

Lockdown Procedures

Guidance for Parallel Learning Trust Academies

LAST REVIEW DATE	May 2025	REVIEW PERIOD	Annual
NEXT REVIEW DATE	May 2026	APPROVED BY	Board

PLEASE NOTE THAT IF THERE IS EVER THE SITUATION THAT THE LOCKDOWN PROCEDURE IS ACTIVATED AS A THREAT HAS BEEN IDENTIFIED, THEN THIS LOCKDOWN POLICY IS TO BE IMPLEMENTED ALONGSIDE THE SCHOOL'S VERSION OF THE PLT EMERGENCY PLAN WHICH CONTAINS ALL THE INFORMATION IN RELATION TO CONTACTING VARIOUS STAKEHOLDERS INCLUDING PARENTS/CARERS, THE RESPECTIVE LOCAL AUTHORITY AND THE TRUST LEADERSHIP.

Introduction

It is advisable that all PLT Academies should have effective lockdown procedures and that they are regularly tested. This guide is intended to be used both by Academies which already have lockdown plans, to inform their development as necessary, and by those Academies where no such plans currently exist.

Lockdown procedures can also be known as 'sheltering in place', and this may be a more suitable term to use with pupils.

This document can also be downloaded from the Parallel Learning Trust website:

<http://www.plt.org.uk>

Guidance for Academies on Creating Lockdown Procedures

All PLT Academies should consider the need for robust and tested Academy 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 pupils in the Academy. Procedures should aim to minimise disruption to the learning environment whilst ensuring the safety of all pupils 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 pupils in the Academy).
- An intruder on the Academy 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) or chemical, biological or radiological contaminants.
- A major fire in the vicinity of the Academy.
- The close proximity of a dangerous dog roaming loose.

Lockdown Arrangements

Lockdown arrangements should be determined by Academies on an individual basis, as they will be dependent to a large extent on local circumstances such as premises design and layout, class arrangements, resources available, etc.

Academies should consider having two types of lockdowns; 'partial' and 'full'.

1. Partial Lockdown

Alert to staff: 'Partial lockdown'

In a partial lockdown staff and pupils should remain in the Academy building and all doors leading outside should be locked. No one should be allowed to enter or leave the building; however, teaching and work can continue as usual. 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 Academy. 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. (There needs to be a means of communicating the alert to duty staff at break times).
- All staff and pupils remain in building and external doors and windows locked.
- Free movement may be permitted within the building dependent upon circumstances.
- In the event of an air pollution or chemical, biological or radiological contaminants issue, air vents, fans, heating and air conditioning systems should be closed or turned off.
- Use anything to hand to seal up all the cracks around doors and any vents into the room – you aim to minimise possible ingress of pollutants.
- Staff should await further instructions.

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 Emergency Services.
Inform the central Trust office of the situation.

A 'partial lockdown' may also be a precautionary measure, but puts the Academy in a state of readiness (whilst retaining a degree of normality) should the situation escalate.

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 Academy and may be an escalation of a partial lockdown. The aim of a full lockdown is for the Academy and its rooms to appear empty.

Immediate action

- All pupils/staff stay in their classroom or move to the nearest classroom.
- Office staff should remain in their office.
- External doors locked. Classroom doors locked (where a member of staff with key is present).
- Windows locked, blinds drawn, internal door windows covered (so an intruder cannot see in).
- Pupils/staff sit quietly out of sight and where possible in a location that would protect them from gunfire (bullets go through glass, brick, wood and metal. Consider locations behind substantial brickwork or heavy reinforced walls).
- Lights, smartboards and computer monitors turned off.
- Mobile phones turned off (or at the least turned onto silent so they cannot give away your position).
- A register to be taken of all pupils/staff in each classroom/office.
- Communicate register of staff/pupils to a pre-agreed central office.
- Staff should await further instructions.

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 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, 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 e.g. laptop, smartphone or tablet.
- Where an Academy uses 'Parent mail' then staff could be put into a defined user group. This could then be used to communicate instructions via text message in an emergency.

Academy Lockdown Plan

It is not possible to prescribe a generic Academy lockdown plan as there are a number of variables that will dictate exactly how an individual Academy responds to those situations identified, for example:

- Access to Academy bell controls to raise an alarm in an emergency.
- Other means of internal communications - messenger, two-way radios, mobile phone, internal e-mail, texts etc. Academy site plan e.g. the layout of buildings and their proximity to one another.
- Age of pupils.
- Geographical location – urban/rural, presence of secure perimeter fence.
- Nonetheless, many Academies have found it helpful to incorporate the following basic principles in their plans:
- A member of staff is nominated as lockdown manager (plus deputies in their absence) to initiate, manage and conclude the lockdown. They will also communicate with emergency services. Their roles and responsibilities should be documented.
- Staff are alerted to the activation of the plan by a recognised signal, audible throughout the Academy.
- The use of the fire alarm should be avoided to reduce the incorrect response to an incident.
- Pupils/staff who are outside of the Academy buildings should be brought inside as quickly as possible.
- Those inside the Academy should remain in their classrooms or proceed directly to the nearest classroom.
- All external doors and, as necessary, windows are locked (depending on the circumstances, internal classroom doors may also need to be locked).
- Blinds/curtains drawn and windows on internal doors covered.
- Once in lockdown mode, staff should notify the office immediately of any pupils not accounted for and any additional pupils/staff in their classroom via the agreed communication channel.
- Staff should encourage the pupils to keep calm.
- As appropriate, the Academy should establish communication with the Emergency Services as soon as possible.
- Central Trust Team should be notified.
- If necessary, parents should be notified as soon as it is practicable to do so via the Academy's established communications system.
- Pupils must not be released to parents during a lockdown.
- If it is necessary to evacuate the building, the fire alarm should sound.
- Ensure procedures are in place for members of staff who do not have a regular office or classroom.
- Ensure visitors/volunteers/peripatetic staff are included in your Academy lockdown plan.
- Establish an official lockdown termination announcement/signal so that all staff know that it is authentic.
- Specific arrangements should be made for pupils/staff with different needs (i.e. hearing/visual impairment or mobility needs).
- Areas in the Academy that cannot be effectively locked down should be identified and the lockdown procedures should include instructions on removing staff and pupils from these areas to a place of safety (i.e. toilets/outbuildings).

- Establish agreed methods of communication from staff to the lockdown manager should a dangerous intruder be located on the Academy premises.
- An overview sheet outlining the Academy's procedures will be displayed in the staffroom and other places throughout the Academy as appropriate (see Appendix A).

In the event that an Academy is in lockdown and the fire alarm sounds, the Academy should contact the emergency services as in a normal fire alarm activation. A nominated member of staff who has a means of remote communication (e.g. a walkie talkie) should go to the fire alarm panel to establish what zone has been activated. Once the zone has been identified, the alarm should be silenced and another person sent to the area to investigate. They will need to approach with caution as there may be a fire or an intruder may have activated the alarm. If a fire is discovered this information should be communicated back to the person at the fire alarm panel, who should resound the alarm, update the emergency services and evacuate the Academy.

Due to the fast-moving nature of incidents that require lockdown it is important that all staff are able to act quickly and effectively. Staff should have clear roles and responsibilities and it is of vital importance that the Academy's lockdown procedures are familiar to members of the senior management team, Academy administrators, teaching staff and non-teaching staff. Depending on their age, pupils should also be aware of the plan. (Regular practices will increase their familiarity).

Staff's understanding should be regularly checked with regular training refreshers. A lockdown drill should be undertaken at least once a year and thoroughly debriefed to monitor the effectiveness of your arrangements. Parents too should know that the Academy has a lockdown plan and that it will be regularly tested. However, it is not advisable to share the Academy's full lockdown plan.

It would also be good practice to:

1. Conduct a number of table top exercises with the senior leadership team to test the procedures against various scenarios.
2. Rehearse lockdown arrangements with all staff and pupils.
3. Display lockdown drill information in every classroom alongside information relating to fire drills.

Communication between parents and the Academy

Arrangements for communicating with parents in the event of a lockdown, should be routinely shared either via newsletter or the Academy 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/carers should be given enough information about what will happen so that they:

- Are reassured that the Academy 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 Academy. Calling the Academy could tie up telephone lines that are required for contacting emergency support providers.

- Do not come to the Academy. They could interfere with emergency support provider's access to the Academy and may even put themselves and others in danger.
- Wait for the Academy to contact them about when it is safe to collect their children, and where this will be from.
- Are aware of what will happen if the lockdown continues beyond Academy hours.

The 'communication with parents' section of the Academy lockdown plan needs to reassure parents that the Academy 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 that 'the Academy is in a full lockdown situation.'

During this period the switchboard and entrances will be un-manned, external doors locked and nobody is allowed in or out...

Should parents present at the Academy during a lockdown under no circumstances should members of staff leave the building to communicate directly with them.

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 Academy 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 Headteacher with regarding the timing of communication to parents/carers.

In the event of a prolonged lockdown or more severe scenario, emergency services, local authorities and voluntary sector organisations will work together to co-ordinate practical and emotional support to those affected by any emergency, also referred to as humanitarian assistance. A reception centre for friends and family could be set-up outside of the cordoned area.

Useful Contact Numbers

PLT Central Trust Head Office – Wandle Valley Academy – 020 8648 1365

Site Staff Contact: Angela Barry, PLT CEO and Chris Phillips, WVA

Emergency Planning Team at Your Local Education Authority:

Sutton: emergency.planning@sutton.gov.uk – 020 8649 0608

DfE: incident.alert@education.gov.uk

Name of Academy: Inspire Academy

Emergency Procedures

Fire Alarm

In the event of the fire alarm sounding (which areMX PRO FIRE PANEL.....) please leave the Academy buildings by the nearest fire escape route and assemble on theGRASSED AREA OPPOSITE MAIN ENTRANCE.....

'Shelter in Buildings' Alarm

In the event of a Lockdown the school pips will be sounded three times producing 18 pips in total, stay indoors, in the room/classroom that you are in. If you are outside when this bell sounds, make your way to the nearest classroom or hall.

An e-mail will be sent to 'All Staff' giving instructions as to what to do – please ensure this is checked and not on the screen for the children to read. It is therefore important that a computer is always logged on (and e-mail accounts opened) during teaching sessions. Internal phones may also be used for communication.

If you are with children it is important to:

- remain calm
- reassure them
- remind them to follow your instructions