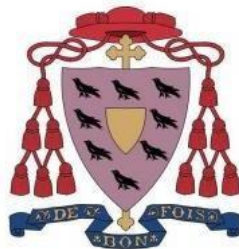




Lock Down Policy

Review Date:	September 2027
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Bishop Chadwick
Catholic Education Trust

Striving for excellence, inspired by Gospel values.

Lock Down Policy

Parents and carers trust our school to keep their children safe. Thanks to the efforts of staff and governors, schools in the UK normally remain a safe haven for children; but as tragic events both overseas and at home have shown, they can become involved in an emergency at any time.

The Department for Education recommends that schools create and maintain an emergency plan and as a school, we not only comply with this but also want to go one step further and be ready to deal with the sort of emergencies that no one really wants to think about – the situation where the children and staff are endangered by the threat of deliberate harm. In emergency planning terms this is called lockdown, a description that will be used throughout this document.

The document is designed to help us:

- Develop and review a lockdown plan.
- Provide information to all staff who could become involved in an incident.
- Help staff to educate and inform the children and indeed their parents about what to do in such a situation.
- Detail actions and procedures not only for use during such an incident but also for testing our readiness for such an incident.

The advice from the Department for Education and the Cabinet Office reminds us “planning for emergencies can save lives. It can prevent an incident from getting worse, provide confidence to staff, governors, parents, careers and children and enhance your school’s reputation as a safe place to learn and work. Plans which deal with the consequences of large-scale emergencies also help staff to deal with the smaller (but nevertheless potentially distressing) incidents that schools can experience on a regular basis”.

This is a document that every good school needs, every member of staff needs to understand, and no one ever wants to use.

What is lockdown?

The purpose of a lockdown is to prevent an intruder or other threat outside the school from causing harm to children and staff. It means that all entrances to the school must be secured in an effort to prevent any threat entering, and staff and children must find a suitable place to protect themselves.

In the case of a fire or similar emergency, the children and staff are taught how to leave the building quietly and safely. In a lockdown, they need to learn almost the opposite, to actually get inside the building as quickly and safely as possible and to stay there until the threat is removed, or – in extreme circumstances - to leave if an intruder gains entrance to the building. A distinct policy is needed because it is so different from the standard emergency drills, and is so extreme in nature that everyone needs to be thoroughly well versed in its contents and the role they are to play during such an incident.

Lockdown arrangements depend heavily on the size and layout of the schools, and as we have many entrances/exits, a large amount of windows and a relatively open site, we have a number of challenges to overcome.

Any procedures we establish must be realistic; in an incident staff and children will not have much time to seek an appropriate place to hide and there is likely to be widespread confusion or panic.

It is very unlikely that our school will ever need to implement a real lockdown but it is important for us to have arrangements in place to deal with such a situation.

Why do we need this document?

Much of the information this contains has been gathered from best practice in other schools and from education departments and authorities.

While lockdown policies are commonplace and indeed in some cases statutory in the US, there is an increasing number of UK schools, including primary schools, that are adopting such policies and our own local authority references lockdown procedures in its emergency planning guidelines. While all of this does not mean we should over exaggerate what is still a minute risk, nevertheless there have been incidents in UK schools that would now be classified as lockdown situations.

There are a number of stages we need to go through to create a robust lockdown procedure.

1. Understand what lockdown is and why it could happen (this is covered by this document).
2. Address the issues raised by our particular school circumstances (many of these are touched on in this document).
3. Compile the completed procedure for distribution to all staff with step by step instructions for display in classrooms and other school areas as appropriate.
4. Hold practice drills on a suitable basis (e.g. annually).
5. Ensure this document is regularly reviewed and included in the induction for new staff members

Some of the issues we need to resolve

A) Safe places

It is important for all staff to decide and know:

1. *Where are the optimum safe places in the school?*

The characteristics of an ideal safe place are:

- a. **Ability to lock children and staff inside.** All teachers have the ability to lock external classroom doors. Corridors should be avoided with staff working in these areas, directed to take children to the nearest safe classroom to remain until it is deemed safe to leave.
- b. **No windows or windows with poor sight lines from outside (or curtains/shutters).** All of our classrooms have a large amount of glass running the length of one wall. Staff will identify areas within their rooms that ideally are away from the windows on the exterior side of the building, though this may not always be possible). All blinds can be drawn to prevent any external intruders from seeing into the classrooms.
- c. **An ability to communicate with the outside world.** Some areas have a phone which can be used to dial out. Staff members may also have their mobile phones in their personal belongings stored away in their classrooms.
- d. **A way out if someone comes in.** Most classrooms have their own exit point within the classroom, which lead straight into the enclosed outdoor area. Emergency gates can be opened if it is deemed necessary to exit the safety of this area. Staff in offices need to identify the nearest safe exit point, but should remain in their room, with the doors and windows closed.

2. What are the second choices if those are not available?

- Due to the nature of our buildings it has been difficult to identify additional areas of safety, particularly as there are several possible entrances that an intruder could enter the building from. Staff have agreed that they would split their children (if possible) amongst some of the other safe areas or respond using common sense to any situation that presents itself.

3. Where are the places to be avoided if possible?

- If possible, staff should avoid the corridor areas and hall.

4. What is the best way to ensure everyone knows where these places are?

- All staff have a copy of this policy which contains a separate set of instructions as to where the safe places are.
- Staff were consulted in the formulation of the lockdown arrangements and identified safe areas to be used for their year groups.
- Children have been briefed during assemblies as to what a lockdown is and the procedures to follow. They have also been spoken to by their teacher about where their designated safe area is.

5. Are there any safe places outside the school building that could provide cover in an emergency?

- Outside of the school building, the children could be walked to a safe place where shelter could be provided. Staff are aware of this venue as stated in the procedure document.

B) Suitable signal for a lockdown

The signal for a lockdown should be clearly distinguishable to that of an evacuation (fire drill). Any confusion may result in children and staff congregating at an assembly point, thus potentially making them more vulnerable to an intruder or outside threat. Staff are aware of this within the procedure document.

C) Communication during the incident

During a lockdown staff may find it difficult to obtain a clear overview of the situation. How can communication be maintained between staff and classrooms?

Staff can use the internal phone system, although we need to be aware that this may signal to an intruder the location of staff or children. Mobile phones must only be used for contact regarding the incident e.g. to phone the emergency services and should not be used for any other purpose. Staff should ensure that their mobile phones are switched to silent. Additionally, the Senior Leadership Team and office staff will use their mobile phones via a shared group to provide updates, where needed.

D) Who gives the signal?

Potentially any member of staff could be the first to raise an alarm for a lockdown so it is important that all employees are aware of the plan and instructions are available in every room.

Who is responsible for calling the emergency services? And what happens if they are not able to?

Staff have agreed that any member of staff will raise the alarm by contacting the school office (either by telephone or in person, if possible). The office will immediately issue a code blue or code red notice on the mobile phone school group. If safe to do so, the message should be relayed around the building as quickly as possible.

In the event of a serious (Code Red) incident any staff member can phone the emergency services – even if another member of staff may have already phoned them.

Once the signal is initiated, who does what?

Executive Head/ Head of School/Assistant Head	Check the halls/corridors are clear of children, coordinate information and where necessary liaise with emergency services and parents.
Office staff	Initiate lockdown code, contact emergency services if required, Take any visitors to a safe lockdown area (nearest located to them) In the event of a serious code red incident, any staff away from site for example swimming or on a school trip should be advised not to return to the building until notified to do so. It is essential that this information remains confidential at all times.
Teachers	Ensure children are safely in a classroom, keep children calm and keep them secure by locking windows and doors. Take any visitors that are in their area or that they pass to a safe lockdown area. Keep an attendance log of all children in the room and update when safe to do so. This should include any children who seek shelter in the nearest classroom. Ensure all medication for pupils is accessible e.g. insulin, inhalers etc.
Support staff (including lunchtime MSAs)	Direct children inside or drop and cover as appropriate. Take any visitors that are in their area or that they pass to a safe lockdown area. Assist teachers inside the classrooms. If safe to do so, check any communal areas e.g. halls, toilets.
Visitors	Visitors are to accompany the child they are working with to their classes.
All staff	Should not allow anyone in or out of a classroom/ the building until given the all clear by an appropriate authority (either the Senior Leadership Team or the Emergency Services).

Signal	
Lockdown signal(s)	Tannoy Word of mouth
All clear signal	Word of mouth (SLT) or emergency services personnel only.
Evacuation signal	Fire bell will sound.
Internal communication	Leadership Team will communicate with staff through WhatsApp. If staff have access to their mobile phones, ensure these are on silent.
Communication with parents	Following an all clear, a member of the SLT will send an app message to inform parents of the lockdown. Parents asked not to call the school, as this will tie up lines that would be used to contact emergency services, and not to come to the school. Leadership team to send this.
Debrief	A debrief will take place between staff and the headteacher and also class teacher and the pupils'.

Is there anything else?

E) Dealing with the concerns of the children

It is important that children know what action to take if a lockdown happens at school. Becoming familiar with lockdown drills will improve the likelihood of these procedures being implemented swiftly and effectively (which could prevent injury and even save lives).

There are many different ways to inform children about this subject. An assembly could be used to explain an emergency drill and outline the actions children would be required to take; this could then be followed up by an exercise of the drill. Some of the issues outlined during training sessions are sensitive and may potentially upset children, especially the youngest. Staff are well placed to assess what level of information should be provided to children on the reasoning behind implementing a lockdown.

Alternatively, a class session could be used to focus on preparing for emergencies. The lesson plan could include:

- Risk assessment (e.g. asking children to consider the risks that could affect school).
- The role of children in the school emergency plan (e.g. emergency drills, communicating with parents/carers).

Elements of these tasks could be included in one teaching session or spread over several during a term.

What approach works best in our school? What do we need to explain to children? Is this done best on a class by class or a whole school basis?

Staff have agreed that at St. Aloysius:

Each teacher will lead a session on how we can keep each other safe in class prior to a phase assembly

A phase assembly will then be held to explain to children about lockdown procedures, class teachers will speak to their classes and revisit the purpose of lockdown and talk them through the procedures.

Once this has taken place, a practice drill will take place. Staff feel all children should be included, but during the initial implementation of the policy all staff will be informed of the time/date of the planned lockdown practice in order to prepare children and reduce any anxiety.

F) Dealing with the concerns of parents/carers

Parents/carers need to be informed when teaching is taking place on this subject so they can prepare for any possible impact this may have on their children.

Routinely informing parents/carers of the procedures can reassure them that our school is prepared and able to look after their child. Methods of informing parents/carers about preparing for emergencies could involve:

- Including information within the school newsletter.
- Distributing information at parent/carer evenings.
- Sending a letter home via Class Dojo.

What approach works best in our school? How can we do our level best to ensure parents are not taken by surprise that this is happening?

In the first instance parents/carers will be informed of the new policy. A message will then go on the text service to inform parents that we are holding a practice drill. This will enable parents/carers of individual children, especially those with SEND needs to be prepared to answer any questions their child may have.

G) Practice drills

There are various ways of holding practice sessions for a lockdown and they range in detail and therefore the amount of planning and work they will involve (although obviously the amount of work would not preclude a need for safety – but remember the risk is very small).

The options are:

- Discussion-based exercises - assembling staff together and asking them to consider how the school would respond to a particular.
- Table top exercises - based on simulating the response to an incident and can be run in a single room or a series of rooms.
- Live exercises – a real time simulation of a lockdown incident involving the whole school physically acting out the response to a scenario.

Which is the best option for our school, and how and when do we make it happen?

All staff will be involved in live exercises, although the SLT will also carry out discussion based and table-top planning exercises

H) Staff training

How can we establish a method to conduct lockdown review training for all staff, during each school year?

The lockdown procedures will be reviewed annually by the Executive Headteacher and re-issued to staff. Practice lockdowns will take place and amendments made to the procedures as required as a result of these. To introduce the procedures, staff meetings will be held in small groups so that staff can ask questions specifically related to the area of the school they work in. This will take place during a twilight session, with a member of the SLT leading a group.

St. Aloysius lockdown policy

Reasons for a lockdown to be initiated:

- A medical emergency
- Someone who is out of control and threatens the safety of our children, staff, or himself/herself.
- Someone who has a gun or weapon.
- An intruder.
- A stray animal loose on the yard
- A suspicious package
- A hazardous event close to the building or on the neighbouring estate
- An extreme weather related event.

When an incident occurs, the priority is to safeguard those on-site (i.e. children, staff, parents/carers, visitors) and alert the emergency services if necessary. Other organisations, such as the local authority, can then be informed as appropriate.

When responding to an incident the emergency services will need unrestricted access to (and egress from) the school site. This can sometimes prove difficult, as parents/carers are likely to visit the school immediately upon hearing of an incident. Parents need to be requested to stay away from the school, as they could otherwise exacerbate the situation and the police services would be the best resource in ensuring this.

Plans should emphasise the importance of locking down as quickly as possible. At the first indication of a major incident or potential threat, the signal for lockdown should be given and the lockdown begins immediately. If children are outside when the signal for a lockdown is sounded, staff members need to take children to the nearest possible internal safe area.

Raising the alarm

All staff (especially those working in the main office) should be trained that when information is received in the office of a situation requiring a lockdown, whoever receives that information, will immediately activate the school's lockdown system. There should be no hesitation in announcing the lockdown, and the decision to call the lockdown should be made immediately by whoever receives the call to the office, it should not be delayed. The other member of office staff or a member of the SLT, will call the emergency services, if this is required.

It is recommended that the actual method of announcing a lockdown, is displayed at fixed points, is clearly visible and can be read by any person announcing the lockdown. In emergent stressful circumstances even the most composed individuals may have difficulty remembering exact procedures. By pre-printing the announcement and practising it, the person delivering the message can ensure that the content is delivered accurately.

Following the bell signalling the staff will follow procedures and lock the school down. They will be informed by Leadership if it is **Code Blue** or **Code Red**.

Code Blue - this is used to signal that the school needs to go into an immediate lockdown. Windows, doors and blinds will be closed but staff and children can continue as normal, within the confines of their classrooms. No one should leave the room until informed that it is safe to do so.

Examples of code blue may include a medical emergency on site, an animal on the yard, a hazardous event near to the school, which should not impact on the school community.

Code Red - this is used to signal that the school needs to go into an immediate lockdown and that there may be risk of harm to staff or children. The emergency services will be called.

Should the risk escalate from code blue to red then this will be shared by the staff phone group.

Classrooms and other secure areas

Before locking a door, staff should gather everyone in the immediate vicinity into their classroom or other secure area, if it is safe to do so.

Code Blue	Code Red
<ul style="list-style-type: none">● Teachers check who is in attendance in their room.● Ensure exit doors are locked, windows closed and blinds down.● All children are encouraged to make their way to a safe classroom as quickly as possible. Wherever possible, this will be their own classroom.● Teachers check who is in attendance in their room.● Be aware of sight lines● No mobile phone use unless necessary to communicate to the emergency services. Messages may be sent by SLT.● Teachers can continue as normal but no one should be allowed to leave the room until cold blue ends.	<ul style="list-style-type: none">● Teachers check who is in attendance in their room.● Stay away from doors and windows; turn off lights; close blinds.● Beware of sight lines if there is a window in the classroom door.● Consider covering the window.● Take cover if available (get behind something solid or under desks).● Remain absolutely quiet.● No mobile phone use unless necessary to communicate to the emergency services. They should be turned to silent or on vibrate.● No one should be allowed to leave the room until cold red ends or the signal to evacuate is given.

In the event of a critical incident the most senior member of staff onsite will take the lead, however we also understand that staff may need to make a rapid decision based on the best interests of the school community

Toilets:

As the door into the toilet area cannot be locked children need to evacuate toilets if at all possible and get to an area that can safely be locked down.

Designated adults who work in close proximity to toilets need to check them before locking down themselves, if it is safe to do so, and take any children found in the toilets, into their classrooms to lockdown.

As a last resort, staff or children trapped in the toilets, should attempt to somehow secure the door, enter a stall, lock the door and climb on top of the toilet.

Open Areas

Open areas including hallways and other open areas are the most vulnerable, making them the most likely location for a threat, and the most difficult areas to quickly and effectively secure.

It is very important, everyone understands what to do and where to go in the event a lockdown is called and they are in an open area. There need to be options in the event that the first choice is not available. *This is shared in the procedural document.*

Terminating a lockdown

Plans to conclude a lockdown will vary by location. It may include a general announcement, or it may be a room to room visit from police/senior school staff so that the occupants of a locked room know in fact that whoever is giving them the all-clear, is in fact authentic. Local plans should include procedures for ending lockdowns at off-site evacuation locations. In all cases where police have responded, the decision to end a lockdown can only be made after approval of the on-scene police. In our school, a member of the Senior Leadership Team (normally the Executive Headteacher, Head of School or Assistant Head) will come and inform each member of staff that the lockdown has ended.

School recovery following a lockdown

A debriefing should occur in all situations following a lockdown. The nature and severity of the incident will dictate who should be included in the debriefing. In all cases, communication with parents is vital.

Lockdown training and practice

Staff Training

Schools can establish a method to conduct lockdown review training for all staff, during each school year. Induction for new teachers includes lockdown awareness. Due to the young age of some primary children, it is suggested that classroom teachers be responsible for training children.

Lockdown practice exercises

The purpose of an exercise is to validate procedures documented within the lockdown plan (in the same way that fire drills are practised). Although they cannot fully replicate the pressure of a real incident, exercises

can help to reinforce training, give confidence to staff that they have the necessary knowledge and skills to respond to an emergency and increase the likelihood of procedures working in practice.

They are also particularly adept at highlighting areas of the response that may initially have been overlooked when developing the plan.

It is recommended that staff and children undergo training on relevant parts of the emergency plan before participating in an exercise. Staff should be aware of their roles and responsibilities and be reasonably confident in carrying them out.

There are different types of exercise that can be used to validate a plan but the method you choose is likely to depend on the purpose of the exercise and the amount of time available.

Discussion-based exercises

Discussion-based exercises involve assembling staff together and asking them to consider how the school would respond to a particular scenario. Participants are provided the opportunity to talk about their roles and discuss what actions the school would take if an incident were to occur. Staff are required only to discuss, not implement, these actions.

Discussion-based exercises are often used to develop a greater awareness of the plan and are ideal for use during training events. They are simple to prepare and a variety of scenarios can be used to provide an indication of the different emergencies staff may experience.

Tabletop exercises

A tabletop exercise is based on simulating the response to an incident (although it does not literally have to take place around a tabletop). A tabletop exercise can be run in a single room or a series of rooms to simulate real divisions (e.g. between the main buildings and the mobile classroom).

Unlike a discussion-based exercise, each participant is expected to undertake a specific role and outline the actions they would take whilst a simulated, realistic scenario unfolds. It is not necessary for staff to physically implement the response but they are required to co-ordinate their actions with other staff.

Tabletop exercises are relatively easy to run but do require careful preparation. Due to the nature of this type of exercise there are limits to the number of people who can be involved.

Live exercises

A live exercise involves physically acting out the response to a scenario. Although this may sound complicated all schools implement fire drills, which are a type of live exercise, on a regular basis.

These exercises are particularly useful for testing logistics and communication arrangements. They can also make excellent training events from the perspective of experiential learning, helping participants develop confidence in their skills and providing insight into the reality of responding to an incident.

Live exercises are generally the best means of validating the lockdown plan as they can involve the entire school, including children. However, they do require more planning and resources than any other type of exercise.

Where possible, during a drill a member of the SLT will be given the role of an observer to monitor the exercise and note any important issues that arise. They should be briefed before the incident and asked to observe specific aspects of the response.

Briefings

Live exercises can appear very realistic so it is important to notify all possible stakeholders that an exercise is taking place.

Lockdown Exercise Review list

1. Parents were informed prior to a drill or after an actual event.
2. Scenario was reviewed with staff prior to the event.
3. Children/staff went inside, closed the doors, and closed and locked all windows.
4. Blinds, curtains and windows were closed.
6. Rooms were designated for people to go to during a drill.
7. Someone called emergency services
8. Check whether anyone left the building during the drill or actual event.
9. Roll call of children and staff.
10. Debriefing after drill or event.

Lockdown Post incident checklist

Date:	Time:	Alerted by:
Code RED	Yes / No	Code BLUE
		Yes / No
Reason:		
Present at debrief:		

Step	Check	Time	Signed
The signal was used to initiate lockdown			
All pupils were able to move to a safe space			
Entrance / exit points were secure			
Emergency services were contacted, if appropriate			
Staff have taken action to increase protection from danger.			
Staff and pupils were aware of exit points.			
If safe, checks for missing pupils or staff took place			
Building remained secured until all clear has been given			

Record of post incident debrief	
Actions	