

St. Mary's PS Rathlin.



School Lockdown Procedure

A school security lockdown is method of providing an effective procedure to protect staff and pupils reducing the risk of harm in the event of any potential threat.

A school security lockdown procedure is a response to an external or internal incident which has the potential to cause a threat to the safety of staff and pupils within a school. The purpose of the lockdown is to promptly restrict access to and egress from the school site or building through the use of physical means, preventing staff and pupils moving towards danger and preventing an intruder(s) accessing pupils and staff.

Action short of Lockdown

In many situations, action short of a full lockdown would be considered when there is **not** a direct threat to the school or the occupants, e.g. livestock or a dangerous dog in the playground. In this situation, staff and pupils should remain in the building, but all external doors should be locked. No one should be permitted to enter or leave the building; however, teaching, activities and work can continue as normal. Depending on the level and type of threat it is probable that free movement of staff and pupils within the building would be allowed. It may be necessary to escalate from this partial lockdown to a full lockdown if the risk was to change or increase. Action short of a full lockdown would be a more common occurrence in a school than a full lockdown.

Full Lockdown

This denotes an immediate threat to the site. The aim of a full lockdown is for the school site and classrooms to appear empty, to ensure the safety of all staff and pupils.

The individual measures that your school will need to consider when drawing up your lockdown procedures should include the members of staff and the specific roles and responsibilities they will adopt.

A member of the Senior Leadership Team should be allocated the role of Lockdown Controller, there should also be nominated deputies who may be required in their absence to provide command and control in a developing situation. The Lockdown Controller will be the person who will initiate, control and conclude the lockdown. They will also be the person who will communicate with emergency services. Other staff with the ability to lead and assist in the lockdown should be nominated and informed of their expected role.

Choose a room which you can use as your main control room, where all management decisions will be taken, e.g. Main Office. This room should have access to a means of communication to enable you to communicate with staff and also external agencies such as PSNI, NIFRS etc. and can also accommodate other staff who will be able to assist. An alternative to this room should be identified in the event that this original room is unavailable in an emergency.

Consideration will also need to be given to the means of communicating the lockdown to all staff. You should consider how you will communicate to staff in buildings such as mobiles which are remote from the main school building, staff working in Meals Kitchens, visiting staff and those on school playing fields. Be direct and do not use codes, it is important that the signal of a school lockdown is not confused with the signal to evacuate the building in the event of a fire.

The initiation of a lockdown should be by a recognisable signal. This sound should be clearly different from both the fire alarm and class change bell/sounder.

In your planning stages of developing your school security lockdown procedure you will need to identify all access and egress points within the school site. Identify how to quickly secure these

access/egress points. Which members of staff are located to these access and egress points who will be able to promptly secure these?

Staff and pupils must remain in the school building and all doors leading outside must be shut. No one should be allowed to enter or leave the building.

Immediate steps to be taken in the event of the initiation of an action short of a full security lockdown

- All outside activity to cease immediately, pupils and staff return to building if it is safe to do so. You may wish to consider pupils in the playground or partaking in activities on pitches, e.g. it may be safer for these pupils to evacuate off site to a neighbouring place of safety. You will need to consider surrounding buildings, businesses as potential places of safety and how to gain access to them. You will need to consider the means of communicating this message to staff in these locations e.g. the use of a mobile phone;
- All pupils and staff to remain in building with external doors and windows locked;
- Take a register of all pupils present in each classroom;
- Internal movement within the building may be permitted depending on the circumstances of the partial security lockdown. If movement within the school is permitted, registers will need to be taken in each classroom to ensure that all pupils are present;
- If the action short of a full lockdown is as the result of air pollution, chemical, biological hazards then air vents, fans, heating and air conditioning systems should be closed or turned off. Seal up all the cracks around doors and any vents into the room with tape or paper to minimise possible ingress of pollutants;
- Staff should await further instructions from the Lockdown Controller;
- In this partial lockdown teaching and normal working can continue.

Immediate action to be taken in the event of initiation of full security lockdown

- All pupils/staff to stay in their classroom or move to the nearest classroom;
- Office/Admin staff should remain in their office;
- All outside activities should cease, pupils and staff return to the building, if it is safe to do so. You may wish to consider pupils in the playground or partaking in activities on pitches, e.g. it may be safer for these pupils to evacuate off site to a neighbouring place of safety. You will need to consider surrounding buildings, businesses as potential places of safety and how to gain access to them. In the event of playing fields being remote from the main school building an alternative lockdown location should be identified for those students/pupils using the playing fields. This location can be either internal or external, however, it is important that pupils and staff will be able to hide in this designated location. You will need to consider the means of communicating this message to staff in these locations e.g. the use of a mobile phone;
- External doors should be locked. Classroom doors should be locked or barricaded;
- Clear hallways and any other areas that cannot be secured of staff and student/pupils;
- Windows should be closed and if available blinds or curtains drawn;
- Internal door windows should be covered to prevent an intruder from seeing into the room;
- Move all pupils and staff away from windows. If the nature of the threat merits it, pupils and staff should sit on the floor, gathered together. This makes the group easier to move and manage;
- Keep pupils calm and quiet;

- Lights, smartboards and computer monitors should be turned off;
- Mobile phones should be turned to silent;

Those pupils who are off site on an educational trip or sporting event should remain off site until the all clear is given. Schools should ensure that staff can be contacted using either a school mobile phone or personal mobile phone. Also ensure, if possible, that there is more than one contact number.

- A register to be taken of all pupils in each classroom. If it is possible, without any risk to safety, this information should be relayed to the Lockdown Controller who should be sited in the main office or designated area (Lockdown Control Room);
- In the event of air pollution, chemical, or other contaminants, air vents, fans, and air conditioning systems must be closed or turned off.
- A register of all staff in the school building should be kept centrally, either through an electronic sign or paper sign-in system.
Ideally phone systems should be in place that will allow the lockdown control room to contact each room. A lockdown specific channel can also be created in Teams to allow communication between classrooms and the Control Room in event of Lockdown Procedure being activated.

Stay Safe' principles - 'Run - Hide - Tell'

The National Counter Terrorism Security Office (NaCTSO) has released guidance that sets out three key steps for keeping safe in the event of a gun or knife attack. The advice is, if caught up in an incident to **RUN to safety, HIDE if you can't, and TELL the police when you're safe**. This guidance can be applied to many places and situations and if followed can save lives.

- **RUN** to a place of safety. This may be outside the school grounds/campus. If there's nowhere to go, then...
- **HIDE** It's better to hide than to confront. Turn your phone to silent and turn off vibrate. Barricade yourself in if you can. Then finally - and only when it is safe to do so...
- **TELL** the police by dialling 999. Wait to be rescued and verify who is rescuing you.

Communication with Parents/Guardians

A school may wish to make parents/guardians aware that they have a school security lockdown procedure in place and that this will be routinely practised. However, the actual details of the school security lockdown procedure should **not** be shared with parents/guardians.

If an actual school lockdown procedure is activated then it is advised that parents/guardians receive a communication notifying them of this incident, as soon as is reasonably practicable to do so and in agreement with the Emergency Services. This communication can be via the school's text messaging service. It is understandable that parents receiving these messages will be worried and concerned. It is important that the message reassures parents that the school is doing everything possible to ensure the safety of pupils and staff.

Parents must be informed that they should not attempt to contact the school at this time as this could block telephone lines which will be required for contacting emergency services.

They should not attempt to come to the school during the security lockdown as no one will be allowed to enter or leave the school during this time and the presence of parents/guardians on site could place them in danger and interfere with the work of the emergency services.

Parents should wait for further instructions from the school on when it is safe to collect their children. Information may also be required on the procedures of what will happen if the lockdown continues beyond school hours. **Suggested wording of the school text message: -**

*St. Mary's PS is currently in a security lockdown. Please be assured the safety of pupils/students and staff remains our main priority at this time. During this period phones will not be answered, all external doors are locked, and nobody is permitted to enter or leave the school site. Please do not attempt to phone the school at this time and **DO NOT** come to the school until the incident has been resolved. We will keep you informed with regular updates as best we can. All staff and pupils at the school will not be allowed to leave the school until the lockdown has been declared over.*

Practicing Lockdown Drills

It is vitally important that everyone knows their roles and responsibilities in the event of the school lockdown. It is advised that the lockdown procedure is practiced regularly, a minimum of at least once every academic year. The drill is an opportunity to test that all systems work properly and will enable you to practice different scenarios. It is important that you do not create fear amongst pupils when carrying out a lockdown drill. Following your lockdown drill there should be a full debrief to all staff with an opportunity for lessons learned.

Resources available for schools

It is important pupils do not become anxious or fearful during the practicing or activation of the lockdown procedure. Educational resources designed for both Primary and Post-Primary School pupils which outline simple steps to take in the event of threat, in or out of school, and how to keep both yourself and others safe are available at: [Citizen Aid](#) and [Ben Kinsella](#)

What to do in the event of activation of the fire alarm during a security lockdown.

In the event of the school fire alarm activating during a security lockdown, a designated member of staff should go to the fire alarm panel to establish what zone has been activated, but only if it is safe to do so. On identification of the zone this area should then be checked for evidence of a fire by another member of staff, within that zone, who will communicate back to the staff member located at the fire alarm panel. Movement within this zone should be done cautiously as the intruder could have activated the alarm. If, on checking the area, a fire is discovered this information should be communicated back to the person at the fire alarm panel and the Northern Ireland Fire and Rescue Service should be contacted using '999'. Inform the call handler that the school is in lockdown.

In the event of an actual fire, the risk of staying within the building would be too great and an evacuation should be carried out. However, a partial evacuation may be better than total evacuation, especially if a fire is located in a separate building that does not immediately pose a risk to the occupants of other buildings. This decision must be based on a dynamic risk assessment by the school Lockdown Controller. Any incident of this nature will be dynamic and procedures cannot be written for all contingencies. An evacuation or the continuation of the lockdown should be decided based on the greatest risk or threat to life.

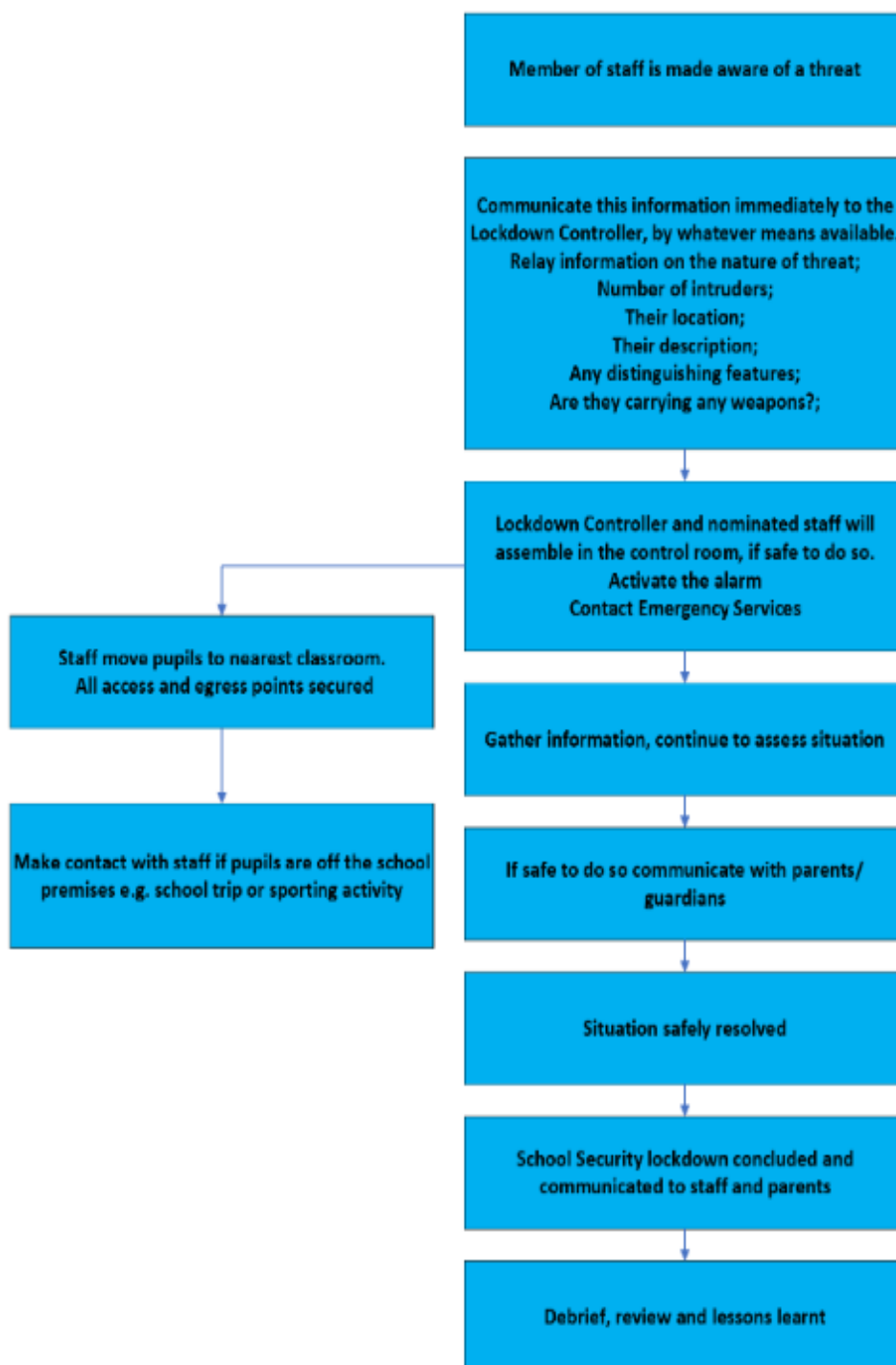
If no evidence of a fire is found, then the fire alarm panel should be re-set, and as the building is in lockdown, the occupants will not be required to evacuate as to do so may put them at greater risk.

To minimise the risk of this happening, during a lockdown staff should:

- Ensure that all cooking processes are stopped;

- Isolate any high-risk activities- this could be Science, Art, ongoing maintenance works etc.;
- Increase their vigilance, ensuring that all fire doors are closed, reducing any likelihood of the spread of fire and that all available exit routes are un-obstructed and immediately available.

School lockdown procedure



Lockdown Plan



Lockdown Plan	Examples
Activation of School lockdown procedure is by school secretary (PMc):	Alarm bell- handheld (different to the sound of the fire alarm and/or class change sounders)
Lockdown Controller and deputies are:	- Principal; - School secretary.
The lockdown control room is:	The Main Admin office.
Staff roles and responsibilities:	- CT in KS1 building to ensure main entrance door is secured; - Staff in hall building to ensure exit doors close to their classroom is secured; - Building Supervisor (PMc) to ensure gate leading into playground are secure- if safe to do so. - Lock all external doors and windows; - Secure all internal doors – lock or barricade; - Close all curtains or blinds; - Ensure pupils are in the classroom and conduct a head count; - Ensure you have a means to communicate with the lockdown controller- mobile phone accessible.
Useful telephone numbers which may be required in the event of a lockdown:	- Emergency Services 999 - Education Authority-Critical Incident Line: 028 3751 2515 - CCMS- 028 9201 3014

Resources:

For Adults and older students: Citizen Aid App for phone: [Citizen Aid App](#)

For Teachers: [Citizen Aid Teaching Resources](#) Free Lesson Plans and Slide Packs [Ben Kinsella](#)