

# AVON MAITLAND DISTRICT SCHOOL BOARD

## ADMINISTRATIVE PROCEDURE

### NO. 179

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**SUBJECT: LOCKDOWN – MAJOR INCIDENT OR THREAT OF VIOLENCE and HOLD AND SECURE MEASURES**

Legal References: *Education Act: Section 265 (1) (j) Duties of Principal: Care of Pupils, Guideline – Ontario Schools Code of Conduct.*

Related References: *Administrative Procedure 160 Access to School Premises; AP 170 School Emergency Procedures; AP 175 Accidents, Incidents and Occupational Illnesses; AP 176 Bomb Threats; AP 180 Medical Emergencies and First Aid; AP 182 Tragic Events Response; AP 351 Code of Conduct; AP 352 Promoting Positive Student Behaviour; AP 357 Violence-Free Schools; AP 364 Search and Seizure Guidelines; AP 404 Violence Prevention in the Workplace; Police/School Board Protocol (Appendix B, AP 351); Ontario Chiefs of Police Report: Developing and Maintaining Lockdown Procedures for Elementary and Secondary Schools in Ontario, June 2009.*

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#### **1. School Emergency Plans**

- 1.1. Students, staff and visitors have the right to learn, work and be present in a safe and secure environment. The purpose of these procedures is to put in place procedures in the event of a major incident or threat of school violence.
- 1.2. The Avon Maitland District School Board provides this administrative procedure to provide general guidelines to respond to a major violent incident or threat of a major violent incident. The principal shall ensure that specific school response lockdown procedures be developed and incorporated into the school emergency plans.
- 1.3. In order to ensure an adequate state of emergency preparedness, it is essential that principals review all facets of the school emergency plan with all staff at the beginning of each school year.

Principals will ensure that the Emergency Response Bag (see AP 170 *School Emergency Procedures*) is complete and up to date.

#### **2. Terminology**

- 2.1. Lockdown: The term “lockdown” should only be used when there is a major incident or threat of violence within the school or in relation to the school. A lockdown signifies a heightened level of safety measures that are implemented in response to an individual or individuals in a school or on school property who pose an imminent threat to the life and safety of students and staff.
- 2.2. Hold and Secure: “Hold and secure” should be used when it is desirable to secure the school due to an ongoing situation outside and not related to the school (e.g. bank robbery near school). In this situation, the school continues to function normally, with the exterior doors being locked until such time as the situation near the school is resolved.

#### **3. Responsibilities in a Hold and Secure Situation**

- 3.1. The school will be notified by the police of an incident when it is desirable for a school to initiate hold and secure procedures.

- 3.2. The school administration or delegate will:
- Make the announcement that *Hold and Secure* procedures will be put into effect due to an incident outside of and not related to the school;
  - Ensure all classes in portables and outside venues have heard the announcement and proceed to previously allocated locations inside the main school buildings;
  - Inform appropriate staff to lock all exterior doors;
  - Inform the transportation consortium if necessary;
  - For elementary schools, initiate the emergency phone tree if students are going to be late getting home from school;
  - For secondary and elementary schools, work with the police and the manager of communications to advise parents of the school situation using the media; and
  - Work with the manager of communications to draft a message for parents and the school community following a hold and secure incident.
- 3.3. Classroom teachers will:
- Close any window blinds or curtains
  - Ensure cell phones are turned off and email is not accessible to students : these media are not to be used except to convey vital emergency information about the situation
  - Continue with regular class activities
- 3.4. Class changes will take place as usual. Previously assigned staff will supervise the exterior doors during class change time(s). No one; student or staff, may enter or leave the school without police permission.
- 3.5. The decision to end a hold and secure situation shall only be made after notification by the police it is safe to do so. The administration or delegate will make the announcement to the school of the termination of hold and secure procedures and notify the appropriate personnel of the end of the incident.

#### **4. Responsibilities in All Cases of Violent Acts on School Property**

- 4.1. Staff members on the scene shall terminate, diffuse or witness the incident as the situation dictates. They will avoid any action that will physically endanger themselves or others.
- 4.2. The staff member on the scene shall inform the office of:
- The location of the incident.
  - Important information (nature of incident, known injuries, number and description of intruders.
  - If the incident is a major violent act that poses an imminent threat to the life and safety of students and staff, the staff member will inform the office to make the LOCKDOWN announcement.
  - If the incident does not impose an imminent threat the staff member will inform the office of the violent incident and when appropriate complete a Safe Schools Incident Reporting form (see AP 352 Promoting Positive Student Behaviour).
- 4.3. The office staff who receives a call NOT requiring a lockdown announcement will:
- Call 9-1-1 if necessary; and
  - Immediately inform the principal or designate.

#### **5. Responsibilities in a Lockdown**

- 5.1. If the incident is a major violent act that poses an imminent threat to the life and safety of students and staff, the staff member will inform the office to make the LOCKDOWN announcement.

- 5.2. The administrator / office staff who receives the call will:
- Make the LOCKDOWN announcement.
  - The following announcement will be made over the school P.A. system inside and outside the school: Emergency – lockdown – lockdown – lockdown. This is not a drill. I repeat lockdown. Initiate lockdown procedures immediately. This announcement should be readily available at the location of the office P.A. microphone(s).
  - Call 9-1-1.
  - Identify yourself, the school and full address.
  - Identify if anyone is injured and the severity of the injuries.
  - Stay on the line and continue to provide information as requested by the emergency operator.
  - Explain safe approach (routes/entrance) for police and advise police where they will be met.
  - Begin to document times and events related to the incident.
  - Have Emergency Response Bag ready.
  - Turn off bells/buzzer system.
  - Identify possible locations (inside and outside the school) for the police to use as a command post.
- 5.3. The Emergency Response Team (ERT) members will report to a predetermined location unless otherwise directed by the principal or designate. A member of the ERT must be ready to provide direction if the principal or designate is involved in the crisis.
- 5.4. If possible, no one should speak to the suspect until police arrive. If the incident is a criminal matter, police are in charge upon their arrival in the school.
- 5.5. Inform the superintendent responsible for emergency measures as soon as possible.
- 5.6. Classroom teachers inside the main school building will:
- Gather everyone in the immediate vicinity into their classroom or other secure area if safe to do so.
  - Ensure that students move away from doors and windows and remain absolutely quiet.
  - Lock or secure door(s) and cover classroom door window(s) if possible.
  - Turn off lights and close blinds.
  - Beware of sight lines.
  - Take cover if available (get behind/under something solid e.g. desk).
  - Only contact the office with information regarding the situation.
  - Ensure that cell phones are not used except to communicate vital emergency information about the situation. Cell phones should be shut off.
  - Take attendance.
  - Ensure that students remain in the safe location until otherwise notified by police.
  - Power down all student computers if possible.
- 5.7. Teaching staff in a school portable will:
- Follow the same procedures as above.
  - Tip desks onto side with desk-tops facing out in a circle formation.
  - Ensure students (and staff) remain inside the desk circle below the top of the desk edge.
- 5.8. Teaching staff outside of school building(s) will:
- Ensure that students and staff do not enter the school.
  - Proceed immediately to pre-determined off-site evacuation location.
  - Take attendance.
  - Monitor that students remain at the evacuation location until further advised by administration or police.

### 5.9. Washrooms

- Predetermined staff will gather all student(s) in the immediate vicinity of their classroom into their classroom; then quickly check their assigned washroom(s) and take any students from the washroom(s) into their classroom to lockdown.
- Secondary school students should be trained to get out of the washroom and into the nearest classroom or secure area immediately upon hearing the lockdown announcement.
- Staff and/or students trapped in a washroom should attempt to secure the bathroom door, enter a stall, lock the door and climb on top of the toilet.

### 5.10. Open Areas – e.g. Cafeteria, Library, Hallways, etc.

- Considerable time and attention in your school lockdown planning needs to be given to open areas.
- If the open area has door(s) leading outside, consideration should be given to evacuation plans to the exterior of the school.
- In the event a fire alarm is activated after a school has gone into lockdown, staff and students shall NOT respond as they normally would but shall remain locked down, if it is safe to do so. Staff and students must, however, always be aware of other dangers, such as fire, and be prepared to respond accordingly to ensure their own safety.
- In the event of a prolonged situation, or a situation where the threat has been contained, the school emergency plan will include provisions for a controlled evacuation of the areas of the school not in the vicinity of the contained area. Police will make the decision whether a controlled evacuation will take place and will direct the evacuation process. This will normally be done on a room by room basis with police escort.

## 6. **Procedures to End a Lockdown**

- 6.1. The decision to end a lockdown shall only be made after the approval of the on-scene police Incident Commander.
- 6.2. A school lockdown will be ended at the school by a room to room visit from police with an identification process, so the occupants in the room know the person giving the all clear is authentic. The lockdown will be ended at the evacuation site(s) by the police/school administrator.

## 7. **Media**

- 7.1. Police are responsible to address media with respect to the criminal incident involved and police response to the incident.
- 7.2. Principal/Board personnel (manager of communications) are responsible for dealing with media on issues of staff and student safety.
- 7.3. Media personnel from the police and school board (manager of communications) are to share press releases prior to release to the media.

## 8. **Follow-Up**

- 8.1. A debriefing will occur in all situations following a lockdown.
- 8.2. The school and/or board Tragic Event Response Support Team (TERST) may be called for support and/or assistance.
- 8.3. The principal should send a note home to parents/guardians as soon as possible. The letter can be prepared with the assistance of the manager of communications.

## **9. Training, Drills and Plan Review**

- 9.1. The principal will train/review the school lockdown and hold and secure procedures with all staff each school year.
- 9.2. Students must be trained each school year in lockdown and hold and secure procedures.
- 9.3. Consideration should be given to involving police partners in staff and/or student lockdown training. Fire and EMS should be invited to training sessions.
- 9.4. Each school shall conduct a minimum of two lockdown drills each school year, one in September or October and one in February or March.
- 9.5. The principal is responsible to set the dates of drills and oversee the drills with police support/assistance. Fire and EMS should also be involved.
- 9.6. Principals must ensure the appropriate staff from organizations sharing school facilities, e.g. Child Care Facility, are included in the development and implementation of lockdown procedures and participate in training and drills.
- 9.7. Staff, students and parents should be given some warning of an impending lockdown drill.
- 9.8. A short debriefing should take place following each lockdown drill to identify areas of need.
- 9.9. The principal will ensure the school lockdown plan is reviewed annually with the ERT to identify areas of need and staff and students are trained in any revisions.
- 9.10. The school lockdown plan will include documentation of who and when the plan was reviewed and be dated and signed.

## **10. Communication**

- 10.1. Principals should communicate the school hold and secure and lockdown procedures with parents and their school community, including where they should proceed in the event of an actual lockdown incident, to ensure a good understanding of these procedures (e.g. in fall school newsletter).
- 10.2. Parents should be encouraged to ensure contact information is kept up to date so they can be easily reached in the event of an emergency.