



ST. JOSEPH'S COLLEGE
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Critical Incidents Policy

Policy Owner Head	Associated documents	Legal Framework
Review by F&GP	Review frequency Every 3 years	Next Reviewed date May 2026



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Critical Incidents Policy

This policy relates to all sections of St Joseph's College, including the Early Years Foundation Stage.

The College has set procedures which must be followed in response to a major incident in the vicinity of the College, or to a major incident within the College.

This policy covers incidents such as:

- A fire or other emergency in the College
- A major fire in the vicinity of the College
- A reported incident/civil disturbance in the local community (with the potential to pose a risk to staff and pupils)
- An intruder on the school site (with the potential to pose a risk to staff and pupils)
- A warning being received regarding a risk locally, of air pollution (smoke plume, gas cloud etc)
- The close proximity of a dangerous dog roaming loose
- Adverse weather
- An outbreak of pandemic disease

This policy should read in conjunction with the Critical Incident Emergency Plan

General principles:

The procedures outlined in this policy should be seen as a sensible and proportionate response to any external or internal incident which has the potential to pose a threat to the safety of staff and students in the school. The procedures aim to minimise disruption to the learning environment whilst ensuring the safety of all pupils and staff.

It is recognised that news of a major incident near the school, or within the school, could spread panic. Teachers and pupils are asked to react calmly and to follow these set procedures.

It is also recognised that parents will be concerned for the safety and welfare of their children. By publishing this policy to parents it is hoped that they will be reassured that their children will be looked after.

Types of Procedure:

- If a major incident occurs which requires the evacuation of the buildings then the fire alarm will be sounded and pupils and staff will follow the usual fire drill procedures.
- The procedures that the College will follow in the incident of a fire are outlined in **Appendix 1 – Fire Procedures**
- If a major incident occurs which requires all pupils and staff to remain in the buildings then a member of the Senior Leadership Team will instigate Lockdown, with a verbal signal of LOCKDOWN, LOCKDOWN, LOCKDOWN transmitted throughout the College via the school siren, Intermittent School bells/ ringing of a hand bell (if safe to do so), school radios and repeated verbally.
- The procedures that the College will follow in the incident of a lockdown are outlined in **Appendix 2 – Lockdown Procedures**
- If an incident occurs relating to adverse weather the procedures that the College will follow are outlined in **Appendix 3 – Adverse Weather Procedures**



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Critical incident occurring over the school day

- Any incident or development will be communicated to parents as soon as is practicable.
- The College will keep lines of communication open with Emergency Services as they are best placed to offer advice as a situation unfolds. The school site may or may not be cordoned off by Emergency Services depending on the severity of the incident that has triggered the incident. Emergency Services will support the decision of the Head regarding the timing of communication to parents.
- It is possible that mobile phone networks will be very busy and that staff and pupils will find it very difficult to contact loved ones (and vice versa). For this reason all pupils and staff will be required to stay in the designated buildings/area until a member of the Senior Leadership Team gives permission for people to leave. In the case of a major incident in the vicinity, this could be up to 24 hours after the event. Remember the advice from the Government is to stay in until it becomes clear what the issues are, how widespread the damage is, and how safe it is for pupils and staff to start making their way home.
- Parents must not try to make their way to the school – instead parents should expect the College to keep their children here or at a designated location until it is safe for parents to come and collect their children or for their children to make their own way home.
- Parents must also not come to the school as they could interfere with emergency provider's access to the school and may even put themselves and others in danger
- It is probable that, in the event of an incident, the Head will close the school to outside personnel (apart from the emergency services) at least in the short term – and until it is clear that it is safe to reopen the gates.
- As information becomes available, we will endeavour to post information on our website. Where possible we will also send information by email and by text message via SchoolPost.
- For some major incidents it is possible that decontamination may be necessary. The emergency services are well equipped to decontaminate large numbers of people very quickly. However, it is very important for individuals not to spread contamination before they have been dealt with by health service personnel. In these circumstances it is particularly important for parents not to make their way to the school.
- In the event of a prolonged or severe scenario, the Local Authority has the capacity to provide humanitarian assistance by establishing a Reception Centre for friend and family outside of the cordoned area.
- Following a major incident it is unlikely that the school will reopen for several days. Notices about reopening will be published on the school website, and sent by email and by text message via SchoolPost.

Critical incident occurring over the weekend or during the holidays

- If a critical incident occurs over the weekend it is possible that the College will be closed on Monday morning. If this situation occurs then notices will be posted on our website, and sent by email and by text message via SchoolPost. There will also be a member of staff at the front gate to give advice to those who make their way to school. In these circumstances please check the website and your email daily.



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- Note that we will also follow this procedure in the case of outbreak of disease (pandemic) where the Governors and/or Government (local or national) advise us that schools should be closed in order to limit the spread of the infection.

Responsibilities

- The Board of Governors will ensure that the appropriate policies, procedures and checks are in place and reviewed from time to time
- The Head and Bursar will ensure that these policies and procedures are implemented and adhered to
- The Health and Safety Committee will ensure that an appropriate system for carrying out training is in place
- The Bursar will ensure that suitable and sufficient risk assessments of intruder access are carried out on all premises and activities within the premises
- The Bursar will ensure that new members of staff receive a Critical Incident briefing as part of their induction procedure, and that annual Critical Incident training is undertaken by the whole staff.
- The Bursar and Deputy Heads will ensure that fire practices are conducted, to effectively prove evacuation procedures, at appropriate intervals, but at least termly and are recorded and retained
- Heads of Department will ensure that action plans, Lockdown precautions and evacuation procedures, resulting from fire risk assessments, are implemented, that fire escape routes within their areas of responsibility are kept unobstructed, and that control measures for controlling the risk from fire are maintained
- Those with pastoral responsibility for any site users with disabilities will ensure that appropriate Personal Emergency Egress Plans have been prepared and disseminated as required
- The Estates Bursar will ensure that inspections and tests on CCTV and alarm systems are carried out termly on contract and recorded on control measures to ensure their continued effectiveness



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Appendix 1

Fire Procedures

In the event of a Fire or Emergency, it is necessary that the College has an action plan for the safe evacuation of the College premises, and a method of accounting for pupils, staff and visitors. The Bursar has responsibility of supervising any evacuation, and will give instructions either directly or via certain members of staff. In the absence of the Bursar the On Call Member of SLT will assume responsibility.

1. If you discover a fire or emergency situation, it is important to spread the word urgently, but calmly. Shout FIRE or EMERGENCY until you have set off the alarm by breaking the glass of one of the red boxes on the walls of the College by all exits. This will sound the alarms throughout the College. The alarm may also sound automatically, as a result of the automatic detectors installed throughout the College. The equipment will also automatically inform the Fire Brigade.
2. The Site Team will note the zone number of the detector or call point as displayed on the main fire panel, and to report this by radio to the Bursar or Estates Bursar who will in turn inform the Fire Brigade.
3. Vacate the building in silence by the nearest safe escape route and assemble as detailed below. All fire routes are protected by automatic fire doors. Pupils leaving the Senior School building should be reminded of the need to be aware of vehicles entering the front gate as they pass in front of Broad Oak House. Specific duties are as follows:
 - 3.1 The Chef is to check that the Catering Staff Room and Staff and Pupils' Toilets (next the Dining Hall) have all been vacated.
 - 3.2 The Admin Assistant (or PA to the Head in her absence) is to check that the Sick Room has been vacated and if necessary accompany any sick pupil to the Top Field.
 - 3.3 The Biology Laboratory Technician is to go to the main entrance gate and prevent traffic entering the grounds while College pupils are walking across the drive in front of Broad Oak House.
 - 3.4 The Deputy Head (Prep) is to check that the Prep School has been vacated.
 - 3.5 The Site Team is to open the Alexandra Road gates for Fire Brigade access.
 - 3.6 No one is to leave their place of assembly until directed to do so by the Bursar.
4. The Fire Assembly Area for the entire College is the Top Field. Pupils will assemble in lines, form by form, as indicated on the plan. Visitors are to assemble with any staff not attached to classes. Pupils away from their own groups at the time that the alarm is sounded should in all cases return to their own tutor group or class line-up.
5. A simple procedure of checking pupils, staff and visitors will then take place.

The Receptionist will print off SIMS absence lists twice daily for the Head of Seniors and Head of Sixth Form. The Receptionist will take senior form registers, visitor's book, staff signing-in book, student signing in/out book, etc to the Top Field along with fire drill attendance checklists for Heads of Year and the Deputy Head Pastoral. The Prep Secretary/Receptionist will take Prep registers etc to the Top Field.

- a. HOY/AHOS/HOS should collect registers for their year groups.
- b. Head of Seniors and Head of Sixth Form to collect absence list and signing out books.



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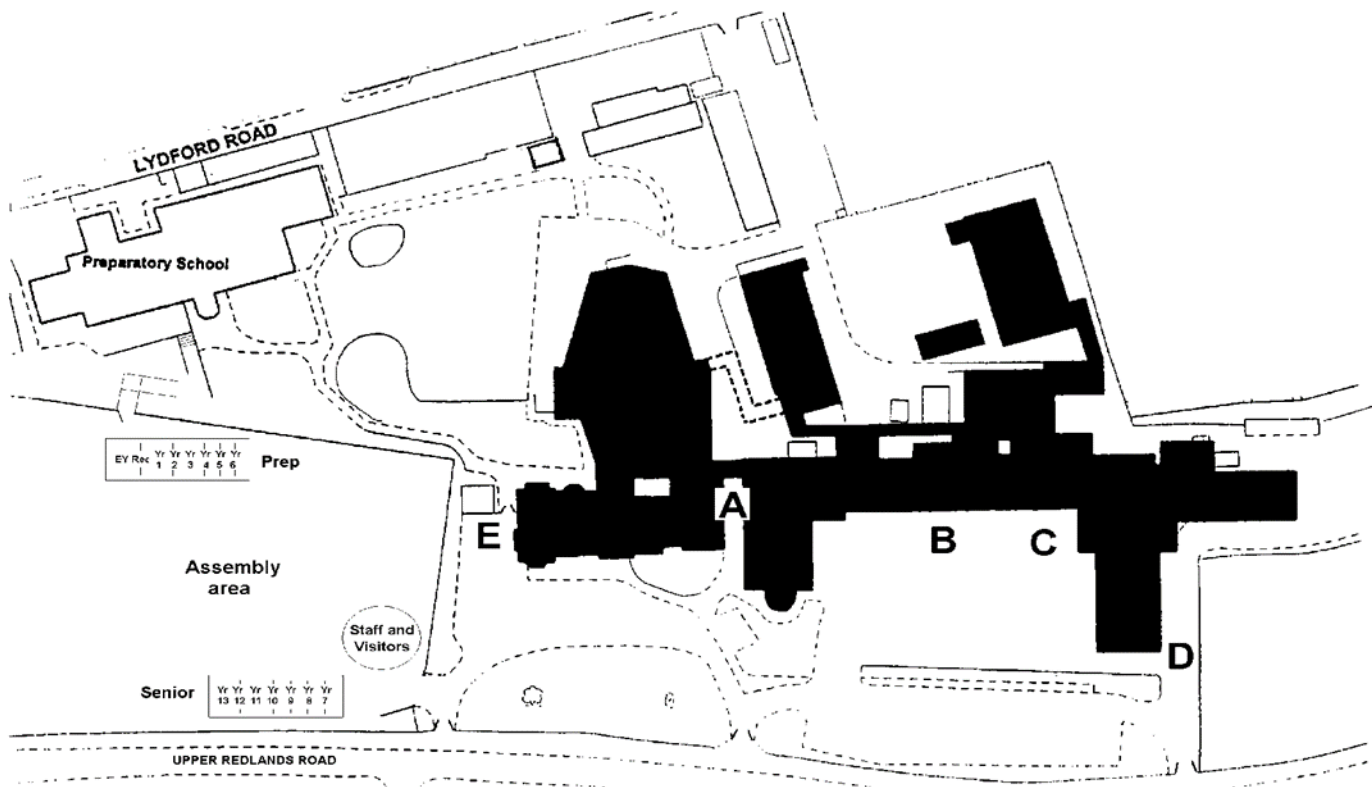
- c. Class Teachers should collect their register from The Prep Secretary. Form Tutors should collect register from HOY.
 - d. Form Tutors/Class Teachers will register pupils and report, via Head of Year/Assistant Head of Sixth Form for the Senior School, to Deputy Head Pastoral/Deputy Head (Prep) the number of pupils present and absent.
 - e. All members of College staff (academic and non-academic), except for Form Tutors and Heads of Year, are to report to the Admin Assistant near the gate of the Top Field. The Head of Music and the Head of PE will account for their respective staff. The Receptionist is to account for visitors present.
 - f. All members of Prep School staff (academic and non-academic) are to report to the Deputy Head (Prep).
 - g. The Site Staff are to report to the Estates Bursar (Tel 07548227782)/ Bursar (mobile tel no 07525 345932) for instructions. The Bursar will deploy these staff by radio to direct and control the situation All members of staff not carrying out specific instructions are to assemble on the Top Field.
6. In the case of a significant emergency posing a threat to the on-site Assembly Points, the Bursar or On Call Member of SLT will implement the Site Evacuation Plan to the Whiteknights Campus shown at Annex E to the Critical Incident Emergency Plan.
 7. In the event of an emergency fire alarm activation after 5.00 pm, Alarm Response (Tel 08707 700825/ 07852 186831) will be contacted by the emergency call monitoring station and will attend the site and if necessary, contacting the Estates Bursar/ Bursar for further assistance.



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7. Assembly points are as follows:





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Appendix 2

Lockdown Procedures

- Only a member of SLT will have the authority to instigate Lockdown. Staff will be alerted to the activation of the lockdown procedure plan by a recognised signal, transmitted throughout the school via the school siren, intermittent school bells/ ringing of a hand bell (if safe to do so), school radios and repeated verbally. This verbal signal will be:

LOCKDOWN, LOCKDOWN, LOCKDOWN

On hearing this signal:

- Pupils who are outside of the school buildings are to be brought inside as quickly as possible;
- Those inside the school should remain in their classrooms;
- The Site Team are to ensure all external doors and, as necessary, windows are locked (depending on the circumstances, internal classroom doors may also need to be locked). Once in lockdown mode, staff should notify the Senior School office immediately by email of any pupils not accounted for (and instigate an immediate search for any missing)
- The Estates Bursar is to return to the Site Office to monitor the CCTV;
- Staff should encourage the pupils to keep calm;
- Staff should ensure no students are using their mobile phones
- As appropriate, the senior school office should establish communication with the Emergency Services as soon as possible;
- If necessary, parents should be notified, as soon as it is practicable to do so, via SchoolPost;
- Pupils will not be released to parents during a lockdown;
- If it becomes necessary to evacuate the building, the fire alarm will be sounded and standard fire evacuation procedures followed;
- Staff should await further instructions via Teams and email.
- During the lockdown, staff will keep agreed lines of communication open but not make unnecessary calls to the senior school office as this could delay more important communication.
- Examples of discreet communication channels might be:
 - Where staff have access to the internal e-mail system then they should access their account and await further instruction. In practical terms, staff should be familiar with accessing their account through a variety of means eg laptop, smartphone or tablet;
 - Teams messaging
 - SchoolPost - to be used to communicate instructions via text message in an emergency.
- Free movement may be permitted within the building ('Partial Lockdown') dependent upon circumstances. All situations are different. Once all staff and pupils are safely inside, senior staff will conduct an ongoing and dynamic risk assessment based on advice from the College Health & Safety Officer (the Bursar)/emergency services. This can then be communicated to staff and pupils. Partial lockdown is a precautionary measure but puts the school in a state of readiness (whilst retaining a degree of normality) should the situation escalate. In the event of an air pollution issue, air vents can be closed (where possible) as an additional precaution. Emergency Services will advise as to the best course of action in respect of the prevailing threat.



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- 'Full lockdown': This signifies an immediate threat to the school and may be an escalation of a partial lockdown. Classroom doors locked (where a member of staff with key is present); Windows locked, blinds drawn, pupils sit quietly out of sight (eg under desk or around a corner)

Implementation

It is of vital importance that the school's lockdown procedures are familiar to members of the senior leadership team, school administrators, teaching staff and non-teaching staff. To achieve this, a lockdown drill will be undertaken at least once a year. Pupils should also be aware of the plan. (Regular practices will increase their familiarity). Parents too should know that the school has a lockdown plan, and a copy of this plan will be placed on the College website.

The SLT will also:

- Conduct a number of table top exercises with the senior leadership team to test the procedures against various scenarios;
- Rehearse lockdown arrangements with all staff and pupils;



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Appendix 3

Adverse Weather Procedures

Introduction

St Joseph's College will endeavour to stay open for as many pupils as possible for as long as possible and will aim to return to normality as soon as possible during any period of inclement weather, including snow.

Please note that no pupil, parent or staff member should travel to school if they cannot do so safely.

The College will restrict its opening if in the opinion of the Head, based on the best advice available to them at the time, the risk to pupils, parents and staff from travelling to school or remaining on site is too great.

If the adverse weather is likely to disrupt learning for **more than 24 hours**, we anticipate that we would move to remote learning wherever possible. This would, at a minimum, involve posting work on Teams for pupils to complete.

Please note the following sources of information that you will need to monitor during the period covered by the plan:

1. www.sjcr.org.uk The latest written update available to parents, pupils and staff will be available on the College **website homepage**
2. The latest detailed updates are available to staff via **email** AND in **Key Info** on the **SJCR Staff Team**
3. **SchoolPost** – Parents and Staff will receive SchoolPost messages to their email account registered with Schoolbase and/or their mobile.
4. <http://news.bbc.co.uk/weather/forecast> Please search for the Reading area and note both the **5 DAY FORECAST** and the **NEXT 24 HOURS** forecast.
5. http://news.bbc.co.uk/local/berkshire/hi/tv_and_radio/ BBC Berkshire provides latest news and information on transport

The following table references snow but we are aware in recent years that amber and red weather warnings have been issued for High Wind and other weathers. The timing, severity and probability of these weather warnings will be considered when deciding whether the school can remain open.

Phase	Indicators	Education	Communication
1. Preparatory Phase	Adverse weather is Forecast	Normal school in progress	Annually the Adverse Weather Procedures should be shared with Parents



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	For example, gritting in progress on public major roads		Parents and staff should monitor the information sources listed.
2. College Open	<p>Adverse weather (mild) For example, light snow is falling or expected to fall</p> <ol style="list-style-type: none"> 1. Public Roads are Open 2. Public Transport is running 3. School Busses are running. 4. Weather warning (yellow) issued by the Met Office 	<ol style="list-style-type: none"> 1. Normal school in progress 2. Outdoor activities / sports may be restricted 3. Lesson 1 may be cancelled if a high proportion of pupils arrive late 	Parents and staff should monitor their mobile phones/email for SchoolPost messages. NB unless told otherwise by SchoolPost, email or on the website the College will be open
3. Restricted Opening	<p>Adverse weather For example, medium snow is falling or expected to fall</p> <ol style="list-style-type: none"> 1. Roads passable but speed limits are reduced and delays likely 2. Restriction on some public transport services 3. School buses operational but subject to delay 4. Extreme weather (amber) warning issued by Met Office for the local area 5. The College site is unable to open fully for health and safety reasons e.g., building damage, lack of heating, lack of staff 	<ol style="list-style-type: none"> 1. The College may operate a reduced timetable of lessons between 10am and 3pm (with a short break at lunch) 2. Mocks or internal exams will be cancelled and rescheduled 3. School may only be open to a smaller number of pupils 	SchoolPost and the Website will inform staff and parents of the arrangements in place
4. College Closed	<p>Adverse weather for example heavy snow has fallen, is falling or expected to fall</p> <ol style="list-style-type: none"> 1. Extreme weather (red) warning issued by Met Office for the local area 2. Public buses (likely to be) cancelled 3. School buses will be cancelled 4. Severe disruption on the roads 5. Police warning people not to undertake unnecessary journeys 6. The College site is unable to open at all for health and 	THE COLLEGE WILL BE CLOSED	<p>SchoolPost and the Website: will inform staff and parents when the College will be closed and when it will reopen.</p> <p>School Transport providers will be informed by the Bursar</p>



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	safety reasons e.g., building damage, lack of heating, lack of staff		
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If it is possible to only run a limited provision for some reason e.g., the availability of staff or challenges on site such as a lack of heating or localised flooding, priority will be given in the following order:

1. Children of Key Workers
2. Prep School Pupils
3. Students with terminal examinations within the current year e.g. Year 11 and Year 13

In cases of restricted opening, those students attending may be advised to attend in games kit with sensible shoes and outdoor wear and bring a packed lunch.