

# Critical Incident Lockdown Policy

## Ellesmere Port Catholic High School



Approved by:	Mr J Coucill, Chair of Governors 
Lead of Review:	Mrs C Vile, Headteacher
Last reviewed on:	August 2020
Next review due by:	July 2021

The school constantly monitors and reviews security and safeguarding system in place and updates this policy and procedure as required.

The EPOCHS security policy is clear about the level of security that should be achieved during the school day. However, there is a possibility of incidents beyond the control of the school which could cause a security risk or concern for the safety of students, staff and visitors.

The school's '**lock down policy and procedures**' are in addition to the security policy and have been developed to achieve the highest security to ensure the safety of all concerned, with the minimal disruption to the learner's environment.

Typical and possible causes that may lead to a complete school lockdown are:

- **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 reported incident / civil disturbance in the local community (with the potential to pose a risk to staff and pupils in the school)**
- **A major fire in the vicinity of the school**
- **The close proximity of a dangerous dog roaming loose**

The Headteacher, Mrs Vile, will make the decision to report a full school **lockdown** after considering all the elements of risk, with the Emergency Services plan actioned as appropriate. The alarm should initially be communicated verbally to staff via Heads of Year (so as not to cause panic and disruption to students).

It is important to note that the school **lockdown procedure** has two levels, **partial lockdown** and **full lockdown** and differs to the critical incident procedure. However, there are elements that are duplicated.

### **Partial Lockdown**

- Mrs Vile will alert SLT as to the level of **Lockdown**
- SLT will alert Heads of Year to the action plan via verbal communication with instructions to give to all teachers.
- All outside activity to cease immediately. Pupils and staff outside of the school buildings are to be brought inside as quickly as possible.
- Free movement may be permitted within the building dependent upon circumstances.
- All external doors and, as necessary, windows are locked.
- All situations are different. Once all staff and pupils are safely inside, the Critical Incident Team will meet and conduct an ongoing and dynamic risk assessment based on advice from the H&S advisor at CWAC and the Emergency Services.
- This will 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.

## **Full Lockdown**

- Alert to staff '**full lockdown**' and the activation of the plan by **the school bell sounded continuously for 1 minute** throughout the school. This signifies an immediate threat to the school and may be an escalation of a **partial lockdown**.
- Admin staff will immediately lock doors leading off the admin corridor.
- Site staff will lock designated doors as agreed.
- All SLT should meet in Mrs Vile's room for immediate briefing of the situation unless it is unsafe to do so in which case, they should communicate through their walkie talkies.
- Pupils who are outside of the school buildings should be brought inside as quickly as possible and should return to their classroom. PE staff should be alerted by SLT through walkie talkies in case they do not hear the bell.
- Staff should ensure those inside the school remain in their classrooms.
- All external doors and, as necessary, windows should be locked. Internal classroom doors should also be locked where possible.
- Once in lockdown mode all communications between SLT and staff will be via email. Allow SLT only into your room.
- Registers should be taken to ensure all students are accounted for.
- SLT will conduct a check of classrooms and report immediately of any pupils not accounted for (and instigate an immediate search for any missing).
- Staff should encourage all pupils to keep calm.
- Window blinds should be pulled down (where fitted) and students moved away from windows.
- The school site will become no entry or exit, entry to site will be refused at the barrier.

***The Critical Incident Team will meet and conduct an ongoing and dynamic risk assessment based on advice from the H&S advisor at CWAC and the Emergency Services.***

**There will be only two possible changes once in full lockdown mode;**

1. **Full lock down is now over** - The school bell will ring continuously for 10 seconds. Staff and students should stay in their classrooms until a member of SLT informs them to do otherwise.
2. **Full evacuation** – The situation is so extreme that the advice is to evacuate from the building. In this instance all staff and students **MUST** follow the fire evacuation plan and await further instructions from Mrs Vile.

It is of vital importance that the school's lockdown procedures are familiar to members of the senior management team, school administrators, teaching staff and non-teaching staff and should be routinely shared with parents either by newsletter or via the school website.

Communication between parents and the school is of vital importance to ensure that only factual information is transcribed to the relevant people.

In the event of an actual lockdown, the school **C.I.T** will meet and take advice on how any incident or development is communicated to parents and in what timescale.

All parents will be concerned but regular communication of accurate information will help to alleviate undue anxiety.

### **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 emergency providers.
- do not come to the school. They could interfere with emergency provider's 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 to collect children, and where this will be from.

The communication with parents needs to reassure parents that the school 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 school is in a full lockdown situation'**. During this period the switchboard and entrances will be un-manned, external doors locked and nobody 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.