



Business Continuity Policy

(09/26)

1. Purpose

Castle Farm Countryside Classroom is committed to providing consistent, safe and nurturing provision for all learners. This policy outlines the procedures in place to ensure the continuity of education, safeguarding and operational stability in the event of unexpected disruption.

Our priority is always the safety, wellbeing and continued progress of our students.

2. Scope

This policy applies to:

- All staff
- All students on roll
- Both sites operated by Castle Farm Countryside Classroom
- All external professionals working in partnership with us.

It covers planned and unplanned disruptions including:

- Severe weather
- Staff absence
- Site inaccessibility

- Public health incidents
- Utility failure
- Critical incidents affecting the wider community

3. Key Principles

In any disruption, we will:

- Prioritise safeguarding and emotional wellbeing
- Maintain safe staffing ratios
- Communicate clearly and promptly with parents/carers and commissioning bodies
- Provide alternative learning arrangements wherever possible
- Resume normal provision as quickly and safely as possible

4. Roles and Responsibilities

Directors/Managers

- Overall responsibility for decision making
- Liaison with Local Authorities and commissioning teams
- Communication with families and staff
- Risk assessment and operational adjustments

Staff Team

- Maintain supervision and safeguarding standards
- Adapt provision where required
- Record and report any concerns
- Support learners emotionally during change or uncertainty

Timescales:

- **Immediate Action (0–2 hours):**
 - **Assess & Alert:** Survey the scene, assess impact on Students/staff, and call emergency services if needed
 - **.Activate Plan:** Directors formally activates the Business Continuity Plan
 - **Communication:** Notify staff, parents, and Local Authority (LA).
 - **Secure Site:** Collect emergency "grab bag" and secure Castle Farm sites.
- **Short-Term Response (2–24 hours):**
 - **Log Actions:** Begin a detailed log of all decisions and actions taken.
 - **Activate Continuity Strategy:** Implement pre-agreed solutions: remote learning, partial closure, or relocation to other site e.g Castle Farm or SO village Hall.
 - **Information Management:** Designate a Director to liaise with the LA and commissioning party and prevent misinformation.
- **Medium to Long-Term (1–7+ days):**
 - **Daily Updates:** Maintain regular contact with staff, parents and commissioning Party.
 - **Prioritise Services:** Focus on restoring provision in the shortest time period once it is safe to do so.
 - **Review & Recover:** Once the incident is over, hold a debrief within 1-2 weeks to review the response.
- **Plan Review (Annual):**
 - The plan must be formally reviewed at least annually or immediately following an activation to update contacts and procedures.

5. Staff Absence

In the event of unexpected staff absence:

- Remaining qualified staff will assess safe ratios and risk levels
- Provision may be adapted to smaller group work or outdoor-based activities
- Not all staff at Castle Farm are full time, but most staff offer to work extra days when there is need. Our Operational Director is normally non direct with students but can work direct when required due to staff shortages.
- If safe operation cannot be maintained, families and schools/placing authorities will be informed as early as possible

Where possible, consistency of key adults for vulnerable learners will remain a priority.

- **Immediate Action (0–2 hours):**

6. Site Inaccessibility

If the main site becomes unusable due to weather, damage or other unforeseen circumstances:

- Risk assessment will determine whether an alternative site can be safely used. We currently have two separate sites for Castle Farm, both of which can accommodate all students if necessary.
- Remote, activity-based or project-based learning packs may be issued
- Families and Local Authorities/referring parties will be informed immediately
- Expected reopening timelines will be communicated clearly

- **Medium to Long-Term (1–7+ days):** Due to Castle Farm Countryside classroom having 2 sites that could facilitate all the students, we could maintain provision within a Short-Term Response (2–24 hours) but for provision to return to normal it would be a long term timescale depending on the reason.

7. Severe Weather

In cases of extreme weather:

- A site safety inspection will take place before opening
- Activities will be adapted to ensure safety
- If closure is required, notification will be issued as early as possible via agreed communication channels
- **Short-Term Response (2–24 hours):**

8. Public Health or Infectious Illness

In the event of illness outbreak or public health guidance:

- We will follow UK Health Security Agency and Local Authority guidance
- Enhanced hygiene and cleaning protocols will be implemented
- Vulnerable learners will receive regular welfare contact

Medium to Long-Term (1–7+ days)

9. Utility Failure

If electricity, water or heating is disrupted:

- Immediate safety checks will be completed

- Activities may move outdoors where appropriate or indoor learning spaces outside of castle farm would be considered
- Parents will be informed if early closure is required.
- **Short-Term Response (2–24 hours):**

10. Critical Incident

In the event of a serious incident affecting staff, students, or the wider community:

- Safeguarding procedures will be followed immediately
- Relevant authorities will be contacted without delay.
- Emotional support will be provided to students and staff
- Communication will be clear, factual, and sensitive.

Post-incident review and reflective practice will ensure learning and improvement.

- **Medium to Long-Term (1–7+ days):**

11. Remote and Alternative Learning

Where physical attendance is not possible:

- Students will receive structured activity packs aligned with their individual learning plans
- Practical, outdoor-inspired and life skills-based tasks will be prioritised
- Contact will be maintained with families to monitor wellbeing and engagement

Provision will remain personalised and realistic, reflecting individual needs.

12. Communication

Communication during disruption will be:

- Timely and without delay to staff, parents and commissioning parties.
- Clear and factual
- Calm and reassuring

Primary methods include:

- Telephone
- Email
- Direct contact with commissioning bodies

13. Review

This policy will be reviewed annually or following any significant incident to ensure it remains effective and reflective of our provision.