

Administrative Procedure 141

Threats to School Safety

Limestone District School Board is committed to the safety of all of its students and staff as well as the broader school community. Staff, students, and visitors in Limestone District Schools have the right to learn, work, and attend a safe and secure environment. However, the possibility that a major incident of violence or a severe environmental concern may occur is a reality which cannot be overlooked. Therefore, everyone who works or spends any amount of time in a school on a regular basis must know how to protect themselves and how to protect our students in the event that a major incident does occur. To this end, community partnerships and protocols have been developed in collaboration with local emergency services representatives including, but not limited to, ambulance, fire and police. The goal of such efforts is to promote and foster safe learning and working environments by proactively communicating, planning, and training in an effort to prevent, where possible, violence from occurring in schools and where violence does occur, preparing for a quick, coordinated and effective response.

1.0.0 OBJECTIVE

To establish a comprehensive procedure in preparation for and response to emergency situations, which includes specific plans to keep students, staff and others safe in the event of a serious accident or potentially violent incident.

2.0.0 ADMINISTRATIVE PROCEDURE

- 2.1.0 All schools are responsible for conducting a minimum of **two** lockdown drills each school year. At shared sites and/or adjacent school sites, drills should be scheduled at the same time and conducted simultaneously. The principal, or vice-principal in consultation with the principal, is responsible to set the date of the drills, oversee the drill with police support/assistance, if possible, and to provide staff, students, Tri-Board Transportation, local police, the school supervisor, and parents with some advanced notice of the impending lockdown and/or hold and secure drill. Fire and Emergency Medical Services personnel may also be invited to participate in the drill.
- 2.2.0 Each family of schools supervisor will follow an established tracking system to record lockdown drill dates each school year, for the schools under their supervision.
- 2.3.0 The principal will provide staff with information about the four emergency procedures as outlined in 3.0 below and teachers will instruct classes accordingly giving consideration for the students' age and understanding.
- 2.4.0 As each school is unique, site-specific plans must be developed and implemented based on these procedures and any supplemental materials.
- 2.5.0 In sites where there are day cares, community workspaces, twin schools, LDSB satellite offices, and so forth, plans need to be developed in consultation with all building occupant groups as well as the Safe Schools Team. A custodian should also be included in the planning process if they are not a member of the Safe Schools Team.

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- 2.5.1 Clear communication plans need to be developed to ensure that all building occupants are informed in the event emergency procedures are activated. The communication plan must also include notification of the Director's Office, field trip supervisors, itinerant staff, and alternate program centres.
- 2.6.0 It is of paramount importance that consistent terminology is used throughout the system and therefore no in-school terms or codes shall be used other than the approved terms listed below.
- 2.7.0 Given the impact of such events, a de-briefing must occur with students, school staff, and other building occupants after a drill or an actual event has occurred. Where an actual event has occurred, the debriefing must also include appropriate emergency services and Educational Services staff.

3.0.0 DEFINITIONS AND GENERAL RESPONSES:

- 3.1.0 **Emergency Evacuation Plan:** All schools have detailed evacuation plans to remove students and staff in the event of a serious incident where everyone must leave the building. This plan must include at least two appropriate locations, one of which must be beyond a 2 KM radius from the school. A fire or gas leak in the school is an example of an event requiring evacuation. A chemical spill close to the school is another example. The Director's office must be notified immediately if a school is placed in an evacuation status due to emergency circumstances.
- 3.2.0 **Shelter in Place:** Shelter in Place is a response to an environmental or weather-related situation, where it is necessary to keep all building occupants within the school. For example, this procedure might be used in the event of a chemical spill, blackouts, or extreme weather. Signs indicating a Shelter in Place status must be posted on exterior doors. The Director's office must be notified immediately if a school is placed in a Shelter in Place status.
- 3.3.0 **Hold and Secure:** Hold and Secure (formerly "Lockout") is a response to a threat in the general vicinity of a school. This could be a police pursuit, a crime in progress or an active search by local police for a known dangerous offender. Staff, students and visitors are considered to be safe inside the school. External doors to the building must be secured as fast as possible, signs indicating a Hold and Secure status must be posted, and staff/students/visitors on property must be brought inside the building. Occupants do not leave the building. The Director's office must be notified immediately if a school is placed in a Hold and Secure status.
- 3.4.0 **Lockdown:** A lockdown threat to safety is in the school building (Interior doors are locked. Exterior doors remain locked or unlocked in accordance with normal practice prior to the situation.) A lockdown should only be used when there is a major incident or threat of school violence within the school, or in relation to the school. Building

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occupants remain in the building in secured locations. The Director's office must be notified immediately after the lockdown is instituted and 9-1-1 has been called.

3.5.0 Internal Hold & Secure: At times, it may be necessary for a Principal or designate to enact an internal hold and secure to ensure student and staff safety. Incidents like this would typically involve keeping students and staff in their classrooms until the incident or potential hazard had been resolved. Examples of this could include an ambulance attending to an injured student or staff member, or a student whose behavior is worrisome and they are in the hall. Notification of this internal hold and secure will depend on the type of incident and its location.

4.0.0 RESPONSIBILITIES

4.1.0 The Associate Superintendent of Safe and Caring Schools) is responsible for:

- Oversight of the board procedures and the review process, which must occur every three years.

4.2.0 The Principal is responsible for:

- Planning and implementing the School's Emergency Response Plan;
- Updating the school Emergency Response Plan to include procedures for lockdown, colour coded floor plans with marked evacuation locations;
- Inviting police, fire and Emergency Medical Services (EMS) to participate in the planning process and/or drills;
- Training staff and students, and ensuring the overall safety and well-being of staff and students;
- Setting the dates of the drills, overseeing the drills with police support/assistance if possible, and providing staff, students, parents, the school's appropriate supervisor, and the Director's office with advanced notice of the impending lockdown drill;
- Ensuring special needs of staff and students are taken into consideration when creating site-based plans;
- Updating the School Council annually about the lockdown procedures in place at the school;
- Ensuring that there is signage in place to identify school buildings and portables, exterior doors, and classrooms, along with an outdoor PA announcement system;
- Ensuring that during a lockdown or hold and secure situation, a quick response is initiated for communication within and outside of the building followed by an immediate call to 9-1-1, including training school office staff and other personnel to initiate the emergency procedures;
- Ensuring that signage is posted on exterior doors in the event of a "hold and secure" or "shelter in place" situation;

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- Ensuring that the wording for the PA announcement for a “Lockdown” (threat to safety is in the school) is posted at the PA system location, and instruct staff working closest to the PA system to read the announcement in the event that they are informed by any staff member of a threat to safety in the school;
- Working with child care facilities or any other board or non-board occupant on the school site to develop shared lockdown procedures and a communication plan in the event that an emergency procedure is activated which align with the provincial guideline referenced herein;
- Following police direction even if such direction does not align with Board procedure in the event that an emergency occurs at the school for which police presence is required;
- Discussing with the local police force the preferred procedure for ending a lockdown drill, and ensuring the school’s lockdown procedure in their Emergency Response Plan is aligned accordingly;
- Informing the Director’s Office when a real lockdown is in process;
- Arranging formal evacuation site arrangements with community partners;
- Sharing emergency procedures with the school’s local police and fire services;
- Maintaining and updating a minimum of two memory sticks with student contact information.

4.3.0 Staff Members are responsible for:

- Ensuring the training, safety and well-being of students;
- Posting the colour-coded floor plan in their classrooms, explaining it to the students, and providing information to students about procedures to follow should an emergency procedure be announced while they are in the washroom or outside of the school building;
- Locking their office/classroom door at the outset of a lockdown after ensuring all students are cleared from hallway areas;
- Training students how to respond when a fire drill occurs during a lockdown, including what to do in the event of an actual fire during a lockdown;
- Providing students with ways to communicate information or any prior knowledge a student may have about a potential situation which may result in a violent incident (for example “Let’s Talk, Let’s Listen or an anonymous tip-line);
- Initiating Lockdown Procedures upon being advised of a threat to safety in the school, which has been witnessed by a staff person calling to initiate a lockdown announcement by using the PA announcement system, reading the announcement that is posted for lockdowns, and calling 911 to inform the police that a lockdown has been initiated at the school with the details of the report leading to the request for the announcement;

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- Ensuring washroom areas are checked for students, if it is safe to do so. This should be the staff member closest to the washroom area;
- Following the site-based procedures at their work site;
- Following the direction of the principal (or designate) and police during an incident at the school.

4.4.0 Students are responsible for:

- Participating in drills, education and/or awareness training in order to familiarize themselves with the school's Emergency Response Plan and corresponding lockdown procedures, such that they are able to respond quickly to the direction of school staff during a crisis situation;
- Disclosing pertinent information to school staff when it involves potential harm to others;
- Not using electronic devices during a lockdown unless they have critical information for the police or emergency services.

4.5.0 Police are responsible for:

- Responding to and investigating violent incidents. During a violent incident, police will assume command and control of the school and the ensuing police investigation. Police will work closely with the principal and school staff in these situations.

4.6.0 Parents/Legal Guardians are responsible for:

- Following police and school direction during a crisis and to disclose any relevant information they may have prior to or during a crisis situation.

5.0.0 PROCEDURES & COMMUNICATION

5.1.0 Some emergency situations may prevent the safe evacuation of a school building and may require specific steps, including the initiation of a "Shelter in Place", "Hold and Secure" or Lockdown, in order to isolate and protect students and staff from danger. The "Threats to School Safety" procedure includes specific plans to keep students, teachers and other school personnel safe in the event of a threat in the vicinity of a school, a potentially violent incident, or an extreme environmental/weather event.

5.2.0 It is recognized that each potential crisis will be unique to the particular site and its inherent characteristics. The following recommended set of guidelines, which conform to current expectations of the Ministry of Education, have therefore been developed for school use to facilitate consistency across the district when responding to crisis situations. The Associate Superintendent of Safe and Caring Schools can be consulted in the creation of site specific emergency procedures/plans. Each school will implement these

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procedures in light of their school's unique structure and/or needs while also taking into consideration special needs of staff and student.

- 5.3.0 As many schools have licensed child care centres, LDSB satellite offices, or other tenants and community groups using school premises, it is important that Principals ensure the appropriate staff members from those organizations are included in the development and implementation of these procedures at each school site and clear communication plans are created.
- 5.4.0 The lockdown procedures in the school's Emergency Response Plan will contain a floor plan, which will be updated annually to include renovations which have impacted upon the school's layout. The floor plan will be colour-coded using red, green, and blue. Red indicates the areas of the school that cannot be locked down safely; green identifies areas sealed off by a working lock; and blue identifies potential command post locations. The floor plan will include the designation of at least two, potential evacuation sites (one of which must be outside a 2 KM radius from the school) as well as two potential in-school command posts. Although the floor plan is a starting point for police information, the nature of the incident will determine the real impact and corresponding actions.
- 5.5.0 There will be signage in place to identify school buildings and portables, exterior doors, and classrooms. Portables will be clearly marked on all sides with a number. Exterior doors will be marked with A, B, C, and so on at the top of the doorway in clockwise sequence. The main entrance should be designated as exterior door A. All rooms within the school building have a number which is displayed at the doorway to the room.
- 5.6.0 The wording for the PA announcement for a "Lockdown" (threat to safety is in the school) will be posted at the PA announcement system. If any staff member sees a threat to safety in the school and asks for a lockdown announcement, the staff member closest to the PA announcement system shall immediately read the PA announcement for a lockdown over the PA system. Other school staff in the area will contact the nearest principal and/or vice-principal, dial 911 to inform the police that a lockdown has just been initiated at the school with details of the report leading to the announcement, and call the Education Centre to inform senior administration. A delay in contacting school administration must not delay the PA announcement of a lockdown or the 911 phone call.
- 5.7.0 The person contacted at the Education Centre by the school will ensure that the Director of Education, appropriate school supervisor, and Tri-Board Transportation are informed of the lockdown at the school.
- 5.8.0 The Director of Education, or designate, will inform Trustees of the lockdown either by e-mail or phone as soon as possible.
- 5.9.0 In classrooms and secure areas during a lockdown, staff and students will stay away from doors and windows, turn off lights, close blinds, stay out of sight lines into the area, cover windows into the area, take cover, remain quiet, refrain from cell phone use except for

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911 call purposes, as directed by the teacher, and barricade doors where possible. The teacher will take attendance in the area.

- 5.10.0 In portables, desks are to be tipped on their sides with desk-tops facing out, and all desks are to be placed in a circle. The staff and students are to take cover within the circle, crouched down on the floor lower than the top edge of the desk during a lockdown drill or event. In the event of a “Shelter in Place” emergency, staff and students in portables will proceed to the main school building, if it is safe to do so. If it is unsafe to move from the portable classroom to the main school building, the staff and students in the portables will remain there and take shelter.
- 5.11.0 In elementary schools, a staff member working closest to the washroom area will check the washroom if it is safe to do so. Any students found in the washroom will be taken to the nearest secure area. In secondary schools, students are to be instructed to get out of the washroom and proceed immediately to a secure area. Additionally, for the safety of students with special needs in secondary schools, a staff member working closest to the washroom area will check the washroom if it is safe to do so. As a last resort, staff or students who are unable to proceed to a secure area should make all efforts to secure the bathroom door, enter a stall, lock the door, and climb on top of the toilet.
- 5.12.0 In open areas of the school such as cafeterias, libraries, hallways, and other areas, staff and students will proceed immediately to a secure zone or exit the school through an exterior door, if possible. If this is not possible, staff and students will take cover as best as possible, lay motionless, and remain quiet.
- 5.13.0 If a staff member or student is outside of the school building when a lockdown is announced, he or she shall proceed to the off-site evacuation location. If a staff member or student is outside of the school building when a “Hold and Secure” is announced, he or she will re-enter the school building prior to the locking of the exterior doors.
- 5.14.0 When a controlled evacuation is possible, the police will make this determination during a lockdown and they will direct the evacuation process. The police will proceed room by room and they will escort the evacuees to the evacuation location.
- 5.15.0 If a fire alarm is pulled during a lockdown, staff and students shall remain locked down and they will not evacuate the school building. If a fire occurs during a lockdown and staff and students are located in the area of the fire, staff and students will respond to the most immediate threat.
- 5.16.0 To conclude a real lockdown, the police will proceed room by room and they will escort the evacuees to the evacuation location. To end a lockdown drill, the principal will discuss with the local police force the preferred procedure for ending a lockdown drill, and the school’s lockdown procedure in their Emergency Response Plan will be aligned accordingly.

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- 5.17.0 Lockdown training for all staff will occur as part of their initial school orientation at the commencement of their assignment, and will be updated annually at the first staff meeting in September for all school staff. As part of the planning process for site-specific plans, all tenants should receive training on the procedures. Lockdown training for students will be conducted each semester at the secondary level and each term at the elementary level. Schools are encouraged to ask local police officers to be part of or lead such training sessions for both staff and students.
- 5.18.0 The police will respond to the media with respect to the criminal incident and the police response to the incident. The Communication Department will coordinate the Board's media response in consultation with the Director of Education, as it relates to matters of staff and student safety.
- 5.19.0 Communication with parents is essential. Parents will be informed about the school's lockdown procedures in the school's Emergency Response Plan on an annual basis through some form of communication. This communication will inform them of the location of the evacuation sites both on and off of school property, and what is expected of them should they arrive at the school during a lockdown drill, or if they are present within the school when a lockdown is called.
- 5.19.1 When the school plans for a lockdown drill, parents will be given some form of advance notice prior to the lockdown drill through such means as synvoice messaging, newsletters or other established communication practices.
- 5.19.2 If the lockdown is not a drill, a communication letter written by the school, in conjunction with the school supervisor, will be sent home with each student as soon as possible after the event.
- 5.20.0 Following a lockdown which is not a drill, debriefing opportunities will be offered for students, staff, and parents. The nature and severity of the incident will dictate who should be included to support that debriefing opportunity. It is anticipated that the Board's Crisis Response Team will support and/or lead these debriefing sessions.
- 5.21.0 Lockdown procedures will be reviewed annually as part of the normal review cycle and update of the school's Emergency Response Plan.

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Legal References

Occupational Health & Safety Act

Related Procedures & Documents

Code of Conduct (AP 350)

Safe Schools (APs 351-356)

Violence in the Workplace (AP 407)

Reporting and Investigating Violence in the Workplace (AP 408)

Emergency Response Plans (Supporting Documents)

School Lockdown Procedures (Supporting Documents)

Threats to School Safety: Template for School-Based Plans (Supporting Documents)

Threats to School Safety: Support Materials for Schools (Supporting Documents)

Safe Schools (Supporting Documents)

Ministry of Education: Guidelines for Developing and Maintaining Lockdown Procedures for Elementary and Secondary Schools in Ontario, June 2009

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