



West Pennard C of E Primary School

Lockdown (Critical Incident) Policy

November 2023

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WEST PENNARD C OF E PRIMARY SCHOOL

Lockdown Policy

Our school vision...

***'Since God so loved us, so we must love one another'
(1 John 4 v11)***

Valuing our Christian foundation, we care for each other and our world.

We develop resilience, confidence, creativity and independence through our innovative and diverse curriculum; inspiring and motivating everyone to thrive.

Our motto, 'To Try is to Triumph' and growing Christian Values, are central to all that we do.

We link this policy with our Christian values of:

- ❖ **Truthfulness**
- ❖ **Compassion**
- ❖ **Friendship**
- ❖ **Thankfulness**
- ❖ **Respect**
- ❖ **Forgiveness**

Lockdown Procedure ('Safe Inside Drill')

Activating the Procedure

The Lockdown Procedure forms part of the school's Critical Incident Plan. The procedure is designed 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 school. The school also has fire procedures which could be activated in the event of a Critical Incident which required evacuation.

The Lockdown Procedure could be activated in response to any number of situations, which may include:

- Road accident outside of school in Church Lane when children are due to leave school.
- Chemical / gas leak
- Intruder in the school

- Damage to the outside of the building
- A serious injury in an area that we need to keep clear
- Escaped dog (thought to be unsafe) or cattle through broken, neighbouring fence
- Extreme weather

Sounding the Alarm

The priority for any member of staff discovering an incident which may require the lockdown procedure to be followed is the safety of the school community.

Where appropriate, the member of staff should contact the Headteacher or a member of the Senior Leadership Team via the main School Office/office or allocated classroom where SLT member is based, who will then decide whether the Lockdown Procedure should be activated and raise the alarm. However, in an emergency situation, it may be necessary for a member of staff to raise the alarm themselves verbally whilst arranging for the alarm to be signalled. The lockdown signal for staff and pupils is the repeated on/off sound of the fire alarm of 3 second intervals.

The lockdown signal can be activated from the main office.

Once the lockdown signal has been activated, it may be appropriate to inform the emergency services when safe to do so and dial 999 and give the following essential information:

- The school address (West Pennard CE Primary School, Church Lane, West Pennard, Glastonbury, Somerset BA6 8NT)
- What has happened (describe the situation)

Action for Staff

The following instructions are issued to staff on a regular basis, to be taken in the event of the lockdown alarm sounding: Staff should assess the seriousness of the situation and

decide whether to escape safely or move to a lockdown procedure. The following 2 routes explain what to do in each situation:

1. Escape:

- Stay calm
- Remind the children to be silent
- Make sure you can identify the exact location of the danger
- Take the least exposed and nearest exit route
- Make sure there is no risk to you and the pupils on the escape route
- Ensure absolute silence at all times

2. Lockdown:

If in a classroom

- Stay calm.
- Remind the children to be silent.
- Quickly glance outside the room to direct any pupils or staff members into your room. Children may be frightened if they get to a classroom and find the door locked, so please make sure you are right by the door and can let them in immediately.
- Lock your door or (see below)
- Use furniture to secure the room/door.
- Lower or close any blinds or curtains.
- Turn out lights and computer monitors (if possible).
- Place pupils against a wall or hidden behind large furniture, so they are out of sight of a possible intruder.
- Turn mobile phones to silent and without the vibration alert enabled.
- Ensure absolute silence at all times.
- Take care of those in distress.
- Never open doors during a lockdown.
- When you can no longer hear the alarm, in addition to an end of lockdown message by a member of SLT, the Lockdown procedure has finished.

Outside the classroom

- Stay calm.
- Remind the children to be silent.
- Identify the exact location of the danger.
- P.E. / forest school lessons being held outside should move into the classroom, lock all doors, and find a safe area.
- Any pupils in the school dining hall should move to a nearby classroom or remain in the hall (if an adult is present).
- If pupils and teachers are outside the school grounds, they should not enter the school site, they should take a known route away from the school (eg towards the Village Hall)
- If teachers and pupils are in the bathrooms, they should move to the nearest classroom and report to the responsible adult.
- If pupils are with a member of staff in the library or music room they should move out of view (under table/behind bookshelves / kitchen area / toilet cubicle). They are to stay in the building. However, if pupils are on their own in the library changing their reading book, for example, they should return to class immediately/nearest classroom.
- Anyone in the corridors should move into the closest classroom immediately.
- Office staff/kitchen staff/support staff should stay in the area they are in, secure the doors, and turn out lights.
- Ensure absolute silence at all times, apart from instructions by the adults and the necessary contacting of others over the phone system.
- Take care of those in distress
- Never open doors during a lockdown (until SLT confirms it is safe to do so).
- When you can no longer hear the alarm, in addition to an end of lockdown message by a member of SLT, the Lockdown procedure has finished.

Stay in safe areas until directed by the police or a member of the Senior Leadership Team to move or evacuate.

Communication with Parents

- All parents will be written to on an annual basis to explain the 'Lockdown Procedure' and that pupils will practise this on a regular basis throughout the school year as they do the fire drill.
- Following a Lockdown, parents will be communicated to as soon as possible via Email/text. A message may also be put on the school website.
- Any incidents or developments would be communicated to parents as soon as is practicable, to help to alleviate undue anxiety. Parents would be given enough information so that they:
 - o Are reassured that the school understands their concern for their child's welfare and that it is doing everything possible to ensure his safety
 - o Do not need to contact the school, keeping telephone lines clear for contacting emergency providers
 - o Do not come to the school, which could interfere with emergency access to the school and could put themselves and others in danger.
 - o Wait for the school to contact them about when and how to collect their children

It may be necessary to reinforce the message that the school is in a full lockdown situation, with the switchboard and entrances unmanned, external doors locked and nobody allowed in or out.

Aftermath

- Procedures will be reviewed after each 'Lockdown' and necessary improvements and changes made.
- In the event of the Lockdown Procedure being activated, the Senior Leadership Team will review its effectiveness, with input from external agencies where appropriate.

Evacuation

If an evacuation occurs, all persons/classrooms will be directed by a member/s of the senior leadership team (or a member/s of the emergency services) to move to a safe location. (For example a gas leak from canister gas containers behind the Elliot Classrooms). Also see Fire Procedures.

During the evacuation you should adhere to the simple guidelines below:

- Leave all your belongings behind
- Evacuate calmly
- Communicate the location of any injured parties

Once evacuated from the building, teachers should take a register to account for all pupils and adults present in their form/class. Senior members of staff will gather the information.

Lockdown Training and Practice

- Members of staff receive regular updates about Critical Incident planning.
- A 'Lockdown' will be held on a regular basis with the children, alongside a fire practice or evacuation, so that they become accustomed to the routine and can act quickly.
- Written instructions about the action to be taken in the event of a 'Lockdown' are shared with staff annually and via email before the drill takes place.

Appendix A:

Parent letter introduce procedure –

Dear Parents,

As part of our ongoing review of keeping children at West Pennard CE Primary School safe, we have various procedures in school that we will practise during the year – i.e. the fire drill, where children will evacuate the building/classrooms and line up safely at the meeting point in the playground.

One of the recommendations is that all schools should have in place a full lockdown procedure. This 'lockdown' is not related to COVID in any way, but is more of an emergency nature should a quick response be required and we need all children inside. This is opposite to the fire drill.

The purpose of a lockdown procedure is to practise how we will keep the children safe at a time of a 'critical incident.' Although as you are aware, such an eventuality is highly unlikely to happen at West Pennard CE Primary School, but we do prioritise your child/ren's safety.

The Lockdown Procedure could be activated in response to any number of situations, which may include:

- Road accident outside of school in Church Lane when children are due to leave school.
- Chemical/gas leak
- Intruder in the school
- Damage to the outside of the building
- A serious injury in an area that we need to keep clear
- Escaped dog/livestock (thought to be unsafe)
- Extreme weather

We plan to carry out our first lockdown procedure this term. As a school we won't be discussing in detail terrorism, intruders or anything of a nature that could potentially worry the children. We will be describing the exercise in a child friendly way, for example, livestock has escaped and entered the playground from the broken, neighbouring fence. During the exercise we will walk around the site to check they are inside, quiet and out of sight - some children may view it as similar to a giant game of hide and seek!

Please be assured that it is highly unlikely that we will ever need to implement a real lockdown, in the same way that we will probably never need to use our fire evacuation plan, but I know you all appreciate how important it is that we have procedures in place.

Of course if you have any questions then please do let me know.

Kind regards,

Appendix B:

How to talk about lockdown with pupils: guidance for staff

Staff should already be clear about what our school's process is via this policy and how they're expected to manage during a lockdown. This will also be discussed during a staff meeting.

Use the guidelines below to help you talk about lockdown to pupils in an age-appropriate way.

The guidelines were taken from an article on [explaining lockdown and calming childrens' fears](#).

Primary school pupils

For children in primary school:

- Use simple language
- Be honest about what lockdown is for, but don't go into too much detail
- Focus on the step-by-step process. Focusing on the process can prevent young children from getting too stressed about why the lockdown might happen
- Emphasise how unlikely a real lockdown would be
- Compare the drill to things they're familiar with (like fire drills)
- Stay calm. If you're calm, pupils will probably be too
- Tell them that your job is to keep them safe, and that these procedures are a way for you to do that

Try saying things like:

- "We're practising this in case a dangerous animal (an escaped lion from a zoo!) comes into school and we need to stay safe." Livestock may be more relevant to West Pennard CE Primary School.
- "There probably won't be a dangerous lion in school/dangerous event while you're at school, but it's good to know what to do just in case."
- Note there may be other reasons – see list (i.e. damage to a building, weather, a person not welcomed on site).
- "This is just like a fire drill: we practice what to do in case there's a fire at school even though a fire probably won't happen."
- "We're going to practice hiding and being quiet in case there is someone in school we need to stay away from to stay safe."
- "If we stay still and quiet, the person(or cat) will think our classroom is empty and will go away." (you may like to use practice procedure of cat and mice game - hide and seek).

- "When the alarm rings – bursts of 3 seconds on and off, be totally silent and sit under your desks/tables or against the wall. I will lock the door (if there is a lock). If we stay still and quiet, we'll be safe."
- "It's OK to feel nervous. But this is just a practice, and nothing is really going to happen."

Older pupils will probably be more aware of the kinds of bad things that can happen. Make sure you give these pupils time to express their concerns or fears, and to ask any questions.

Appendix C:

Talking about lockdown procedures with pupils: before and after a drill

Before

Talking to pupils before a lockdown drill will help you manage any anxiety they may feel.

You can do this in an assembly, or in the classroom.

Talking to pupils in the classroom may be preferable (especially for younger pupils) because:

- It allows staff to discuss lockdown in a familiar environment
- Pupils may feel more comfortable asking questions (about lockdown or the reasons for it) with staff they're more familiar with
- You can **show** pupils what they'll need to do, rather than tell them
- Staff can tailor the way they discuss the drill based on the pupils they have in their classes (for instance, pupils who speak limited English may need visual aids, or pupils with special educational needs may need additional guidance, support or specific procedures)

Schedule your lockdown drill to take place soon after you've spoken to pupils.

Whether you talk about it in an assembly or in classrooms, make sure pupils know:

- What the procedures is, step-by-step
- How the school expects them to behave
- That this is just a drill, and they aren't in any real danger (it helps to compare it to a fire drill)

After

- Praise your pupils, explain how their good behaviour kept them safe and out of harm.
- Talk to your pupils about how they felt and have time to answer any questions they may have.

- Ask if there was anything that your class could have done better when reacting to the drill.
- Remind your pupils that it was a drill and there is nothing for them to worry about
- Then go straight back to 'work as usual'

Appendix D:

Resources

['Moggy's Coming'](#) is a book that can help you explain lockdown or dangerous situations in a way young children can understand.

The story is about school mice who deal with emergency situations, and is produced by [citizenAID](#) and the [National Counter Terrorism Security Office](#).

Childline has guidance for children and young people about [what to do if they're worried about the world around them](#).

The NSPCC has guidance on [talking to children who are worried about terrorism](#).