

Business Continuity Management for independent schools, academies and free schools

What is Business Continuity Management?

In simple terms, Business Continuity Management (BCM) is an approach to help an organisation plan for the activation of an effective response to a range of potential business interruptions. This will help enable schools to stay up and running and then get back to 'normal operations' as soon as possible.

Why is a plan essential?

Your school is potentially vulnerable to a number of different types of incidents that could impact on the ability of the school to educate pupils, such as:

- fire
- flood
- malicious attack
- loss of IT services
- widespread illness
- an incident on a school trip.



Business Continuity Planning will help to ensure that there is a coordinated response to likely incidents and also a clear strategy for recovering as quickly as possible.

Planning ahead for the potential of a major interruption occurring is vital in helping the response. According to our research*, 46% of independent schools, academies and free schools rate financial issues as their most frequently discussed concern. Whether this is due to budget or funding challenges, it is important to take reasonable steps to help protect your critical assets.

Failure to perform Business Continuity Planning could lead to increased risks for staff and students, with delays to the recovery process and a subsequent impact on performance. In addition to the increased costs, there may be a potential issue to reputation through the perception that the organisation has not responded well. After all, according to our research* the local community and parents are the greatest influencer on decisions made by a school or academy.

*Research conducted by BDRC Continental across a sample of 100 schools across the England & Wales, with a variety of roles (responsible for risk & insurance solutions) questioned, with a fairly consistent mix of primary and secondary schools. School types split as follows: Academy 60%, Independent 30%, Free 10%. Field dates were from 1-8 Feb 2013.

Developing an effective strategy

It is important that there is a clear and coordinated approach to developing an effective BCM strategy relevant to your school or academy. It is crucial for the leadership group of a school or academy to agree on:

1 The statement of intent

A short statement signed by senior management that outlines the school or academy's commitment to developing a plan and why it is important.

2 The contents of a plan

Ensuring that the contents of the plan are fit-for-purpose and can be kept up-to-date. As a minimum the plan should contain the following information:

- **Incident Management Plan** – identifying a meeting point to coordinate a response, plus the team responsible and an appropriate escalation protocol where necessary
- **Key Contact Details** – of the people and organisations that are key to the implementation of your plan
- **Incident Response Plans** – to identified threats with reasonable potential to impact the school
- **Key Supporting Documents** – such as site plans or incident logs, which are required to support a response to an incident.

3 Key roles and responsibilities

The resources required in order to develop, test and maintain the plan.

For example:

- a plan owner
- a plan deputy that helps the plan owner to maintain the plan
- senior managers who will be responsible for implementing the plan and testing that it works.

4 Timescales

Agreed timescales for:

- the development of the plan
- frequent testing – according to our research* only 4 in 10 schools have tested their plan in the last 12 months.

Working with an expert

As a leading provider of risk and insurance to schools and academies, Zurich Municipal is acutely aware of the critical need for effective Business Continuity Management and the impact that an incident can have on your ability to continue to provide high-quality education.

How can we help you?

Visit our online portal for schools and academies, www.riskcurriculum.co.uk, for more information on risk. Our customers can also utilise an interactive tool to produce their own bespoke business continuity plan.

You can also read interesting newsworthy articles around business continuity planning at newsandviews.zurich.co.uk

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For more specific questions on business continuity or our related consultancy services, please speak to one of our Risk & Insurance Consultants. Alternatively you can arrange a call back by emailing us at info@zurichmunicipal.com.

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