



Blue Skies School: Business continuity plan

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| Date: | March 2026 |
| Last reviewed on: | March 2026 |
| Next review due by: | March 2027 |

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1. Introduction

Blue Skies School is committed to maintaining the safety, welfare, and continuity of education for all students in the event of unforeseen disruption to normal operations. This policy sets out the arrangements the school has in place to respond effectively to a range of disruptive incidents, ensuring that students continue to receive high-quality provision and that safeguarding responsibilities are maintained at all times.

This policy should be read in conjunction with the school's Critical Incident Policy. Its purpose is to ensure that critical functions are resumed as quickly as possible and, where possible, continue to be delivered during any period of disruption. During an incident it is likely that some non-critical functions may need to be temporarily suspended in order to prioritise the most essential provision.

This policy applies to all staff, the Proprietors, and the Advisory Board. It is reviewed annually and following any activation.

2. Aims and Principles

The aims of this policy are to:

- Ensure the safety and welfare of all students and staff in the event of disruption
- Maintain continuity of education to the greatest extent possible
- Ensure that safeguarding responsibilities, including DSL cover, are maintained without interruption at all times
- Set out clear lines of responsibility and communication for all foreseeable disruptive scenarios
- Provide named staff with clear, actionable cover arrangements
- Comply with all relevant statutory requirements and DfE, Independent School Standards Regulations and Ofsted expectations
- Minimise the impact of disruption on students, families, and the wider school community

Blue Skies School recognises that many of its students are particularly vulnerable to disruption and anxiety arising from changes to routine. This policy is designed with that context in mind. Communication with families will be prompt, honest, and supportive, and any reduction in provision will be managed with the same person-centred approach that characterises the school's everyday practice. Reintegration following any period of disruption will be handled sensitively and, where needed, on a phased basis.

3. Legislation, Statutory Requirements and Statutory Guidance

This policy has been developed in accordance with the following:

- The Education (Independent School Standards) Regulations 2014, in particular Part 3 (Welfare, Health and Safety) and Part 8 (Quality of Leadership and Management)
- Keeping Children Safe in Education (DfE, 2025) - statutory guidance for schools and colleges
- Working Together to Safeguard Children (DfE, 2023)
- The Health and Safety at Work etc. Act 1974
- The Management of Health and Safety at Work Regulations 1999
- The Civil Contingencies Act 2004
- DfE guidance: Preparing for Emergencies (updated 2023)
- Ofsted Education Inspection Framework (2023) - expectations regarding leadership, management, and safeguarding
- General Data Protection Regulation (GDPR) and the Data Protection Act 2018
- The Equality Act 2010

4. Scope

This policy covers the following categories of disruptive incident:

- Planned or unplanned staff absence (individual or multiple)
- Premises unavailability due to fire, flood, structural failure, or other emergency

- IT system or data failure, including loss of power
- Severe weather or climate-related events
- Utility failure (gas, electricity, water)
- Public health incidents or infectious disease outbreaks
- Loss of key suppliers, third parties, or partners
- Other unforeseen circumstances requiring a significant change to normal operations

This policy does not replace the school's Safeguarding and Child Protection Policy, Health and Safety Policy, Critical Incident Policy, or Fire Evacuation Procedure, each of which contains specific procedures for those areas. It should be read alongside those documents.

5. Roles and Responsibilities

5.1 The Proprietors

The Proprietors (Jo Higgins and Lauren Higgins) are responsible for:

- Approving and reviewing this policy
- Ensuring that business continuity arrangements are in place and communicated to all staff
- Taking operational authority if the Headteacher is unable to fulfil their responsibilities
- Communicating with the Advisory Board in the event of a significant or prolonged disruption
- Liaising with insurers, the LA, and other external bodies as required

5.2 The Headteacher

The Headteacher (Carrie Myhill) is responsible for:

- Implementing this policy in the event of disruption
- Ensuring that cover arrangements are activated promptly and communicated to relevant staff
- Notifying the Proprietors of any significant disruption without delay
- Maintaining safeguarding oversight and ensuring DSL cover is in place at all times
- Communicating with families in a timely, clear, and supportive manner
- Maintaining records of any disruption, actions taken, and outcomes
- Leading the post-incident debrief and policy review

5.3 All Staff

All staff are responsible for:

- Familiarising themselves with the cover arrangements relevant to their role
- Notifying the Headteacher or Proprietors of their absence at the earliest possible opportunity
- Following the instructions of the Headteacher or senior leader on duty in the event of disruption
- Maintaining confidentiality regarding any information accessed as part of cover responsibilities

6. Staff Absence and Cover Arrangements

The table below sets out the cover arrangements for each key role. These arrangements are communicated to all relevant staff at the start of each academic year and reviewed termly. No student will be without appropriate supervision at any time. Safeguarding arrangements are never reduced regardless of staffing pressures.

| Role | Current Postholder | Cover Arrangement if Absent |
|-------------------|--------------------|--|
| Headteacher / DSL | Carrie Myhill | Danielle Atterbury (Deputy Headteacher / Deputy DSL) assumes full Headteacher and DSL responsibilities immediately |

| Role | Current Postholder | Cover Arrangement if Absent |
|--|-----------------------------|--|
| Deputy Headteacher / Deputy DSL | Danielle Atterbury | Lauren Clarke-Page (Middle Leader) assumes teaching leadership; Jo Higgins (Proprietor) assumes safeguarding oversight and contacts LADO if required |
| Middle Leader / Behaviour & Attitudes Lead | Lauren Clarke-Page | Headteacher or Deputy Headteacher covers; Proprietors notified |
| Wellbeing Lead | Hayley Jenner | Class teacher with PROACT-SCIPr-UK® training provides wellbeing support; Headteacher notified |
| Speech & Language Therapist | Nicky McKeon | Planned SALT sessions rescheduled; parents informed in advance where possible; embedded communication support continues via trained teaching staff |
| School Business Manager | Natalie Bucklen | Lauren Higgins (Proprietor) manages financial and administrative functions |
| Proprietors | Jo Higgins & Lauren Higgins | If both simultaneously unavailable: Carrie Myhill holds operational authority; Advisory Board notified; Peter Jacobs (Kape HR) available for HR advice |

Where two or more staff are absent simultaneously, the Headteacher will assess the impact on provision and take one or more of the following actions:

- Consolidate classes temporarily, maintaining safe and appropriate ratios
- Contact the Proprietors to discuss contingency staffing options
- Engage a supply teacher or known cover professional, ensuring appropriate pre-employment checks and vetting in place in accordance with safer recruitment requirements and KCSIE 2025
- Contact families to advise of any temporary adjustment to timetable or hours
- Where reduced staffing is sustained, consider using different ways of working including larger group activities, pre-prepared independent learning materials, and virtual learning opportunities

Any supply or cover staff will be briefed by the Headteacher or senior leader on the school's safeguarding procedures, student profiles, and relevant risk considerations before working with students.

7. Designated Safeguarding Lead Cover

The Designated Safeguarding Lead (DSL) is Carrie Myhill (Headteacher). The Deputy DSL is Danielle Atterbury (Deputy Headteacher). A further trained Deputy DSL is Natalie Bucklen (School Business Manager). At least one DSL-trained member of staff is present on site at all times when students are in attendance. This is a non-negotiable requirement under KCSIE 2025 and is not subject to any staffing contingency that would reduce it.

If both the DSL and Deputy DSL are simultaneously absent:

- Jo Higgins (Proprietor) assumes safeguarding oversight responsibility immediately
- Jo Higgins will contact the LADO via the Kent LESAS portal or relevant agencies directly if a referral is required
- Any safeguarding concern arising during this period will be recorded on paper contemporaneously and transferred to CPOMS as soon as the DSL returns
- The DSL will review all safeguarding activity from the period of absence on their return and take any necessary follow-up action

All staff receive annual safeguarding training and are aware of their duty to act on concerns regardless of the availability of the DSL. Safeguarding responsibilities are never deferred.

8. Critical Function Analysis

The table below sets out the school's critical functions, maximum recovery times, recovery time objectives, and minimum service levels. These are reviewed annually and following any activation.

| | Critical Function | Maximum Recovery Time | Recovery Time Objective | Minimum Service Level | Key Resources Required |
|---|--|-----------------------|----------------------------|---|--|
| 1 | Deliver a timetable of education for students | 7 days | 1 day | 1 member of qualified staff per 8 students with key resources | Qualified staff member; heated room with water and toilet access; tables, chairs and learning resources |
| 2 | Maintain attendance records | 7 days | 1 day | Maintain paper records as minimum | 1 trained staff member; paper record sheets |
| 3 | Maintain safeguarding records and DSL availability | 0 days — continuous | Immediate | DSL or Deputy DSL present at all times during school hours; paper-based safeguarding records available if CPOMS unavailable | DSL (Carrie Myhill) or Deputy DSL (Danielle Atterbury) or Deputy DSL (Natalie Bucklen); paper safeguarding log; CPOMS access |
| 4 | Maintain exam timetable | 7 days | 1 day | 1 staff member per 4 students; scribes/readers as specified in EHCPs and access arrangements | Qualified invigilator; heated room meeting exam conditions; access to locked exam scripts |
| 5 | BTEC assessment | 7 days | 1 day | Reschedule to a point in term where all resource requirements are met | 1 trained staff member per 3 students; suitably resourced kitchen meeting BTEC standards |
| 6 | Communication with parents, carers and the LA | Same day | Within 2 hours of incident | Families contacted by telephone; LA notified for students with EHCPs | School Business Manager or Headteacher; master contact list (One Drive and hard copy) |

9. Premises Unavailability

In the event that the school premises at ME4 6DQ are temporarily unavailable due to fire, flood, structural failure, utility failure, or other emergency:

- The Headteacher or, in their absence, the Deputy Headteacher will assess whether the building is safe to occupy, in consultation with relevant emergency services or contractors where appropriate
- Students will be moved to a safe location immediately in accordance with the school's Fire Evacuation Procedure
- Parents and carers will be contacted by the Headteacher or School Business Manager as soon as possible using the contact list held on One Drive and in hard copy
- The Proprietors will be notified immediately
- The Local Authority (Medway and Kent) will be informed of any closure or significant disruption affecting students with EHCPs

If the building is unusable for more than one day, the following options will be considered and activated as appropriate:

- Remote learning: class teachers will provide work via email or an agreed digital platform; for students who are unable to access remote learning, individual arrangements will be made in consultation with families
- Mutual aid: Balfour Primary School and/or Ripplevale Rochester may be approached for use of premises, particularly where there is disruption to exam timetables or where the building poses a risk to students who cannot be sent home
- Alternative community premises: libraries, leisure centres, or other local facilities may be considered for temporary use
- The Proprietors will liaise with insurers (NC Insurance / Markel UK - see Section 14) and the LA regarding reinstatement of the premises or alternative accommodation

The school recognises that many of its students experience significant anxiety and that premises disruption may be particularly distressing. Reintegration to the premises will be managed sensitively and, where needed, on a phased basis consistent with the school's usual transition approach.

10. IT Systems and Data

Critical school records - including student EHCPs, safeguarding records, attendance data, progress monitoring, and staff files - are held on One Drive, which is accessible from any device with internet access. The Headteacher and both Proprietors hold administrative access.

In the event of IT system failure or power loss:

- Paper-based registers and safeguarding records are maintained as a backup and are accessible in the school office at all times
- The School Business Manager holds offline copies of key contact lists
- CPOMS (the school's safeguarding recording system) has its own backup and recovery procedures; the DSL will contact CPOMS support directly in the event of access failure
- Any safeguarding concern arising during a system outage will be recorded on paper immediately and transferred to CPOMS as soon as access is restored
- Flexible lesson plans are maintained for all classes to allow teaching to continue without technology where necessary
- The Headteacher will notify the Proprietors of any significant data system failure without delay

For utility failure, contact details for Scottish Power (electricity: 0800 092 9290) and British Gas Lite / National Gas Emergency (gas: 0800 111 999) are held by the School Business Manager and listed in Section 14. Emergency lighting is available on site.

All data management and recovery activities will comply with the school's obligations under GDPR and the Data Protection Act 2018. Any data breach arising from a system failure will be reported in accordance with the school's Data Protection Policy.

11. Emergency Communication

The primary communication route for emergencies is telephone, followed by email. The School Business Manager (Natalie Bucklen) holds the master contact list for all families, staff, external professionals, and emergency services. A copy is also held by the Proprietors and in hard copy in the school office.

In an emergency during the school day:

- The safety and welfare of students takes precedence over all communications activity
- Once students are safe, the Headteacher will notify the Proprietors without delay
- Families will be contacted as promptly as possible with accurate and supportive information
- Where a safeguarding concern arises in the context of an emergency, normal safeguarding protocols apply regardless of the circumstances

- A written record of all communications and actions taken will be maintained by the Headteacher or School Business Manager

Out of hours, the Proprietors are the primary point of contact. Both Proprietors' contact details are held by the Headteacher and the School Business Manager.

12. Severe Weather and Climate-Related Disruption

The school will monitor severe weather warnings issued by the Met Office and will take appropriate action in advance of forecast disruption where possible. In the event of severe weather:

- The Headteacher, in consultation with the Proprietors, will decide whether the school can open safely and will communicate this to families and staff at the earliest opportunity, and no later than 7.30am on the day concerned
- Where the school is unable to open, remote learning arrangements will be activated in accordance with Section 9
- Staff and students with significant travel distances or vulnerabilities will be given particular consideration

The school is committed to considering climate resilience in its service planning and delivery. Forward planning for weather-related risks forms part of the annual review of this policy.

13. Recovery and Resumption

The following actions will be taken to return the school to normal working practices following a disruptive incident. This checklist should be completed by the Headteacher and Proprietors and retained as a record.

| | Action | Further Detail | Done? |
|---|---|---|--------------------------|
| 1 | Agree and plan actions required to enable recovery and resumption of normal working | Agreed actions to be detailed in an action plan with timescales and named responsible person for each | <input type="checkbox"/> |
| 2 | Respond to any ongoing and long-term support needs of staff and students | Depending on the nature of the incident, leadership may need to consider access to counselling services; students with heightened anxiety following disruption will be supported through the school's usual therapeutic and wellbeing provision | <input type="checkbox"/> |
| 3 | Communicate the return to business as usual | All staff notified that the incident is no longer active. School Business Manager to contact relevant stakeholders and key suppliers by telephone and email to advise that normal working practices have been resumed | <input type="checkbox"/> |
| 4 | Carry out a debrief with staff and, where appropriate, with students | Debrief report to be reviewed by the Headteacher and Proprietors; key actions and lessons identified; progress in completing agreed actions monitored | <input type="checkbox"/> |
| 5 | Review and update this policy in light of the incident | Implement recommendations for improvement; update policy; ensure revised version is shared with all staff and Proprietors | <input type="checkbox"/> |
| 6 | Update safeguarding records and notify relevant agencies as required | DSL to review any safeguarding activity arising during the incident; notify LA or other agencies as appropriate; ensure CPOMS is up to date | <input type="checkbox"/> |

14. External Support and Key Contacts

The following contacts are held by the Headteacher, School Business Manager, and Proprietors. This list is reviewed annually.

| Organisation / Role | Contact | Details |
|------------------------------|---------------------------------------|--|
| HR Adviser | Peter Jacobs, Kape HR | Via usual contact details held by Proprietors |
| Kent LESAS (LADO referrals) | - | Via Kent LESAS online portal |
| Medway SEND Team | - | 01634 331123 seneducationteam@medway.gov.uk |
| Electricity (Scottish Power) | Emergency line | 0800 092 9290 |
| Gas (British Gas Lite) | National Gas Emergency | 0800 111 999 |
| School Insurers | NC Insurance / Markel (UK) | Claims line: 0845 194 9236 Policy number: held by Proprietors |
| Mutual Aid — premises | Balfour Primary; Ripplevale Rochester | Contact details held by Headteacher and School Business Manager. Available if building is inaccessible or posing risk to students, or if exam timetable is disrupted |
| Ofsted | - | 0300 123 1231 |
| DfE | - | 0370 000 2288 |

15. Links with Other Policies

This policy should be read in conjunction with the following school policies:

- Critical Incident Policy
- Safeguarding and Child Protection Policy
- Health and Safety Policy
- Fire Evacuation Procedure
- Data Protection Policy
- Behaviour Policy
- Attendance Policy
- Complaints Policy

16. Monitoring and Review

- This policy will be reviewed annually by the Headteacher and Proprietors
- The policy will also be reviewed immediately following any activation, to incorporate learning from the incident
- Any significant amendments will be approved by the Proprietors and communicated to all staff
- All staff are made aware of the contents of this policy at induction and at the start of each academic year
- A copy of this policy is held on One Drive and in hard copy in the school office
- This policy is available to parents, carers, and other stakeholders upon request