Emergency Response and Preparedness Policy

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Introduction & Policy Statement

This Emergency Response and Preparedness Policy sets out Cameron and Cooper Limited's approach to managing emergencies across its residential children's homes and school. It provides clear and structured guidance to support adults and leaders in responding to incidents that may present a risk to the safety, health, or welfare of young people.

The policy reflects the organisation's duties under the Children's Homes (England) Regulations 2015 and associated safeguarding guidance. It ensures that all emergency responses are coordinated, proportionate, and centred on the protection and wellbeing of young people.

In all circumstances, the welfare of young people is the primary consideration. Adults are expected to follow agreed procedures, maintain clear communication, and act in a way that supports safety, stability, and reassurance. Responses must reflect the individual needs of young people, including any known risks, vulnerabilities, or care planning arrangements.

This policy provides a clear framework for action during emergencies. It does not replace professional judgement but requires that judgement to be exercised within the context of safeguarding responsibilities, leadership oversight, and regulatory expectations. Senior leaders are responsible for ensuring that decisions are informed, proportionate, and consistent with the organisation's values of Love, Care, and Consistency.

Policy Objectives and Commitment

Cameron and Cooper Limited is committed to maintaining a safe, prepared, and well-led environment across all services. This includes ensuring that adults are equipped, supported, and confident to respond effectively to emergency situations, and that clear systems are in place to enable a coordinated and timely response.

The objectives of this policy are to:

- Provide clear and practical guidance to support effective decision-making during emergencies
- Ensure that the safety, welfare, and supervision of young people are prioritised at all times
- Establish clear roles, responsibilities, and lines of accountability during incidents
- Support effective communication within services and with external agencies, including emergency services and safeguarding partners
- Promote consistent training, preparedness, and confidence across all teams
- Maintain continuity of care and minimise disruption to young people wherever possible

The organisation is responsible for ensuring that:

- This policy is reviewed regularly and updated in line with legislation, statutory guidance, and organisational learning
- Adults receive appropriate training, guidance, and support to apply emergency procedures confidently and consistently
- Emergency responses are informed by safeguarding responsibilities, individual risk assessments, and care planning arrangements

- Incidents are reviewed in a structured and reflective way, with learning embedded into practice and oversight

Purpose and Scope

This policy sets out the organisation's approach to preparing for and responding to emergency situations across all services. It provides a clear framework to ensure that responses are safe, coordinated, and focused on the protection and welfare of young people.

It applies to all areas of Cameron and Cooper Limited's operations, including residential children's homes, the school, and any associated environments where the organisation has responsibility for young people.

Across all settings:

- Adults are expected to understand and follow the procedures outlined in this policy
- Leaders are responsible for ensuring that appropriate systems, training, and oversight are in place
- Emergency responses must be consistent, coordinated, and proportionate to the level of risk presented

In residential homes, this includes maintaining appropriate supervision, safeguarding, and support for young people during any emergency situation. Within the school environment, procedures must ensure the safety of all pupils while maintaining effective oversight of the site.

This policy applies at all times, including during off-site activities, transport, and any situation where the organisation retains a duty of care. Adults remain responsible for responding appropriately to risk, regardless of location or setting.

Definitions and Terminology

Key Terms

The following terms are used throughout this policy to ensure clarity and consistency in how emergency situations are understood and managed:

- **Emergency**
  A situation presenting immediate or significant risk to the safety, health, or welfare of young people or adults, requiring a coordinated and timely response

- **Incident**
  An event that disrupts normal operations and requires an organised response, which may escalate into an emergency

- **Lockdown**
  A procedure used to restrict movement and secure individuals within safe areas in response to an identified threat

- **Evacuation**
  The safe and controlled movement of individuals from a potentially hazardous area to a designated safe location

- **Shelter-in-Place**
  A protective action where individuals remain indoors and secure the environment in response to an external risk

- **Safeguarding**
  Actions taken to protect young people from harm and promote their welfare at all times

- **Risk Assessment**
  A structured process used to identify, evaluate, and manage potential risks

- **Business Continuity**
  The organisation's ability to maintain or restore essential functions following an incident

- **Emergency Services**
  Police, fire, ambulance, or other services responsible for responding to emergencies

- **Regulation 40 Notification**
  A statutory notification made to Ofsted and relevant agencies following a serious incident, in line with the Children's Homes (England) Regulations 2015

Organisational Context

The following terms relate specifically to how this policy is applied within the organisation:

- **Residential Children's Homes**
  Settings where young people live and receive care, where emergency responses must include safeguarding, supervision, and support

- **School Environment**
  All areas of the educational provision, where procedures must prioritise the safety and supervision of pupils

- **Senior Leadership Team**
  Leaders responsible for overseeing emergency response, decision-making, and coordination across the organisation

- **Designated Safe Areas**
  Identified locations within each site used to provide a secure environment during an emergency

- **Leadership Oversight**
  The structure through which decisions are made and coordinated during an incident, ensuring clarity, accountability, and safeguarding focus

Roles and Responsibilities

Senior Leadership Team

The Senior Leadership Team holds overall responsibility for the organisation's response to emergencies. This includes leadership, decision-making, coordination, and communication with emergency services and safeguarding partners.

At all times, a clearly identified senior leader will take operational lead for managing the incident. This will usually be the Registered Manager or, where applicable, the on-call senior leader. All other leaders will support this role to ensure a coordinated and effective response.

- **Director**
  Holds overall accountability for the organisation's emergency response. Ensures that responses are aligned with regulatory requirements, safeguarding responsibilities, and organisational priorities

- **Head of Safeguarding**
  Leads the safeguarding response during incidents. Ensures that all actions prioritise the welfare of young people and that appropriate safeguarding procedures, including multi-agency coordination and escalation, are followed

- **Registered Manager**
  Leads the operational response within the home. Ensures that emergency procedures are implemented effectively, that young people are safeguarded and supervised, and that all actions are clearly directed and recorded

- **Deputy Manager**
  Supports the Registered Manager and assumes full responsibility in their absence. Ensures continuity of leadership, decision-making, and oversight during incidents

- **On-Call Senior Leader**
  Holds responsibility for providing immediate advice, decision-making, and escalation outside of normal working hours. May assume operational lead where the Registered Manager is not present

- **Head of School**
  Leads the emergency response within the school environment. Ensures the safety, supervision, and coordinated management of all pupils and staff on site

- **Business Manager**
  Supports the coordination of resources, logistics, and communication. Ensures that operational continuity is maintained during and following an incident

Senior leaders must maintain clear communication throughout any incident. Decision-making must be timely, proportionate, and clearly directed. Where required, the designated senior leader is responsible for ensuring that all safeguarding notifications, including those required under Regulation 40, are completed without delay.

Responsibilities of Adults

All adults are responsible for responding promptly, safely, and in line with this policy during any emergency situation. Adults must follow the direction of senior leaders and act in a way that prioritises the safety, supervision, and wellbeing of young people at all times.

This includes:

- Acting immediately and following agreed emergency procedures
- Maintaining the safety, supervision, and whereabouts of young people at all times
- Communicating clearly, sharing accurate information, and reporting concerns without delay
- Implementing emergency measures as directed, including evacuation, lockdown, or shelter-in-place
- Providing calm, consistent reassurance to young people during incidents

- Escalating concerns to a designated senior leader immediately where there is risk of harm or uncertainty

Adults must work within the limits of their training and competence. Where a situation cannot be safely managed, or there is a risk to life or serious harm, emergency services must be contacted without delay.

Adults must not act outside of agreed procedures or attempt to manage situations beyond their level of competence. Support must be sought immediately from a designated senior leader.

External Agency Coordination

Effective emergency response requires clear, timely, and well-coordinated communication with external agencies. A designated senior leader will act as the primary point of contact to ensure that communication is consistent, accurate, and appropriately managed.

External agencies may include:

- Emergency services, including police, fire, and ambulance
- The placing authority and allocated social worker
- The host local authority
- The Local Authority Designated Officer where concerns relate to adult practice
- Health services and other relevant safeguarding partners

In the event of an emergency:

- Emergency services must be contacted without delay where there is a risk to life or serious harm
- A designated senior leader will take responsibility for all external communication and coordination
- Clear and accurate information must be shared, based on known facts only
- All contact with external agencies must be recorded in line with organisational procedures

Following an incident:

- The organisation will engage with relevant agencies to review the response
- Any safeguarding processes, including multi-agency meetings or enquiries, will be fully supported
- Learning will be identified and used to strengthen practice, oversight, and future responses

Risk Assessment and Hazard Identification

Hazard Identification

Cameron and Cooper Limited takes a proactive and structured approach to identifying and managing risks that may impact the safety and welfare of young people, adults, and visitors across all services.

Hazard identification is continuous and informed by day-to-day practice. It includes:

- Regular review of the physical environment across all sites
- Immediate reporting and escalation of hazards or concerns by adults

- Ongoing review of incidents and near misses to identify patterns, trends, and emerging risks
- Consideration of individual young people's needs, vulnerabilities, and known risk factors
- Input from external professionals where specialist assessment or advice is required

Risks that may require an emergency response include:

- Security concerns, including unauthorised access or suspicious behaviour
- Health and safety risks, such as fire, gas leaks, electrical faults, or structural damage
- Environmental factors, including severe weather or disruption to utilities
- Medical emergencies affecting young people or adults
- Incidents occurring during off-site activities or transport

Risk Analysis and Prioritisation

All identified risks must be assessed based on their likelihood and potential impact. This ensures that responses are proportionate and that higher-risk situations are prioritised.

Risk levels are understood as:

- **Low**
  Unlikely to occur and manageable with minimal impact

- **Medium**
  Possible occurrence with some disruption or risk of harm

- **High**
  Likely to occur or presenting a significant risk of harm or disruption

- **Critical**
  Immediate or ongoing risk with potential for serious harm or major impact

Risk assessment must inform decision-making at all times. Where risk levels increase, actions must be escalated without delay and appropriate control measures implemented.

In response to identified risks, the organisation will:

- Implement preventative and protective measures to reduce risk
- Ensure that clear and site-specific emergency response procedures are in place
- Provide training and guidance to support confident and consistent responses
- Maintain leadership oversight through regular monitoring, review, and escalation

Risk assessment must take account of both environmental factors and the individual needs of young people. This includes known behaviours, vulnerabilities, and care planning arrangements, ensuring that responses remain safeguarding-led at all times.

Emergency Communication Plan

Internal Communication

Effective communication is essential to ensure a coordinated and safe response during any emergency. Information must be shared clearly and without delay to support decision-making, maintain oversight, and protect the welfare of young people.

Communication methods include:

- Verbal instruction where immediate action is required
- Alarm systems, including fire or safety alarms
- Mobile phones and agreed messaging systems, including group communication between senior leaders
- Pre-agreed discreet communication approaches, where a response is required without causing unnecessary distress to young people

All adults must ensure that communication devices are accessible at all times. Messages must be acknowledged promptly and acted upon without delay.

During any incident, a designated senior leader will take responsibility for coordinating communication. This includes:

- Providing clear direction to adults
- Ensuring information shared is accurate and based on known facts
- Maintaining oversight of communication across the service

Discreet communication approaches will be agreed through training and briefing processes to ensure that responses can be coordinated without escalating anxiety or distress for young people.

External Communication

Communication with external agencies and stakeholders must be clear, timely, and led by a designated senior leader at all times.

External communication may include:

- Emergency services, including police, fire, and ambulance
- The placing authority and allocated social worker
- The host local authority
- The Local Authority Designated Officer where concerns relate to adult practice
- Parents, carers, or those with parental responsibility
- Other relevant professionals or safeguarding partners

In the event of an emergency:

- Emergency services must be contacted without delay where there is a risk to life or serious harm
- A designated senior leader will act as the single point of contact for all external communication
- Information shared must be factual, accurate, and based on known information only
- Speculation, opinion, or unverified information must not be shared

Parents, carers, and professionals must be informed as soon as it is safe to do so and in line with advice from emergency services or safeguarding partners.

The Head of Safeguarding will oversee communication with safeguarding agencies to ensure that all actions are appropriate, proportionate, and aligned with statutory safeguarding responsibilities.

All external communication must be clearly recorded in line with organisational procedures.

Contact Information and Notifications

Up-to-date contact information must be maintained, accurate, and accessible at all times. This must be available to adults on shift, including during out-of-hours periods.

This includes:

- Emergency services
- Senior leaders and on-call contacts
- The placing authority and allocated social workers
- The host local authority
- The Local Authority Designated Officer
- Parents, carers, or those with parental responsibility
- Other relevant safeguarding or health professionals

In the event of an emergency:

- A designated senior leader must be informed immediately
- Emergency services must be contacted without delay where there is a risk to life or serious harm
- Clear and direct instructions must be provided to adults and young people
- Relevant external contacts must be notified in line with safeguarding responsibilities
- All communication and actions taken must be recorded accurately in line with organisational procedures

Security Protocols

Lockdown Procedures

Lockdown procedures must be implemented immediately where there is a serious risk to the safety of individuals on site. This may include an intruder, a significant disturbance, or a threat within the local area. The purpose of a lockdown is to restrict movement, secure individuals, and reduce the risk of harm.

There are two levels of lockdown:

- **Full lockdown**
  All individuals remain inside. External and internal doors are secured, movement is restricted, and individuals are kept out of sight where possible

- **Partial lockdown**
  External access points are secured, with limited internal movement permitted under the direction of a designated senior leader

In the event of a lockdown:

- A designated senior leader will initiate the response and provide clear instructions
- Emergency services must be contacted without delay where there is a risk to life or serious harm
- Adults must immediately direct young people to a designated safe area
- Doors and windows must be secured where safe to do so
- A headcount must be completed immediately and any missing individuals reported without delay
- Adults must maintain supervision and provide calm reassurance to young people

- No one must open doors or respond to external prompts unless directed by a designated senior leader or emergency services

The lockdown must remain in place until a designated senior leader confirms it is safe to stand down.

Lockdown procedures must be practised regularly to ensure that adults and young people understand expectations and are able to respond confidently and safely.

Intruder Response

An intruder is any unauthorised individual on site who presents, or may present, a risk to the safety of young people or adults. The priority in all situations is to minimise contact, maintain safety, and ensure a controlled and coordinated response.

If an intruder is identified:

- A designated senior leader must be informed immediately
- Emergency services must be contacted without delay where there is any risk to safety
- Adults must not place themselves or others at risk through direct confrontation
- Young people must be moved away from the area of risk and kept under close supervision
- A headcount must be maintained and any concerns reported immediately
- Lockdown procedures must be initiated where required

Where it is safe to do so, adults may take steps to restrict access to areas of the building, but must not attempt to physically intervene unless necessary to prevent immediate harm.

Following the incident:

- All actions must be recorded clearly and factually
- Safeguarding procedures must be followed in line with organisational policy
- Consideration must be given to whether the incident meets the threshold for a Regulation 40 notification
- A structured review must take place to identify learning and any required changes to practice
- Appropriate support must be provided to young people and adults affected

Responding to Violent or Aggressive Behaviour

Young people may present behaviour that creates a risk to themselves or others. In all situations, the safety of young people and adults must remain the priority.

Adults must respond in line with training, behaviour support plans, and individual risk assessments.

Adults must:

- Use de-escalation strategies and follow agreed approaches
- Maintain supervision of all young people, ensuring their safety at all times
- Move other young people away from the area of risk where required
- Inform a designated senior leader immediately and request additional support
- Continue to assess risk dynamically and act in a way that reduces the likelihood of harm

Where there is an immediate risk of serious harm:

- A designated senior leader may implement a partial or full lockdown
- Emergency services must be contacted without delay if the situation cannot be safely managed
- Any intervention must be proportionate, necessary, and in line with training
- Adults must not place themselves or others at risk through unsafe or unplanned intervention

Following any incident:

- A clear and factual record must be completed in line with safeguarding procedures
- Consideration must be given to whether the incident meets the threshold for a Regulation 40 notification
- A debrief must take place to support reflection and emotional wellbeing
- Risk assessments and behaviour support plans must be reviewed and updated where required

Access Control and Site Security

Effective access control is essential to maintaining a safe and secure environment and preventing unauthorised access to young people and the home.

Across all sites:

- External doors must remain secure when not in use
- Entry to the building must be controlled, monitored, and not left unattended
- Visitors must be authorised, appropriately identified, and supervised at all times
- The purpose of any visit must be known and agreed before access is granted
- Any concerns about unknown individuals, unexpected visitors, or unusual activity must be reported immediately

Keys and access systems must be managed securely at all times:

- Keys must not be shared inappropriately or left unsecured
- Any lost or unaccounted-for keys must be reported immediately to a designated senior leader
- Action must be taken without delay to maintain the security of the building where concerns arise

Adults are responsible for maintaining a secure environment at all times. This includes remaining alert to risks, challenging concerns appropriately, and taking immediate action where safety may be compromised.

Health and Safety Emergencies

Gas Leaks and Hazardous Materials

Gas leaks and exposure to hazardous materials present an immediate risk to life and must be treated as an emergency.

If a gas leak is suspected:

- Do not operate electrical switches or use open flames
- Evacuate the area immediately and move to a safe location
- Open doors and windows where safe to do so
- A designated senior leader must be informed without delay
- Contact the National Gas Emergency Service and follow their guidance
- Emergency services must be contacted where there is any risk to life or safety
- Do not allow re-entry until the building has been declared safe by a competent professional

In the event of a hazardous material incident:

- Move all individuals away from the affected area immediately
- Avoid direct contact and use protective equipment where available
- Ventilate the area where it is safe to do so
- Emergency services must be contacted where there is any risk to health or safety
- Follow all guidance provided by emergency services or relevant professionals
- Ensure the area is made safe by a competent professional before resuming normal use

Adverse Weather and Environmental Risks

Severe weather and environmental conditions can present immediate risks to the safety of young people and impact the operation of services. These risks must be actively monitored and managed to ensure safety and continuity of care.

This may include flooding, extreme temperatures, storms, or disruption to utilities.

Senior leaders must:

- Monitor weather conditions and environmental risks on an ongoing basis
- Assess the potential impact on the safety of young people, adults, and the environment
- Make clear decisions regarding site safety, movement within the community, transport, or temporary closure where required
- Ensure that staffing, supervision, and support arrangements remain safe and appropriate
- Communicate clear instructions to adults, young people, and relevant professionals

Where conditions present a risk to safety:

- Movement within the community must be restricted where necessary
- Off-site activities must be reviewed and adapted or cancelled
- Additional supervision or support must be implemented where required

Where a site becomes unsafe or cannot be used:

- Alternative arrangements must be implemented without delay to maintain the safety and care of young people
- Access to essential resources, including medication and communication systems, must be maintained

Fire Safety and Evacuation

Fire presents an immediate risk to life and must be treated as an emergency requiring immediate action.

In the event of a fire:

- Activate the alarm immediately
- Evacuate the building using the nearest safe exit without delay
- Supervise young people at all times and proceed to the designated assembly point
- Carry out a headcount immediately and report any unaccounted-for individuals without delay
- Emergency services must be contacted without delay
- Do not re-enter the building until it has been declared safe by emergency services

A designated senior leader must take oversight of the response, ensuring that evacuation is completed safely and that all individuals are accounted for.

Adults must only attempt to use fire-fighting equipment where it is safe to do so and where they are trained.

Fire safety systems must be regularly checked and maintained. Evacuation drills must be carried out routinely to ensure that adults and young people understand procedures and can respond safely.

Where a property cannot be used following a fire:

- Alternative arrangements must be implemented immediately to maintain the safety and care of young people
- Access to essential resources, including medication and communication systems, must be maintained

Medical Emergencies and First Aid

Immediate Response

Medical emergencies can occur without warning and must be treated as urgent situations requiring immediate and coordinated action. The safety and welfare of young people must remain the priority at all times.

Examples may include loss of consciousness, seizures, breathing difficulties, severe allergic reactions, significant injury, or any situation where a young person's condition is deteriorating.

In the event of a medical emergency:

- A designated senior leader must be informed immediately
- Emergency services must be contacted without delay where there is a risk to life or serious harm
- A trained adult must provide first aid in line with their training
- Other young people must be supervised and supported at all times
- The young person must be reassured and kept safe until emergency services arrive

An adult must remain with the young person at all times.

Where hospital treatment is required:

- An adult must accompany the young person unless advised otherwise by medical professionals

- Relevant medical information, including known conditions, medication, and care plans, must be shared with emergency services where appropriate

Parents, carers, and relevant professionals must be informed as soon as it is safe to do so and in line with advice from medical professionals.

First Aid and Equipment

Each site must maintain appropriate first aid provision to support a timely and effective response to incidents.

This includes:

- Clearly identified and regularly checked first aid kits
- Sufficient numbers of adults with up-to-date first aid training
- Safe storage and appropriate access to prescribed medication and emergency treatments
- Clear and accurate recording of all first aid incidents and actions taken

Senior leaders are responsible for ensuring that first aid provision is maintained, regularly reviewed, and remains appropriate to the needs of young people.

Coordination with Emergency Services and Evacuation

Coordination with Emergency Services

Where emergency services are required, communication must be clear, accurate, and coordinated.

- A designated senior leader must oversee all communication with emergency services
- Clear and factual information must be provided without delay
- An adult must be allocated to meet emergency personnel and direct them to the location
- Relevant medical information, including known conditions, medication, and care plans, must be shared where appropriate

Care plans must clearly identify any known medical needs and required responses. Adults must be familiar with this information and act in line with it during an emergency.

Evacuation

Evacuation must take place immediately where it is safer to leave the building than remain inside. This may include fire, gas leaks, structural concerns, or other immediate risks.

In the event of an evacuation:

- The alarm or alert must be raised immediately
- Adults must guide young people to the nearest safe exit without delay
- Young people must be supervised at all times
- A headcount must be completed at the designated assembly point
- Any unaccounted-for individuals must be reported immediately
- Emergency services must be contacted without delay where there is a risk to life or serious harm

No one must re-enter the building until it has been confirmed safe by emergency services or a competent professional.

A designated senior leader must coordinate the response, including communication, headcount verification, and decision-making regarding next steps, including relocation where required.

Evacuation procedures must be practised regularly to ensure that adults and young people understand expectations and are able to respond safely.

Shelter-in-Place and Consideration of Individual Needs

Shelter-in-Place

Shelter-in-place must be implemented where it is safer to remain inside the building than to evacuate. This may be required in response to external threats, environmental risks, or local incidents.

In these situations:

- External doors and windows must be secured immediately
- Individuals must be moved to a safe internal area where required
- Adults must maintain supervision of all young people at all times
- A designated senior leader must oversee the response and coordinate communication
- Instructions from emergency services must be followed at all times

The situation must be monitored continuously. Normal activity must not resume until a designated senior leader or emergency services confirm that it is safe to do so.

Consideration of Individual Needs

All emergency responses must take account of the individual needs, vulnerabilities, and risks of young people.

This includes:

- Providing additional supervision and support where required
- Acting in line with care plans, risk assessments, and behaviour support strategies
- Ensuring communication is clear, appropriate, and reassuring
- Responding in a way that supports emotional wellbeing as well as physical safety

Adults must be aware of each young person's needs and adapt their response accordingly to ensure safety is maintained at all times.

Incident Reporting and Documentation

Reporting Expectations

All incidents, emergencies, and significant events must be reported without delay and recorded accurately. This ensures that appropriate action is taken, safeguarding responsibilities are met, and there is clear leadership oversight.

This includes incidents involving:

- Injury or harm to young people, adults, or visitors
- Serious behavioural incidents or use of physical intervention

- Security concerns or unauthorised access
- Evacuation, lockdown, or shelter-in-place responses
- Fire, gas, or other health and safety incidents
- Medical emergencies
- Any situation requiring emergency services

In the event of an incident:

- Immediate action must be taken to ensure safety
- A designated senior leader must be informed without delay
- The incident must be recorded as soon as possible, with no unnecessary delay
- Records must include key facts, actions taken, decisions made, and current status
- Safeguarding procedures must be followed in line with organisational policy
- Consideration must be given to whether the incident meets the threshold for a Regulation 40 notification. Serious incidents, including the death of a child, must be managed in line with the organisation's dedicated emergency and safeguarding procedures, including the Death of a Child in Service protocol.

All records must be factual, clear, and based on known information only. Assumptions, opinions, or unverified information must not be included.

Notifications and External Reporting

Certain incidents require formal notification to external agencies. Senior leaders are responsible for ensuring that all required notifications are completed without delay and in line with statutory and regulatory requirements.

This may include:

- Notification to Ofsted in line with Regulation 40 of the Children's Homes (England) Regulations 2015 where incidents meet the threshold for a serious event
- Notification to safeguarding partners, including the placing authority, host local authority, and other relevant professionals
- Referral to the Local Authority Designated Officer where concerns relate to the conduct of an adult
- Reporting under the Reporting of Injuries, Diseases and Dangerous Occurrences Regulations (RIDDOR) where a work-related incident meets the reporting threshold
- Notification to other relevant agencies where required by the nature of the incident

All notifications must:

- Be made without delay
- Be clear, factual, and based on known information
- Provide sufficient detail to demonstrate appropriate safeguarding action and oversight

Where there is uncertainty about whether a notification is required, senior leaders must apply professional judgement and seek advice without delay to ensure that reporting responsibilities are met.

Record Keeping and Oversight

All incidents must be recorded clearly, accurately, and without delay. Records must be stored securely and maintained in a way that supports safeguarding, oversight, and accountability.

This includes:

- Completion of incident reports promptly following the event
- Clear recording of actions taken, decisions made, and outcomes
- Documentation of all communication with families, professionals, and external agencies
- Review and sign-off by a designated senior leader to ensure accuracy and completeness

Records must be factual, consistent, and based on known information. They must be managed in line with data protection requirements and accessed only by those with appropriate authority.

Senior leaders are responsible for ensuring that records are subject to regular oversight, are of a consistently high standard, and reflect safe and appropriate practice.

Accurate and timely recording supports effective safeguarding, informed decision-making, and continuous improvement across the organisation.

Death of a Child in Service

This section applies where a child dies whilst in the care of the organisation or on premises where the organisation holds responsibility.

This is a critical incident requiring an immediate, coordinated, and safeguarding-led response.

Immediate Response

In the event of a child's death or suspected death:

- Emergency services must be contacted immediately in all cases of suspected or confirmed death.
- A designated senior leader must be informed without delay
- First aid or life-saving intervention must be provided where appropriate and in line with training until emergency services arrive
- The area must be made safe and preserved where possible
- Other young people must be moved away from the area and supported appropriately

No action must be taken that could compromise a potential investigation, unless required to preserve life.

Leadership and Escalation

A designated senior leader must take immediate operational lead.

Senior leaders must:

- Inform the Head of Safeguarding and Director without delay
- Ensure that all actions are coordinated, clearly directed, and recorded
- Act as the single point of contact for emergency services and external agencies
- Ensure that all safeguarding and regulatory notifications are considered and completed without delay

Notifications and External Reporting

The death of a child must be treated as a serious incident requiring immediate notification.

Senior leaders must ensure:

- A Regulation 40 notification is submitted to Ofsted without delay
- The placing authority and host local authority are informed immediately
- Relevant safeguarding partners are notified in line with statutory requirements
- The Local Authority Designated Officer is informed where required

All information shared must be factual, accurate, and based on known information only.

Communication and Information Management

All communication must be carefully managed.

This includes:

- Ensuring information is shared on a strict need-to-know basis
- Avoiding speculation or the sharing of unverified information
- Providing clear, factual, and sensitive communication to professionals and families
- Ensuring that any communication with young people is age-appropriate, honest, and supported

Only a designated senior leader should coordinate external communication.

Support for Young People and Adults

Immediate and ongoing support must be provided.

This includes:

- Providing emotional support to young people, taking account of relationships and individual needs
- Ensuring appropriate supervision and reassurance
- Providing support and supervision to adults involved in or affected by the incident
- Accessing additional professional support where required

Recording and Preservation of Information

All actions and decisions must be clearly recorded.

Senior leaders must ensure:

- Accurate and timely recording of all events, actions, and communications
- Preservation of records, logs, and any relevant information
- Full cooperation with any investigation or multi-agency process

Post-Incident Review

Following the incident:

- A structured review must take place in line with organisational procedures
- The organisation must fully cooperate with any external investigation or safeguarding review
- Learning must be identified and used to inform future practice, safeguarding oversight, and policy development

Death or Serious Harm of a Child Connected to the Service

This section applies where the organisation is informed of the death or serious harm of a child who is not currently in placement but is, or has previously been, supported by the service.

These situations require a clear, sensitive, and safeguarding-led response, with appropriate leadership oversight.

Upon receiving information:

- A designated senior leader must be informed immediately
- The accuracy of the information must be confirmed through appropriate and reliable sources
- The Head of Safeguarding and Director must be informed without delay

Senior leaders must then:

- Consider the organisation's previous involvement with the child, including any known risks, vulnerabilities, or safeguarding concerns
- Assess whether the incident meets the threshold for external notification, including consideration of a Regulation 40 notification
- Ensure that all relevant agencies are informed where required, including the placing authority or safeguarding partners

All information must be:

- Managed sensitively and shared on a strict need-to-know basis
- Recorded clearly, factually, and without speculation

Support must be provided to:

- Young people currently living within the service, taking account of relationships and potential emotional impact
- Adults, recognising the need for reflection, supervision, and emotional support

Communication must be:

- Clear, factual, and sensitive
- Appropriate to the age and understanding of young people
- Managed to avoid speculation or the sharing of unverified information

Following the event:

- All relevant information and actions must be recorded
- A review must take place to consider any learning, themes, or risks
- Any identified learning must inform future practice, safeguarding oversight, and policy development

Recovery and Business Continuity

Post-Incident Assessment

Following a significant incident, a designated senior leader must lead an immediate assessment of the impact on the environment, operations, and the welfare of young people.

This must include:

- Assessing the safety and condition of the premises
- Identifying any immediate risks or hazards
- Confirming the availability of essential resources, equipment, and records
- Recording all damage, disruption, and initial actions taken

Where external support is required, appropriate agencies or services must be engaged without delay to support the recovery process.

Maintaining Continuity of Care

The organisation must ensure that the care and support of young people continues safely and with minimal disruption.

Where a site is not safe or cannot be used:

- Alternative arrangements must be implemented without delay
- Young people must be supported, supervised, and kept informed in a calm and appropriate way
- Staffing arrangements must be adjusted to maintain safe supervision and appropriate support
- Access to medication, care plans, and communication systems must be maintained at all times

A designated senior leader is responsible for ensuring that continuity arrangements are safe, proportionate, and safeguarding-led.

Operational Continuity

The organisation must maintain the ability to continue essential functions during and after an incident.

This includes:

- Maintaining access to records, systems, and critical information
- Ongoing communication with families, professionals, and external agencies
- Coordinated use of staffing and resources across services

Senior leaders must oversee all decision-making and ensure that actions taken support stability, continuity, and the ongoing safety of young people.

Training, Drills and Exercises

Training

All adults must receive appropriate training to ensure they are able to respond safely and effectively in emergency situations.

This includes:

- Understanding emergency procedures and expectations
- Responding to evacuation, lockdown, and shelter-in-place situations
- First aid and emergency response

- Safeguarding responsibilities and reporting expectations
- Managing risk and responding to incidents involving young people

Training must be provided as part of induction and refreshed regularly. Senior leaders are responsible for ensuring that training remains current, relevant, and reflective of the needs of the service.

Drills and Practice

Regular drills must take place to ensure that adults and young people understand what to do in an emergency and are able to respond confidently.

This includes:

- Evacuation drills across all sites
- Lockdown practice where appropriate
- Scenario-based exercises for senior leaders

All drills must be planned, recorded, and reviewed. Learning identified through drills must be used to strengthen practice, improve preparedness, and address any identified gaps.

Senior leaders are responsible for ensuring that learning from drills is embedded into practice and that standards remain consistent across all services.

Post-Incident Review, Learning and Continuous Improvement

All emergency responses must be subject to structured review to ensure continuous improvement and strengthened safeguarding practice.

Following any significant incident, a structured review must take place.

A designated senior leader must oversee this process.

The review must include:

- A clear account of the sequence of events and actions taken
- Assessment of the effectiveness of communication and decision-making
- Consideration of the impact on young people and adults
- Identification of any immediate safeguarding or operational concerns
- Identification of any gaps in knowledge, confidence, or response

Where improvements are required:

- Actions must be clearly identified and implemented without delay
- Additional guidance, training, or support must be provided
- Risk assessments, care plans, and procedures must be updated where necessary

All learning must be clearly identified, recorded, shared across the organisation, and embedded into practice to ensure consistency.

Reviews must be proportionate to the seriousness of the incident and reflect a safeguarding-led approach at all times.

Senior leaders are responsible for ensuring that learning is translated into improved practice, strengthened oversight, and increased confidence across teams.