



# ALGONQUIN AND LAKESHORE CATHOLIC DISTRICT SCHOOL BOARD

## ADMINISTRATIVE PROCEDURES

### THREATS TO SCHOOL SAFETY (Policy Statement: Caring and Safe Catholic Schools)

#### Purpose

The Algonquin and Lakeshore Catholic District School Board (the “Board”) shall implement procedures that ensure organizational structures; practices and links are in place to deal effectively with a crisis or emergency.

The Board expects all schools and work sites to take immediate and appropriate action in emergency situations. While it is impossible to predict all circumstances, administration will plan and use good judgment to govern our response. Accordingly, these Threats to School Safety Procedures establish management responsibilities and effective emergency planning in the event of a major crisis to ensure the safety of our students, staff, visitors and facilities.

#### References

*Education Act*

#### Terms and Definitions

There are four terms for the umbrella of procedures captured under “Threats to School Safety”:

##### 1. EVACUATION

“Evacuation” is the term used to describe the safety response that occurs when **all students and staff are removed from the school**. This is typically a result of a serious incident where everyone must leave the building. A fire or a gas leak in the school is an example of an event requiring evacuation. The Director’s Office must be notified immediately if a school is placed in evacuation status due to an emergency.

##### 2. LOCKDOWN

“Lockdown” is the term used for the resulting school safety response when a **major incident or threat of school violence within the school**, or in relation to the school has occurred. Interior doors are locked. Exterior doors remain locked or unlocked in accordance with normal practice. A lockdown should only be called when there is a major incident or threat of school violence in the school, or in relation to the school.

Building occupants remain in the building in secured locations. The Director's Office must be notified immediately after the lockdown is instituted and 911 has been called.

### 3. HOLD AND SECURE

"Hold and Secure" is the term used for the resulting school safety response when there is **an ongoing threat to school safety or emergency outside and not related to the school**. This could include a police pursuit, a crime in progress or an active search by local police for a dangerous offender. Staff, students, and visitors are considered to be safe inside the school. Exterior doors are locked. Interior doors remain locked or unlocked in accordance with normal practice. Signs indicating a Hold and Secure status must be posted on exterior doors and staff/students/visitors on the property must be brought inside the building. Occupants do not leave the building for the duration of the Hold and Secure status. The Director's Office must be notified immediately if a school is placed in a Hold and Secure status.

### 4. SHELTER IN PLACE

"Shelter in Place" is the term used for the resulting school safety response when there is **an environmental or weather related situation where it is necessary to keep all the occupants within the school to protect them from external harm**. 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 door. Exterior doors are locked. Occupants do not leave the building for the duration of the Shelter in Place status. The Director's Office must be notified immediately if a school is placed in a Shelter and Secure status.

## Procedures

1. A minimum of two lockdown drills must occur each year. The principal is responsible to set the date of the drills, oversee the drill with police support/assistance, and provide staff, students, and parents with some warning of the impending lockdown drill. Fire and Emergency Medical Services personnel may also be invited to participate in the drill.
2. Each family of schools superintendent will follow an established tracking system to record lockdown drill dates each school year for the schools under his or her supervision.
3. The principal will provide the staff with information about these four terms for responses to threats to school safety, and teachers will instruct class accordingly with consideration of the pupils' age and understanding.
4. No in-school terms or codes shall be used other than the approved terms listed above.
5. The principal of each school will provide the Superintendent of School Effectiveness-Safe Schools with the dates of the school's lockdown drills no later than September 30<sup>th</sup> of each school year.
6. As each school setting is unique, site-specific plans must be developed and implemented based on these procedures and any supplemental materials.
7. In sites where there are day cares, community programs, satellite offices, etc., plans need to be developed in consultation with all building occupant groups as well as the Safe Schools Team.

8. Clear communications plans need to be developed to ensure that all building occupants are informed in the event threat to school safety procedures are activated. The communication plan must also include notification of the Director's Office, field trip supervisors, itinerant staff, and alternate program centres.
9. Given the impact of such events, a debriefing 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 will also include appropriate emergency services and board staff.

## 10. Roles

The roles of school members, parents, and community are detailed as follows:

### 10.1 The principal:

- is responsible for over-all planning, updating the school Emergency Response Plan to include procedures for threats to school safety (evacuation, lockdown, hold and secure and shelter in place), colour-coded floor plans with a marked evacuation location, scheduling of drills, inviting police, fire and Emergency Medical Services (EMS) to participate and be aware of planning and drills, training of students, and for the overall safety of staff and students;
- is responsible to set the dates of the drills, oversee the drills with police support/assistance if possible, and provide staff, students, parents, the school's appropriate Superintendent of School Effectiveness, with sufficient notification of an impending lockdown drill;
- will take into consideration special needs of staff and students when creating site-based plans;
- will update the Catholic School Council annually about the Threats to School Safety procedures in place at the school and publish the procedures in one school newsletter per year;
- will ensure that there is signage in place to identify school buildings and portables, exterior doors, and classrooms, along with an outdoor PA announcement system;
- will ensure exterior doors are secured in the event of a "hold and secure" scenario;
- will ensure that signage is posted on exterior doors in the event of a "hold and secure" or "shelter in place" situation;
- will ensure that the wording for the PA announcement for threats to school safety (evacuation, lockdown, hold and secure and shelter in place) 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;
- will ensure that a colour-coded floor plan is posted in each classroom and staff gathering place (e.g. workrooms, staff room);
- will work with child care facilities on the school site to develop shared Threats to School Safety procedures which align with the provincial guideline referenced herein;

- will follow police direction even if such direction does not align with Board procedure in the event of an emergency at the school requiring police presence;
- will discuss with the local police force their preferred procedure for ending a lockdown drill, and ensure the school's lockdown procedure in will be aligned accordingly;
- will inform the Office of the Director of Education when a real threat to school safety (evacuation, lockdown, hold and secure and shelter in place) is in progress, and when the threat is over.

#### 10.2 Staff members:

- have the responsibility for the training, safety and well-being of the students;
- will post the colour-coded floor plan in their classrooms and explain it to the students, and provide information to students about procedures to follow should a lockdown be announced while they are in the washroom or outside of the school building;
- will train students how to respond when a fire drill occurs during a lockdown and what to do in the event of an actual fire during a lockdown;
- will provide 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;
- will lock the office/classroom door at the outset of the lockdown after ensuring all students in the hallway are gathered in the secure area (if it is safe to do so);
- who are advised of a threat to safety in the school witnessed by a staff person calling for a lockdown announcement, will proceed to the PA announcement system, read the announcement that is posted there for lockdowns, and call 911 to inform the police that a lockdown has been announced at the school with the details of the report leading to the request for the announcement;
- who works closest to the washroom area will check the washroom if it is safe to do so;
- will follow the site-based Threats to School Safety procedures of their work site;
- will follow the direction of the principal (or designate) and police during an incident at the school.

#### 10.3 Students:

- will participate in drills, education and/or awareness training in order to familiarize themselves with the school's response to threats to school safety procedures, such that they are able to respond quickly to the direction of school staff during a crisis situation;
- will disclose pertinent information to school staff when it involves potential harm to others;
- will follow direction of school staff including not using electronic devices during a threat to

school safety (evacuation, lockdown, hold and secure and shelter in place).

10.4 Police:

- are responsible to respond to and investigate violent incidents. During a violent incident, police will assume command and control of the school's response and the following police investigation. Police will work closely with the principal and school staff in these situations.

10.5 Parents/Legal Guardians:

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

## 11. Planning for Lockdown

11.1 The lockdown procedures in the school's Emergency Response Plan will contain a floor plan. The floor plan of the school is 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 a possible evacuation site off school property and one on school property. The floor plan is a starting point for police information, and the nature of the incident will obviously have a more real impact. The floor plan must identify two potential in-school command posts, two evacuation sites within a 2 km radius of the school and two evacuation sites beyond a 2 km radius of the school property. The colour coded floor plan must be posted in classrooms and one in each hallway of the school.

11.2 There will be signage in place to identify school buildings and portables, exterior doors, and classrooms. The main school building will be identified as Building 1. 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. All rooms within the school building have a number which is displayed at the doorway to the room.

11.3 The wording for the PA announcement for threats to school safety 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 announced at the school with details of the report leading to the announcement. The principal or designate will call the Office of the Director of Education to inform senior administration and/or the Communications Officer. A delay in contacting school administration will not delay the PA announcement of a lockdown or the 911 phone call.

## 12. Activation of the Lockdown Procedure

12.1 The person contacted in the Director's Office by the school will ensure that the Director of Education, appropriate school superintendent, Superintendent of Safe Schools, Superintendent of Business and Finance, Controller of Plant and Planning Services, Manager of Tri-Board Transportation and Communications Officer are informed of the lockdown at the school.

- 12.2 The Director of Education, or designate, will inform trustees of the lockdown either by e-mail or phone as soon as possible.
- 12.3 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, and refrain from cell phone use except for 911 call purposes. The teacher will take attendance in the area.
- 12.4 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.
- 12.5 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 the secondary school, 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.
- 12.6 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.
- 12.7 If a staff member or student is outside of the school building when a lockdown is announced, he or she shall proceed to the primary 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. Field trip supervisors will be notified of the lockdown by the principal or his/her designate and will be directed to an appropriate evacuation site.
- 12.8 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, identify themselves, and they will escort the evacuees to the evacuation location.
- 12.9 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.

### **13. Concluding a Lockdown**

To conclude a real lockdown, the police will proceed room by room, identify themselves, and they will escort the evacuees to the evacuation location. To end a lockdown drill, the principal will discuss with the local police force their preferred procedure for ending a lockdown drill, and the school's lockdown

procedure in their Emergency Response Plan will be aligned accordingly. The principal will contact the Office of the Director of Education as soon as possible to confirm that the lockdown has been lifted.

#### **14. Lockdown Training**

Lockdown training for all staff will occur as part of their school orientation at the start of their employment assignment, and it will be part of the staff meeting for all school staff at the beginning of the school year. 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.

#### **15. Communication to the Public**

The police will respond to the media with respect to the criminal incident and the police response to the incident. The Board's Communications Officer will coordinate the Board's media response in consultation with the Director of Education with regards to matters of staff and student safety.

#### **16. Communication to Parents/Guardians, Staff, Students**

Communication with parents is essential and detailed accordingly:

- 16.1 Parents will be informed about the school's lockdown procedures in their Emergency Response Plan on an annual basis through a school newsletter. The school newsletter will inform them of where they should proceed in the event of an actual incident, the location of the evacuation sites 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.
- 16.2 If the lockdown is a drill, parents and students will be given notice prior to the lockdown drill.
- 16.3 If the lockdown is not a drill, a communication letter will be sent home with each student as soon as possible. An update will be provided on the school answering system. A scripted response will be prepared for callers to the school. Where available, an auto-calling message may be provided to parents/guardians.

#### **17. Debriefing following a Lockdown.**

- 17.1 Following a lockdown drill, the Safe Schools Team will meet to discuss the drill and share with staff and students the recommendations for improvement.
- 17.2 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 be involved in the support of these debriefing sessions.

#### **18. Review of Threats to School Safety Procedures**

The school's Threat to School Safety procedures will be reviewed annually as part of the normal review cycle and update of the school's Emergency Response Plan. The Board will review the Policy and Procedure under cyclical review or as required.

## **Appendices**

- Appendix 1: Message to Parents, Guardians Re: Procedures for Threats to School Safety – To be Introduced in all ALCDSB Schools
- Appendix 2: Frequently Asked Questions and Answers about Threats to School Safety
- Appendix 3: Critical Incident Response Kits

## **Forms**

## **Associated Documents**

Police/School Board Protocol – A Partnership for Safe Schools  
ALCDSB 2011 community Threat Assessment Protocol

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