



# **QET Business Continuity Policy**

LINKS: School Business Continuity Policy, Data Protection Policy

DATE: February 2026

POSTHOLDER RESPONSIBLE: Chief Operations Officer (COO)

TRUSTEES/GOVERNORS COMMITTEE: Finance Operations & Audit

AUDIENCE: All members of the Trust Community

STATUS: Approved

DATE RATIFIED: 17<sup>th</sup> March 2026

DATE OF NEXT REVIEW: Every two years

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## 1. Policy Statement

Quantock Education Trust (QET) is committed to maintaining the continuity of education, safeguarding, and essential business functions during any disruption. This policy ensures that the Trust can respond effectively to incidents, protect pupils, staff, and assets, and restore normal operations as quickly as possible.

The Trust recognises its statutory duties under health and safety, safeguarding, data protection, and education legislation and will maintain appropriate arrangements to ensure organisational resilience. QET will ensure that, wherever possible, education continues to be provided in a safe working environment.

Each school is expected to maintain its own Business Continuity Plan (BCP) outlining local arrangements, aligned with this policy. The central Trust team will maintain a BCP for central QET locations and critical Trust functions, overseen by the Chief Operating Officer (COO).

## 2. Purpose

The purpose of this policy is to establish a framework for managing business continuity across the Trust, define roles and responsibilities for resilience and recovery, ensure that critical services can continue or be rapidly restored, and promote consistent planning across all academies and central services.

## 3. Scope

This policy applies to all schools within the Trust, central Trust services, and all employees, volunteers, contractors, and governors. It covers on-site, remote, and hybrid operations, as well as extended school activities. The policy encompasses school business operations related to students, staff, and administration, including information technology systems, hardware, software, and backup, financial systems and administration, and estates functions. It also applies to third-party suppliers and contractors, including internal services such as catering, as well as regular third-party service providers.

## 4. Definitions

**Business Continuity:** The capability of the Trust to continue delivery of essential services at acceptable predefined levels following a disruptive incident.

**Business Continuity Plan (BCP):** The documented procedures that guide the Trust's response and recovery.

**Incident:** Any event that disrupts or threatens normal operations, including but not limited to natural disasters, IT failures, cyberattacks, or critical staff absence.

**Critical Services:** Services that must continue or be restored within a defined time to prevent serious disruption to education, safeguarding, or operational functions.

## 5. Policy Principles

The Trust prioritises safety and safeguarding above all else and will maintain compliance with statutory duties. It will identify and protect critical activities, maintain proportionate and tested continuity plans, ensure clear communication during incidents, and continually improve resilience through regular review and training.

## 6. Roles and Responsibilities

The Trust Board approves the Business Continuity Policy and receives assurance regarding compliance and testing. The Chief Executive Officer (CEO) has overall accountability for business continuity, while the Chief Operating Officer (COO) serves as the policy owner and strategic lead, ensuring that plans are maintained and tested. Headteachers are responsible for maintaining school-level continuity plans, ensuring staff awareness, and implementing local procedures. Each Headteacher will develop and document procedures tailored to their specific local circumstances. Central Executive Leads are responsible for maintaining service continuity plans, and all staff are expected to follow continuity arrangements and report any incidents.

### **Trust Board**

- Approves the Business Continuity Policy.
- Receives assurance on compliance and testing

### **Incident Management Team**

- Activates and coordinates the BC response plan
- Ensures recovery plan is in place

### **Chief Executive Officer (CEO)**

- Overall accountability for business continuity.

### **Chief Operating Officer (COO)**

- Policy owner and strategic lead.
- Ensures plans are maintained and tested.

### **Headteachers**

- Maintain school-level continuity plans
- Ensure staff awareness and local implementation.
- In discharging this policy, each Headteacher will develop and document their local procedures for their own local circumstances.

### **Central Executive Leads**

- Maintain service continuity plans.

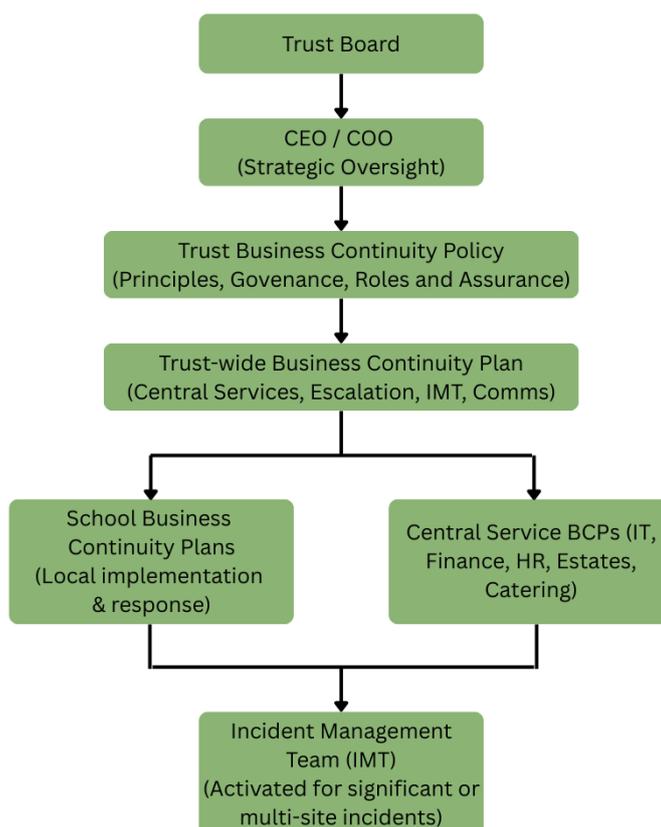
### **All Staff**

- Follow continuity arrangements and report incidents.

## 7. Business Continuity Framework

This diagram illustrates the relationship between the Business Continuity Policy, the Trust-wide Business Continuity Plan, and school site-specific plans. The policy sets the strategic framework, while operational Business Continuity Plans provide the detailed procedures required to manage incidents effectively.

### Business Continuity Framework



## 8. Business Continuity Arrangements

The Trust will maintain a central Business Continuity Plan and requires each school and central function to maintain local plans. Critical services and maximum tolerable disruptions will be identified, emergency contact arrangements will be maintained, ICT resilience and data backup arrangements will be ensured, and continuity plans will align with safeguarding, health and safety, cybersecurity, and emergency planning policies.

## 9. Incident Escalation and Activation

Significant incidents will be escalated to the CEO or COO. The Trust level Business Continuity Plan may be activated when normal operations cannot be maintained, and the Incident Management Team (defined within the Trust Wide BCP) will coordinate the response and recovery. Communication during such incidents will be managed centrally to ensure consistency.

## 10. Training, Testing and Awareness

Plans will be reviewed every two years, and desktop exercises and simulations will be conducted periodically. Staff will receive appropriate awareness training to support effective continuity arrangements.

## 11. Monitoring and Compliance

Compliance will be monitored through internal reviews, incident debriefs, and reporting to the Trust Board.