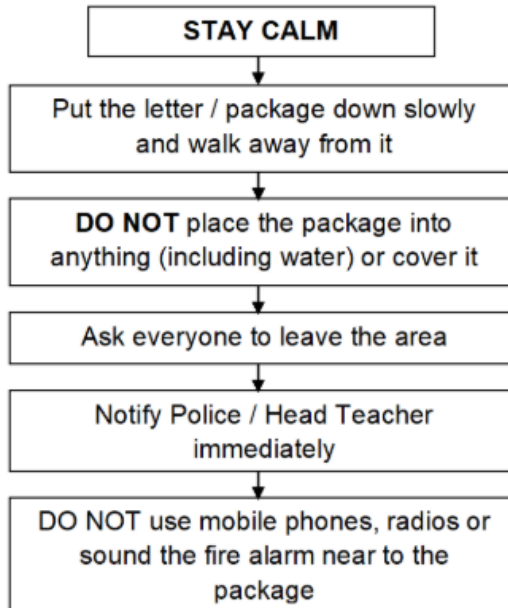
Some of the immediate warning signs to look for on a postal bomb or chemical / biological package are:

- Grease marks or oily stains on the envelope or wrapping
- Unusual odour i.e., almonds, marzipan or ammonia
- Discolouration or any powder residue on the wrapping
- Visible wiring or aluminium foil
- Package feeling heavy for its size
- Uneven weight distribution
- Hand delivered or delivered from an unknown / unusual source
- Excess wrapping
- Poor handwriting or misspelling
- Wrong address
- No return address or a postmark that doesn't match the return address
- Too many stamps for the weight of the package



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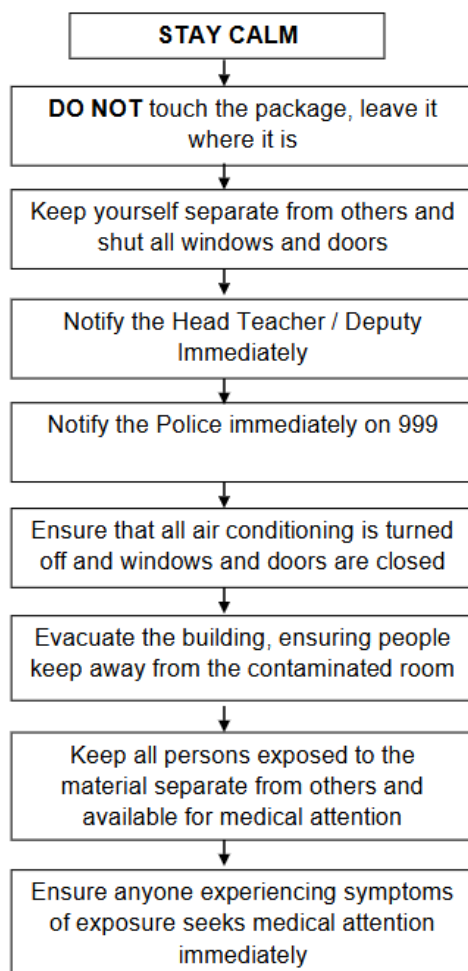
If you suspect a package may contain a **bomb**:





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If you suspect that a letter or package may contain a **chemical or biological threat**:



## 5.6 Media

The school should always liaise with West Midlands Police and Birmingham City Council before making comment to the media. Any requests for comment should be referred to Birmingham City Council Press Office. BCC Press Office will liaise with the Head Teacher and Police to agree the appropriate response. In some cases, BCC Press Office may take over the media response and produce press statements on behalf of, and in consultation with, the school to enable the Head Teacher to focus on managing the emergency. Where appropriate, BCC Press Office can provide advice and guidance to the school on addressing the media directly.

## 5.7 Communicating with the Local Authority and Emergency Services

Communication systems will be put under immense pressure in the immediate aftermath of an emergency. The main school switchboard / phone line may become jammed with incoming calls. If this occurs, Birmingham Resilience Team can provide



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support by activating their Control Centre for the school to then divert calls to, and Birmingham City Council Press Office can update the website with relevant information regarding the incident.

5.7.1 In order for the school to maintain contact with the Local Authority and Emergency Services, other telephone lines not known to the public should be listed for designated use during an emergency. An early decision should be made about what methods will be used to inform worried parents. Considering the speed that rumours spread, it is vital to keep parents / guardians informed as quickly and accurately as possible. West Midlands Police will usually advise what information can be given to parents, but in the case of a fatality or a number of fatalities, it will be the role of the Police to inform the parents / families.

5.7.2 If the school is closed (or has had to close) due to severe weather or an issue with utilities, the main school number will be used, with a pre-recorded message to inform callers of the situation and advise them where they can get further information.

It is possible that concerned Parents may turn up at the school site. If this occurs a member of Elms Farm staff will direct them to the office to be briefed and advised on where to get more information. Elms Farm will routinely inform parents of the school emergency procedures including how parents will hear about an emergency and what they should do should one occur.

Suggested methods of informing parents include:

- ☐ Email or text messages
- ☐ School website
- ☐ Police or BCC Website
- ☐ Telephone
- ☐ Local Radio
- ☐ Notices on school gate / fence
- ☐ Member of staff on school gate to greet worried parents.

### STAND DOWN AND RECOVERY



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| Immediately after an emergency                                                           | Tick |
|------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------|------|
| Liaise and cooperate with the Emergency Services and Birmingham City Council             |      |
| Visit injured pupils / staff                                                             |      |
| Liaise with parents regarding plans for attendance / representation at memorial services |      |
| Arrange debriefing for staff and pupils                                                  |      |
| Arrange debriefing for Head Teacher and CIMT Members                                     |      |
| Identify and support high – risk pupils and staff                                        |      |
| Promote discussions about the emergency in class                                         |      |
| Consider the need for additional support for individuals or groups                       |      |
| Make reasonable adjustments for affected staff / pupils to return to school              |      |
| Seek advice on legal issues from Birmingham City Council                                 |      |

| In the longer term                                                                            | Tick |
|-----------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------|------|
| Arrange a debrief for all who have been involved In the emergency response                    |      |
| Review the school's Emergency Plan, identify any gaps / concerns and amend as appropriate     |      |
| Consider financial and insurance implications                                                 |      |
| Consider public relation issues                                                               |      |
| Consider on going communications with parents / other stakeholders                            |      |
| Consider how to mark anniversaries                                                            |      |
| Consider much longer-term psycho support for all involved in the incident / emergency         |      |
| Make new staff aware of who is and how individuals are affected by the incident that occurred |      |