



# Lockdown Policy

## Introduction

All schools should consider the need for robust and tested school lockdown procedures. Lockdown procedures should be seen as a sensible and proportionate response to any external or internal incident which has the potential to pose a threat to the safety of staff and students in the school. Procedures should aim to minimise disruption to the learning environment whilst ensuring the safety of all students and staff.

Lockdown procedures may be activated in response to any number of situations, but some of the more typical might be:

- A reported incident/civil disturbance in the local community (with the potential to pose a risk to staff and students in the school);
- An intruder on the school site (with the potential to pose a risk to staff and pupils);
- A warning being received regarding a risk locally, of air pollution (smoke plume, gas cloud etc);
- A major fire in the vicinity of the school;
- The close proximity of a dangerous dog roaming loose.

This policy will detail –

- Access to the school bell controls to raise an alarm in an emergency;
- Other means of internal communications - messenger, two-way radios, mobile phone, internal email, texts etc;
- School site plan eg the layout of buildings and their proximity to one another.

## Procedure

- Staff are alerted to the activation of the lockdown procedure by a recognised signal, audible throughout the school (this is by the ringing of a hand bell);
- Students who are outside of the school buildings are brought inside as quickly as possible, if it is safe to do so, otherwise they will remain in the outside building(s), the staff to secure the building(s);
- Those inside the school should remain in their classrooms;

- All external doors and, as necessary, windows are locked (depending on the circumstances, internal classroom doors may also need to be locked).
- Staff to communicate with the school office via mobile telephone if in lockdown in the outside building(s).

Once in lockdown mode, staff should notify the office immediately of any student not accounted for (and instigate an immediate search for any missing)

- Staff should encourage the students to keep calm;
- As appropriate, the school should establish communication with the Emergency Services as soon as possible;
- If necessary, parents should be notified as soon as it is practicable to do so via the school's established communications system;
- Students will not be released to parents during a lockdown
- If it is necessary to evacuate the building, the fire alarm will be sounded;
- Staff should await further instructions.

It is of vital importance that the school's lockdown procedures are familiar to members of the senior management team, school administrators, teaching staff and non-teaching staff. To achieve this, a lockdown drill should be undertaken at least once a year. Students should also be aware of the plan. (Regular practices will increase their familiarity). Parents too should know that the school has a lockdown plan, and a copy should be placed on the school's website.

It would also be good practice to:

- a) Conduct a number of table top exercises with the senior management team to test the procedures against various scenarios;
- b) Rehearse lockdown arrangements with all staff and students;
- c) Display lockdown drill information in every classroom alongside information relating to fire drills.

## **Lockdown Arrangements**

1. Partial Lockdown Alert to staff: 'Partial lockdown' This may be as a result of a reported incident /civil disturbance in the local community with the potential to pose a risk to staff and students in the school. It may also be as a result of a warning being received regarding the risk of air pollution, etc.

Immediate action:

- All outside activity to cease immediately, students and staff return to building; (There need to be a means of communicating the alert to duty staff at break times)
- All staff and students remain in building and external doors and windows locked;
- Free movement may be permitted within the building dependent upon circumstances.

All situations are different. Once all staff and students are safely inside, senior staff will conduct an ongoing and dynamic risk assessment. This can then be communicated to staff and students.

'Partial lockdown' is a precautionary measure but puts the school in a state of readiness (whilst retaining a degree of normality) should the situation escalate.

2. Full Lockdown Alert to staff: 'Full lockdown' This signifies an immediate threat to the school and may be an escalation of a partial lockdown.

Immediate action:

- All students return to base (classroom, tutor room or other agreed location eg sports/assembly/dining hall);
- External doors locked. Classroom doors locked (where a member of staff with key is present); Windows locked, blinds drawn, students sit quietly out of sight (eg under desk or around a corner);
- Register taken - the office will contact each class in turn for an attendance report;
- Staff and students remain in lock down until it has been lifted by a senior member of staff /emergency services. At any point during the lockdown, the fire alarm may sound which is a cue to evacuate the building.

During the lockdown, staff will keep agreed lines of communication open but not make unnecessary calls to the central office as this could delay more important communication.

Examples of discreet communication channels might be:

- Where staff have access to an internal e-mail system then they could access their account and await further instruction. In practical terms, staff would need to be familiar with accessing their account through a variety of means eg laptop, smartphone or tablet

Communication between parents and the school – The school lockdown procedure, especially arrangements for communicating with parents, should be routinely shared with parents either by newsletter or via the school website.

In the event of an actual lockdown, it is strongly advised that any incident or development is communicated to parents as soon as is practicable. It is obvious that parents will be concerned but regular communication of accurate information will help to alleviate undue anxiety.

Parents should be given enough information about what will happen so that they:

- Are reassured that the school understands their concern for their child's welfare, and that it is doing everything possible to ensure his/her safety;
- Do not need to contact the school. Calling the school could tie up telephone lines that are needed for contacting emergency providers;

- Do not come to the school. They could interfere with emergency provider's access to the school and may even put themselves and others in danger;
- Wait for the school to contact them about when it is safe for them to come and collect their children, and where this will be from.

The communication with parents' part of the plan needs to reassure parents that the school understands their concern for their children's welfare and that everything that can possibly be done to ensure children's safety will be done. However, it may also be prudent to reinforce the message 'the school is in a full lockdown situation. During this period the switchboard and entrances will be un-manned, external doors locked and nobody allowed in or out...'.

Emergency Services - It is important to keep lines of communication open with Emergency Services as they are best placed to offer advice as a situation unfolds. The school site may or may not be cordoned off by Emergency Services depending on the severity of the incident that has triggered the Lockdown. Emergency Services will support the decision of the Head of Centre regarding the timing of communication to parents.

**Review Date:           September 2020**