

## Crisis PR & Issues Management



# ABOUT ALDER

An unexpected crisis can be a testing time for senior leaders in schools. The communication demands are intense, and decision-making must take place at high speed and under great scrutiny.

Alder specialises in supporting clients at such times, with a combination of PR support, strategic counsel, and stakeholder management advice. With many years' experience, and working with the country's leading education lawyers, we advise on how to handle a whole range of issues that can arise from a sudden incident, legal dispute or unexpected communications challenge.

## *Alder /'ɔːldə / noun*

*The alder tree has long been a symbol of protection, stability and restoration. Its wood was historically employed for the building of wharves and flood defences. Even after centuries under water, alder doesn't rot, but is instead strengthened by every breaking wave.*

**“Speed of response, clarity of communications, can-do attitude, clarity of long-term thinking.”**

**Head, co-educational independent school**



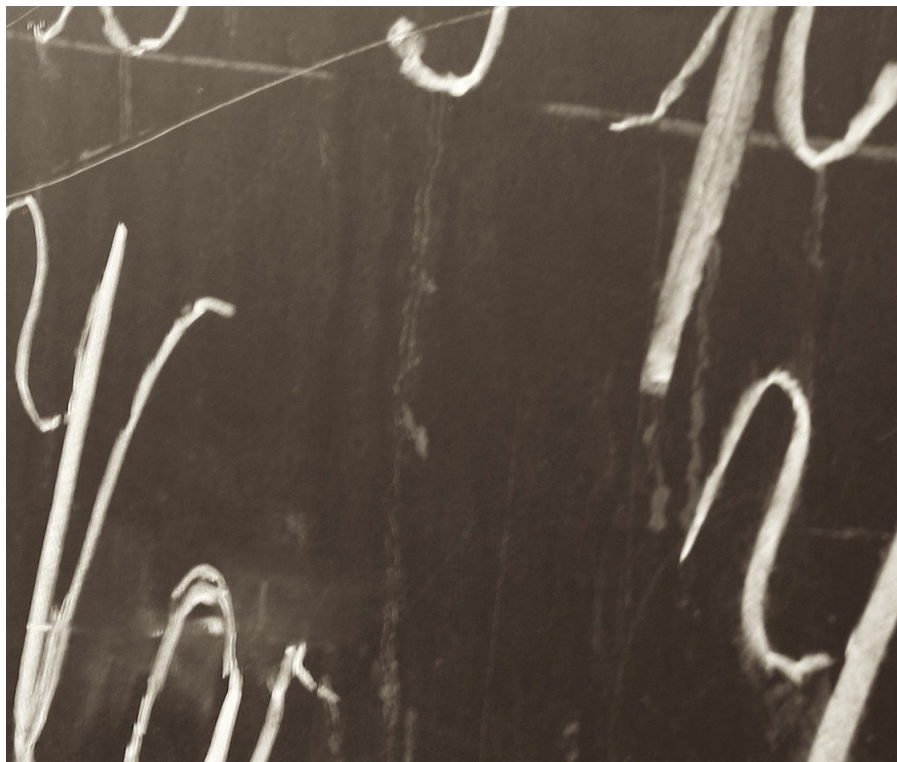
# AREAS OF EXPERTISE

We represent a wide range of educational establishments, including multi-academy trusts, independent schools and further education colleges. We provide strategic counsel on a range of matters, including employment disputes; police investigations; abuse allegations; regulatory inquiries; free speech issues; cultural movements such as BLM and #MeToo; and health and safety matters including injuries and fatalities.

Our positive profile-building team helps schools get on the front foot in an increasingly competitive market, supporting in-house teams build narratives and improve their reputations with well-targeted communications and good media relations. Our consultants have a deep understanding of the complex regulatory and political demands on schools, and we regularly provide specialist briefing and training to leadership teams and governors.

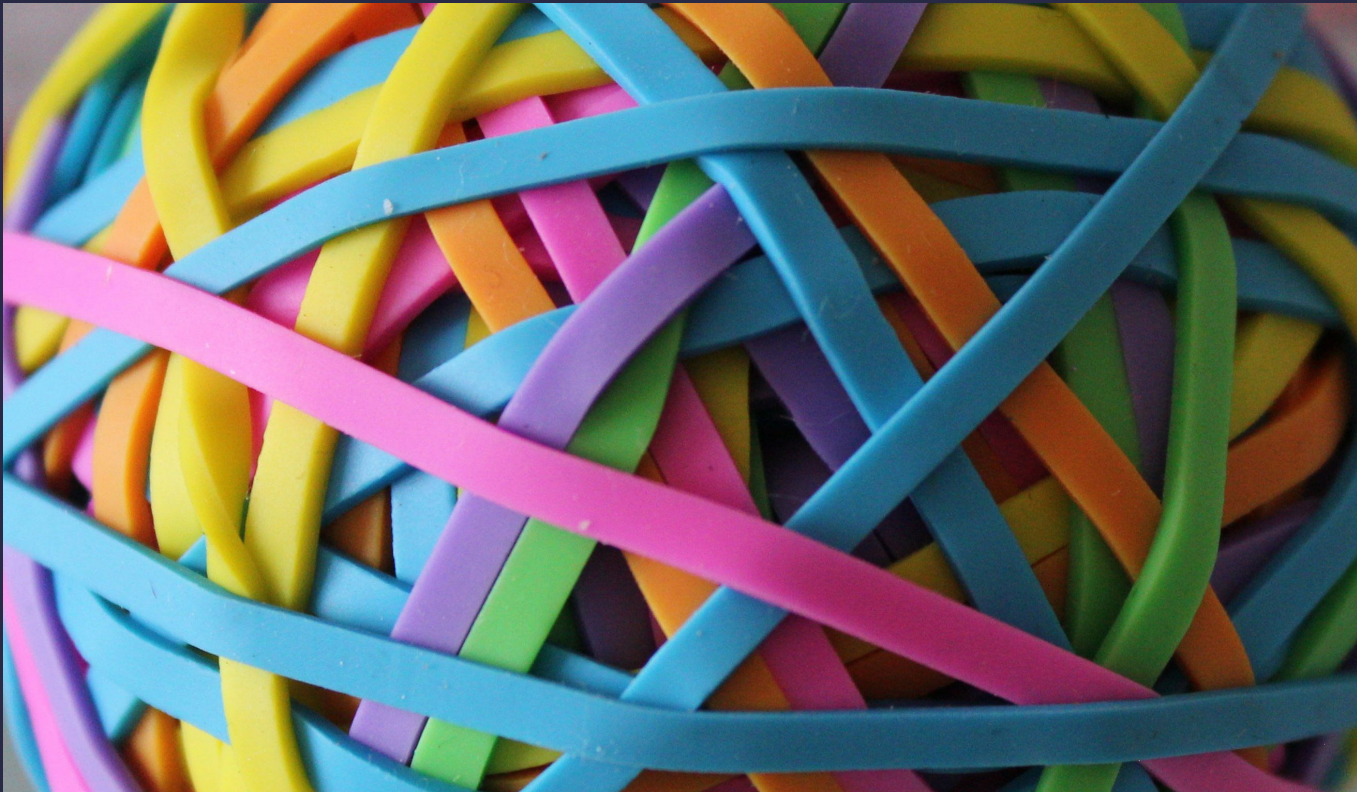
**Issues include:**

Arrests and criminal trials
Accidents and sudden deaths
TRA hearings
Inquests
ISI/Ofsted issues
Bullying and harassment
Allegations of abuse
Staff suspensions and absences
Cultural movements such as BLM and Everyone's Invited
Freedom of expression issues including religious and minority groups
Mergers
Move to co-ed
Redundancies





# OUR SERVICES



## BEFORE A CRISIS: BUILDING RESILIENCE

### Crisis communications manual

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Planning ahead will help you cope with the significant demands that a crisis will place on you and your senior team.

### Building empathy capital

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Improving your reputation with the public and your stakeholders in advance of any crisis will help get you through even the most challenging scenario.

### Hostile media training

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It's one thing being a confident speaker; it's another performing under the pressure of responding to a negative story with a dogged reporter in front of a rolling camera.

### Crisis simulations

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Testing your crisis responses with a real-time simulation will help identify your core vulnerabilities.



## BEFORE A CRISIS: GETTING READY

### Stakeholder management plan

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Managing the diverse needs of your stakeholders is essential during any major issue.

### Media strategy

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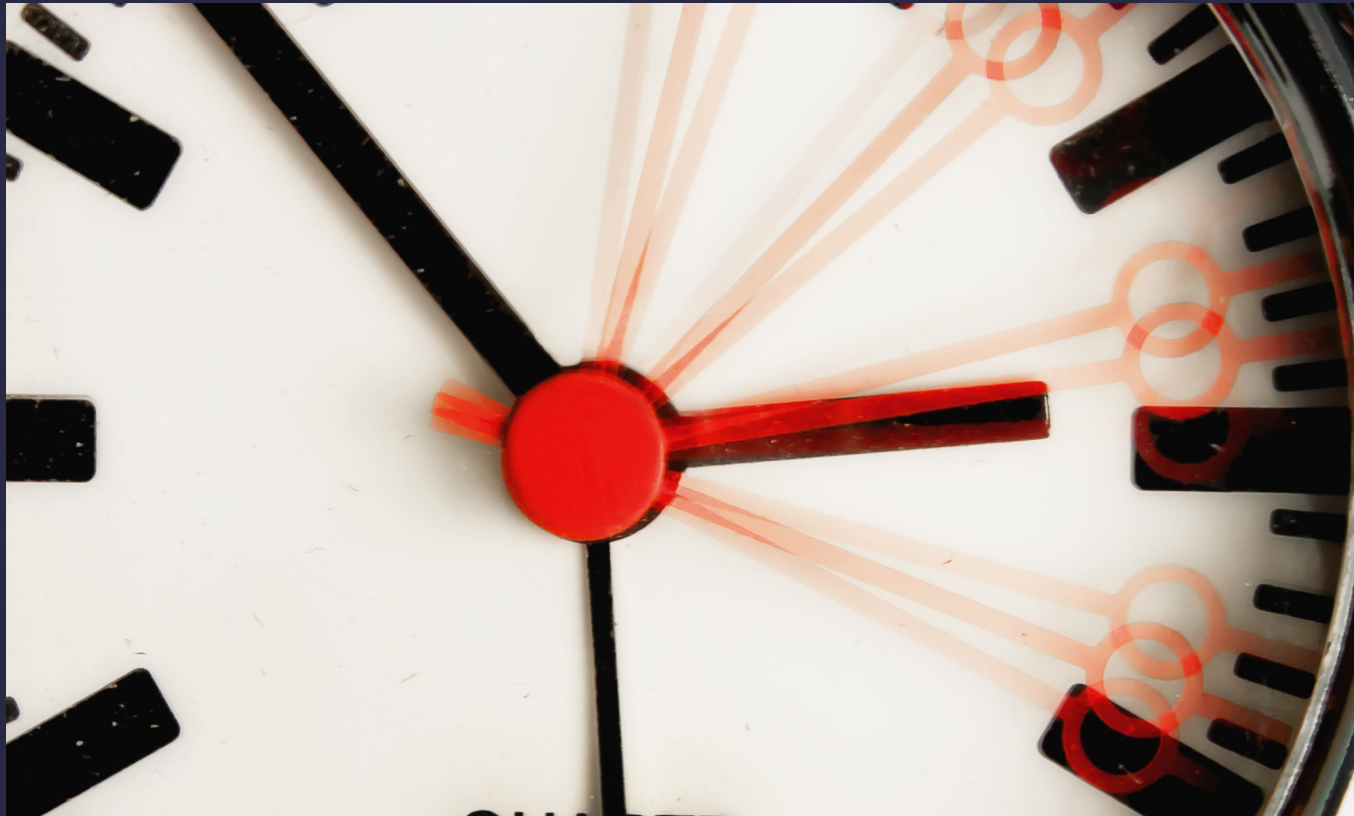
We will explain how journalists will approach a story and give you strategic advice on how to respond.

### Online reputation review

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Journalists will often begin their research by seeking out your online profiles. Ensuring information is accurate and up-to-date and monitoring complaints can be the difference between making headlines and avoiding mention entirely.





## DURING A CRISIS: RESPONSE

### Communications drafting

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We will bring consistency to your communications by drafting statements, Q&As, and lines to take.

### Outsourced press office

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We can set up rapid-response outsourced press office facilities to act as a firewall between you and the media during difficult times.

### Media monitoring

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Our software will help you keep on top of breaking stories, enabling you to take swift action if necessary.

### Social media support

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Increasingly, crises either start on or are sustained by social media activity, making your online profile and response strategy all the more important.



## AFTER A CRISIS: RECOVERY

### Recovery strategy

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Once the dust has settled, you will need to focus on rebuilding reputation. We give management and communications advice so that clients can tell positive stories again and embed lessons learned from a crisis or legal dispute.

### Online reputation repair

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A crisis can leave a lasting negative legacy if not addressed. Our digital reputation partners can get to work immediately to ensure your online profile is clear of negative stories.

### Training gaps

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Our experts will help you identify any gaps in learning that may have contributed to reputational damage, and ensure your team are better prepared for crisis events in future.



# REPUTATION SUPPORT

Our services include:

## ALDER ASSURE

A low-cost retainer which includes media monitoring, monthly advice surgeries and discounts on other services. Ideal for schools facing a number of ongoing challenges.

## CRISIS PR

Our team of experts will help you navigate any negative news story with a combination of PR advice, stakeholder management, and strategic sounding board support. This is available either on an ad hoc or retained basis.

“Our team of experts will help you navigate any negative news story with a combination of PR advice, stakeholder management, and strategic sounding board support.”

## TRAINING

Build your school’s resilience to any reputational threat with our masterclasses and training covering all aspects of media engagement – from giving fluent interviews to dealing with unexpected visits to your home address.

## MEDIA MONITORING

Our intelligent software captures all references to your school, monitors changes to your reputation in real time and allows problematic issues to be nipped in the bud.





# OUR TEAM



**TIM TOULMIN**

**Managing Director**

Tim gives crisis PR to many schools and individual Heads on subjects as diverse as sudden incidents and fatalities; managing hostile stakeholder groups; abuse cases; the impact of social movements such as BLM and Everyone's Invited; and inclusion and diversity issues among many other matters. He founded Alder in 2010 having previously been Director of the Press Complaints Commission.



**SUE BISHOP**

**Specialist Education & Charities Partner**

Sue gives strategic advice to schools and charities. Before joining Alder, she was Director of External Relations at the Headmasters' and Headmistresses' Conference and Director of Communications at Christian Aid and ActionAid UK. She has worked for Newsnight, BBC News, Watchdog, Dispatches and The Mirror.



**ANTHONY LONGDEN**

**Specialist Partner, Crisis Communications**

Anthony advises clients in the education and charity sectors. He is uniquely placed to advise clients on a wide range of crisis and media relations issues, having worked as a senior regional media journalist and editor at Newsquest Media Group and Trinity Mirror for more than two decades.



**ALISON BRACE**

**Specialist Partner, Proactive Education PR**

Alison helps schools build strong reputations by devising and delivering strong media relations campaigns so they can tell their stories in a positive way. She has an extensive knowledge of schools and the education media having been an education correspondent for national and local newspapers and the BBC, and a columnist for the Times Educational Supplement.



**DURELL BARNES**

**Specialist Education Partner**

Durell spent 11 years as Deputy Director & Head of Communications at the Independent Schools Inspectorate. An expert on school governance, compliance and issues management, Durell advises clients on inspection readiness, effective governance and safeguarding.



**JACK MYERS**

**Senior Account Director**

Jack advises many of our school accounts, supporting clients on a range of issues and ensuring they are prepared for any crisis event. Jack also leads our education training programme and helps schools enhance their profile through positive storytelling. Jack joined Alder following senior consultancy roles at a range of specialist communications firms.



**JOE MACINTYRE**

**Account Manager**

Joe supports Alder with case management, business development and marketing strategy. Having read European Studies at Trinity College Dublin and worked at two of the top 100 QS ranked Universities in the world, Joe provides strategic advice across all of Alder's practice areas, with particular focus on charity and education clients. Joe speaks Spanish and Italian.



# TESTIMONIALS

We pride ourselves on the strong, trusted relationships we've built with many long-standing clients over the years, who time and again return for peerless crisis advice and support.

"From the first call to the final output everything was easy and a lot was achieved in a short space of time. The outputs were exactly what we needed and the outcome has so far been positive. A very professional team who listened and delivered on our brief."

**Chair of governors, independent school**

"Alder's consultants were professional, skilled and accessible at every juncture that we needed their support. We were very thankful to have them on our team."

**Head of Communications, multi-academy trust**

"When the heat is on, you need someone to advise, assist and most of all be there on the end of the phone at any time. Your company did all of the above!"

**Head Teacher, independent school**

"Alder provided calm, insightful and reassuring support in dealing with a non-story that could have nevertheless been quite damaging if mishandled. I was very impressed with the service provided, and I am an enthusiastic recommender of their services."

**Headmaster, independent school**

For a discreet, no obligation discussion about your needs please call our education team on 020 7692 5675 or email [enquiries@alder-uk.com](mailto:enquiries@alder-uk.com).