



St Mark's West Essex Catholic School

Lockdown Procedures

Date Reviewed: June 2019

Next Review Date: June 2021

Committee: Premises

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 pupils in the school. Procedures should aim to minimise disruption to the learning environment whilst ensuring the safety of all pupils and staff.

Although it is important to be prepared and have Lockdown procedures in place, it is vital that the children's welfare is considered throughout. The procedure needs to consider which members of staff need to be informed, depending on the type of occurrence to ensure that key staff are informed without unnecessarily alarming pupils or other staff.

Alarming/concerning pupils when unnecessary may cause them to become scared and develop a fear of going to school.

Communication is a key aspect in these situations so St Mark's will make sure that all emergency numbers are close to hand (preferably inputted into mobile phones already). Note that any mobile phones containing staff personal contact details should be password protected to protect data in accordance with the Data Protection Act.

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 pupils 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

Procedure

If a lockdown is declared:

- The Site Manager will be advised to implement the lockdown via Mobile phone or word-of-mouth.
- The SLT will communicate via internal phones, PARS or word of mouth
- Staff are alerted to the activation of the lockdown procedure plan by a recognised signal, audible throughout the school, or by a message via PARS. If the need arises for a silent evacuation senior staff will position themselves along the designated exit route and the Senior Assistant Headteacher will initiate an ordered evacuation block by block. Year heads will be asked to assist via notification by word of mouth.
- Pupils who are outside of the school buildings are brought inside as quickly as possible;
- 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).
- Once in lockdown mode, staff will be notified by the Reception, Report if any pupils not accounted for.
- Staff should encourage the pupils to keep calm;
- As appropriate, the school should establish communication with the Emergency Services as soon as possible;
- The Brentwood Diocese should be notified;
- If necessary, parents should be notified as soon as it is practicable to do so via the school's established communications system;

- Pupils 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 leadership team, teaching staff and support staff. To achieve this, a lockdown drill will be undertaken at least once a year. Pupils will also be made aware of the plan. (Regular practices will increase their familiarity). Parents will also know that the school has a lockdown plan, and a copy will 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 leadership team to test the procedures against various scenarios;
- b) Rehearse lockdown arrangements with all staff and pupils;
- 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 pupils 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, pupils and staff return to building;
- All staff and pupils 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 pupils are safely inside, senior staff will conduct an ongoing and dynamic risk assessment based on advice from the school's Health & Safety provider/emergency services. This can then be communicated to staff and pupils.

'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.

In the event of an air pollution issue, air vents can be closed (where possible) as an additional precaution. Emergency Services will advise as to the best course of action in respect of the prevailing threat.

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 pupils 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, pupils sit quietly out of sight (eg under desk or around a corner);
- Register taken - the Reception staff will contact each class in turn for an attendance report;
- Staff and pupils remain in lock down until it has been lifted by a senior member of staff / emergency services. At any point during the lockdown, the lockdown alarm may sound again 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 Reception as this could delay more important communication.

An example 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;

If someone is taken hostage on the premises, the school will seek to evacuate the rest of the site.

Communication with Parents

In the event of an actual lockdown, any incident or development will be communicated to parents as soon as is practicable.

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 the Emergency Services.
- do not come to the school. This could interfere with Emergency Services' 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 to get their children, and where this will be from.

Parents will be told '*...the school is in a full lockdown situation. During this period the switchboard and entrances will be un-manned, external doors locked and nobody will be 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 decisions of the Head Teacher regarding the timing of any communication to parents.

Monitoring the Site Entrances:

Once the site is secure, staff should return to the building and monitor School entrances via safe vantage points. The gates should only be opened by SLT or Site Staff as directed when visual

confirmation of the presence of the Emergency Services can be confirmed or notification that the threat has been removed.

3. Bomb Threat – *upon receiving a message that a bomb has been planted in school.*

Immediate Action:

- The caller will be immediately transferred to a senior leader (if possible)
- The person receiving the call will ask questions such as: where the bomb is located, when the bomb will go off, what materials are in the bomb, who is calling, why the caller is doing this
- The person receiving the call will listen closely to caller's voice and speech patterns and to noises in the background
- Notify the Headteacher/most senior member of staff
- The Headteacher/most senior member of staff will order evacuation of all persons inside the building(s)
- The Headteacher/most senior member of staff to notify police (call 999)

Evacuation Procedures:

- The Headteacher/most senior member of staff will warn pupils and staff (but not mentioning "Bomb Threat"). We will use standard fire drill procedures:
 - Pupils and staff must be evacuated to a safe distance outside of school building(s)
 - Teachers take register after being evacuated
- No one may re-enter the building(s) until the entire building(s) is declared safe by fire or police service
- The Headteacher/most senior member of staff will notify pupils and staff of the end of the emergency.

Where examinations are taking place (advice from [JCC – Joint Council for Qualifications](#)):

Immediate Action:

- We will evacuate the examination room in line with the instructions given by the appropriate authority
- We will make sure that the candidates are supervised as closely as possible while they are out of the examination room to make sure there is no discussion about the examination
- The examination officer / senior invigilator will make a note of the time of the interruption and how long it lasted
- The examination officer will make a full report of the incident and of the action taken, and send it to the relevant awarding body

The examination officer will keep up to date with the latest recommendations from the relevant awarding board websites.

Further Information

Further information is available from [Gov.uk](#) and includes the [Stay Safe Film – 'Run, Hide, Tell'](#) and [Emergency Planning and Response](#).

Appendix A

Stay Safe

Firearms and weapons attack

'Stay Safe' principles (Run Hide Tell) give some simple actions to consider at an incident and the information that armed officers may need in the event of a firearms and weapons attack. Full guidance is contained on the NaCTSO website

<https://www.gov.uk/government/publications/recognising-the-terrorist-threat>.

Run

- Escape if you can.
- Consider the safest options.
- Is there a safe route? RUN if not HIDE.
- Can you get there without exposing yourself to greater danger?
- Insist others leave with you.
- Leave belongings behind.

Hide

- If you can't RUN, HIDE.
- Find cover from gunfire.
- If you can see the attacker, they may be able to see you.
- Cover from view does not mean you are safe, bullets go through glass, brick, wood and metal.
- Find cover from gunfire e.g. substantial brickwork / heavy reinforced walls.
- Be aware of your exits.
- Try not to get trapped.
- Be quiet, silence your phone.
- Lock / barricade yourself in.
- Move away from the door.

Tell

Call 999 - What do the police need to know?

- Location - Where are the suspects?
- Direction - Where did you last see the suspects?
- Descriptions – Describe the attacker, numbers, features, clothing, weapons etc.
- Further information – Casualties, type of injury, building information, entrances, exits, hostages etc.
- Stop other people entering the building if it is safe to do so.

Armed Police Response

- Follow officers' instructions.
- Remain calm.
- Can you move to a safer area?
- Avoid sudden movements that may be considered a threat.
- Keep your hands in view.

Officers may

- Point guns at you.
- Treat you firmly.

- Question you.
- Be unable to distinguish you from the attacker.
- Officers will evacuate you when it is safe to do so.

You must STAY SAFE

- What are your plans if there were an incident?
- What are the local plans? e.g. personal emergency evacuation plan.

Protecting yourself, your staff, your business and your community

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