

Guidance to support schools in managing lockdown procedures

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The position

Schools are fundamentally safe places

Emergency incidents requiring a lockdown are rare

What is lockdown?

- **Perimeter lockdown – locking gates, pupils inside the buildings but continuing their internal movement, and controlling the access and exit of visitors**

Usually due to a threat beyond the school perimeter with no known threat to pupils and staff

- **Full lockdown – securing the site, restricting staff and pupils to designated areas, remaining in one place**

Usually when there is considered to be an intruder within the school perimeter who is considered to pose a danger due to their behaviour and demeanour, and their location is unknown

- **Dynamic lockdown – managing and adjusting the lockdown due to changing information**

Usually when the incident become more specific and information is clarified

The position

- The health and safety of a school is a governing body/Trust responsibility; all education, childcare and children's social care setting must have emergency plans in place [Emergency planning and response for education, childcare, and children's social care settings - GOV.UK](#)
- All schools are advised to establish specific lockdown procedures to ensure the safety of students and staff during emergencies.
- Hampshire local authority advises the use of national guidance, copies of which are stored in the Hampshire Services for Schools portal – Emergency Response Planning [Health & Safety | Hampshire Services for Schools](#) (for schools with a health and safety service level agreement)

The position

- [School and college security - GOV.UK](#)
- [Protective security and preparedness for the education sector](#)
- [Lockdown_template.docx](#)

Schools should have:

- security policies in place that complement their safeguarding policies so that health and safety policies are integrated,
 - an identified lead for health and safety,
- All staff must be aware of the guidance.*

Security policies should:

- identify the likelihood of a security related incident occurring
- assess the level of impact
- develop plans and procedures to manage

Preparing the school



Department
for Education

Lockdown Template

There are important differences between the lockdown and shelter arrangements. Lockdown is necessary when children and staff need to be **locked** within buildings for their own safety i.e. in an emergency situation such as a hostile intruder, terrorist attack or other criminal activity.

Signals

Alarm or signal for lockdown shelter	[insert]
Signal for stand down / all-clear	[insert]

Incident Control Officers & Response Team

Role	Name	Emergency Contact Number
Incident Control Officer		
Deputies		
Communications Officer		

It is important to remember that it is very much **the exception** to evacuate a building in the event of a hostile intruder. Unless the location of the intruders is known, a "blind" evacuation may be putting people in more danger (e.g. from an intruder or device at one of the entrances/exits) than if they had remained within the building.

Rooms most suitable for lockdown

1 Classrooms
2 Hall
3 Sports hall
4 Offices

It is important to make sure that items that could be used as weapons (kitchen implements, sports equipment, tools, cleaning products) are securely locked away when not in use.

Communication arrangements

Wherever possible use silent communications and keep noise to a minimum especially if the intruders are close by. Make sure any communications devices are secure and cannot be intercepted.

Two-way radios
Classroom telephones
Mobile phones

- The DfE's lockdown template provides a plan to assist school leaders and the identified lead in preparing for and managing an incident
- The relevant policies should be reviewed regularly by the governing body in line with their review schedule and shared with all staff
- Consider the needs of pupil groups; plan for their specific needs

In the case of any lockdown incident, schools are encouraged to communicate at the earliest opportunity with the local authority for advice on all matters including external communication following the incident and, following the event, ensure that learning can be shared and adjustments to policy and practice made.

Case studies

PRIMARY SCHOOL

Incident

- Parent came to school at the **end of lunchtime** with a younger child wanting to collect her child from school.
- Clearly distressed and in a very agitated. School leaders unable to calm her.
- Parent forced way towards playground.
- Police were called by the school.
- Child saw parent, screamed and ran away. Child taken to safe space in school.
- All children brought off playground, inside to classrooms.
- Parent left but then returned.

Response: school's action in line with its lockdown procedure

- Lockdown procedure was implemented. Everyone advised to stay in classrooms with all outside doors locked. The corridor door was also locked.
- The Office was instructed not to answer the buzzer to entrance door nor open the main door to the parent.
- The parent attempted to force her way in with an implement then returned to her car and drove car down the slope towards the school doors, bumping the car at a low speed into the front door, causing the glass to crack.
- Staff monitored the situation from the safety of the raised Reception area, away from the lobby, waiting for the arrival of the police.
- Children remained in classrooms; all doors remained closed.
- Parent apprehended by Police outside the school.

The management of the incident aligned with the school's Emergency Response Plan:

Ref	Initial response - lockdown	Tick / sign / time
L1	Ensure all pupils are inside the school building. Alternatively, ask pupils to hide or disperse if this will improve their safety.	Yes
L2	Lock / secure entrance points (e.g. doors, windows) to prevent the intruder entering the building.	Yes
L3	Dial 999. Dial once for each emergency service that you require.	Yes
L4	Ensure people take action to increase protection from attack: ▪ Block access points (e.g. move furniture to obstruct doorways) ▪ Sit on the floor, under tables or against a wall ▪ Keep out of sight ▪ Draw curtains / blinds ▪ Turn off lights ▪ Stay away from windows and doors.	Yes Children in classrooms, all doors closed, no-one at windows or doors, all external doors locked
L5	Ensure that pupils, staff and visitors are aware of an exit point in case the intruder does manage to gain access.	All classes have external doors.
L6	If possible, check for missing / injured pupils, staff and visitors.	One child was kept safely in the HT office with a member of staff.
L7	Remain inside until an all-clear has been given, or unless told to evacuate by the emergency services.	Yes

The headteacher sought HCC Communication Team's advice

- an email was sent out to parents before the end of the school day.

The police reported the incident in the media and a number of parents approached the school sharing their concern

- a second email was sent to parents.

In summary, the headteacher

- logged this as a 'near miss' with the Health and Safety team.
- reported to Police (Police completed IARF).
- reported to Children's Services.
- reported to School Improvement Manager.
- reported to Communications Team

Case studies

SECONDARY SCHOOL

- The school was due to close at 14:00 as Open Evening was scheduled
- The school had already sent out a text communication to parents as there had been reports of a white van acting suspiciously in the morning and slowly driving passed students.
- This was also reported to the police who had confirmed they had received similar reports; the community was therefore already heightened.

Incident

- **13:15** – Two students reported to Pastoral Support that a group, including a named student, was seen on the cycle path.
- Simultaneously, two other students informed a senior staff member that the named student had made threats on social media and was coming to school to cause harm.
- The pastoral team contacted **101** to report the situation. During the call, one student disclosed a past altercation with the named individual but believed it was resolved.
- Concern spread among students, causing alarm. The named student was known to carry a knife.

Response

- The **headteacher called 999**, shared all known information, and was advised to initiate a **lockdown** in line with school's procedures.
- Leadership team members liaised with parents waiting outside while the lockdown was in effect.
- **14:50** – Police confirmed the student had been located and advised that lockdown could be lifted. Only one class had been released and was quickly returned to safety.
- Police **searched the individuals** involved; **no weapons were found**.
- **15:30** – Lockdown was officially lifted and students were dismissed safely.

Supportive factors

- New messaging system implemented at start of term was used to inform parents of lockdown.
- Updates given to parents – just informing them the police were dealing with the matter.
- Staff communication channel on Teams was used to keep school up to date

Following the incident, the headteacher:

- Liaised with the local press to ensure the incident was reported correctly
- Reviewed the incident and made adjustments to the practices undertaken across many aspects
- Reported to Children's Services.
- Reported to School Improvement Manager
- Reported to Communications Team

Revised Lockdown Procedures following the incident and sent to parents

- Following a review of the school's procedures, a change was made to define each element of the lockdown process as
- **Tier 0** is defined as a drill. In this case students and parents/carers are given notice minimising anxiety where possible.
- **Tier 1** is where the 'threat' is outside of the premises, requiring the students to remain in classrooms. In this case, students can remain at their desks and are permitted to contact home via mobile phones confirming they are safe.
- **Tier 2** is the most serious and when there is a direct threat inside the school. In this case the school must be silent, and pupils hidden, with phones turned off to prevent knowledge of pupils' location. Communication with parents may be sparse.

In summary:

- **Plan and record-** breadth of site, needs of pupils, needs of staff, community -
CONTEXT
- **Train staff**
- **Prepare staff and pupils**
- **Communicate with all**
- **Debrief following any incident**
- **Inform**
- **Reflect and refine**
- **Communicate**

**Follow DfE and LA guidance; review
and update regularly**