

**June 2017**

## **Rationale**

Parents and carers trust our school to keep their children safe. Thanks to the efforts of staff and governors, schools in the UK normally remain a safe haven for children; but as tragic events both overseas and at home have shown, they can become involved in an emergency at any time.

The Department for Education recommends that schools create and maintain an emergency plan and as a good school we not only comply with this, but also want to go one step further and be ready to deal with the sort of emergencies that no one really wants to think about – the situation where the children and staff are endangered by the threat of deliberate harm.

In emergency planning terms this is called lockdown, a description that will be used throughout this document.

The document is designed to help us:

- Develop and review a lockdown plan,
- Provide information to all staff who could become involved in an incident,
- Help staff to educate and inform the pupils and indeed their parents about what to do in such a situation,
- Detail actions and procedures not only for use during such an incident but also for testing our readiness for such an incident.

The advice from the Department for Education and the Cabinet Office reminds us “planning for emergencies can save lives. It can prevent an incident getting worse, provide confidence to staff, governors, parents, carers and pupils and enhance your school’s reputation as a safe place to learn and work.

Plans which deal with the consequences of large-scale emergencies also help staff to deal with the smaller (but nevertheless potentially distressing) incidents that schools can experience on a regular basis”.

This is a document that every good school needs, every member of staff needs to understand, and no one ever wants to use.

Our school has taken advice from the National Police Chief Council’s National Counter Terrorism Policing team when creating this policy as well as liaising with other local schools.

## **What is lockdown?**

The purpose of a lockdown is to prevent an intruder or other threat outside the school from causing harm to pupils and staff.

It means that the entrances to the school must be secured in an effort to prevent any threat entering, and staff and pupils must find a suitable place to protect themselves.

In the case of a fire or similar emergency the children and staff are taught how to leave the building quietly and safely. In a lockdown, they need to learn almost the

opposite, to actually get inside the building as quickly and safely as possible and to stay there until the threat is removed, or – in extreme circumstances - to leave if an intruder gains entrance to the building.

A distinct policy is needed because it is so different from the standard emergency drills, and is so extreme in nature that everyone needs to be thoroughly well versed in its contents and the role they are to play during such an incident.

Any procedures we establish must be realistic; in an incident staff and pupils will not have much time to seek an appropriate place to hide and there is likely to be widespread confusion or panic.

It is very unlikely that our school will ever need to implement a real lockdown but it is important for us to have arrangements in place to deal with such a situation.

### **Why do we need a policy?**

Much of the information in this policy, has been gathered from best practice in other schools and from education departments and authorities.

While lockdown polices are commonplace and indeed in some cases statutory, in the US, there is an increasing number of UK schools, including primary schools, that are adopting such polices and our own local authority references lockdown procedures in its emergency planning guidelines.

While all of this does not mean we should over exaggerate what is still a minute risk, nevertheless we feel it is our duty to prepare our children and staff for such an event.

There are a number of stages we need to go through to create a robust lockdown procedure.

1. Understand what lockdown is and why it could happen (this is covered by this document)
2. Address the issues raised by our particular school circumstances
3. Compile the completed procedure for distribution to all staff complete with step by step instructions for display in classrooms and other school areas as appropriate
4. Hold practice drills on a suitable basis (e.g. annually)
5. Ensure the policy is regularly reviewed and included in the induction for new staff members

### **Some of the issues staff and children need to be aware of:**

#### **A) Safe places**

It is important for all staff to decide and know at this planning stage:

The characteristics of an ideal safe place are:

- a. Ability to lock pupils and staff inside
- b. No windows or windows with poor sight lines from outside (or curtains/shutters)
- c. Strong walls
- d. An ability to communicate with the outside world
- e. A possible way out if someone comes in.

## **B) A signal for a lockdown**

The signal for a lockdown is clearly distinguishable to that of an evacuation (fire drill). Our school's lockdown signal is a whistle.

At Oxenhope Church of England Primary School whistles are distributed at key points in the school and carried by supervising staff when outside.

## **C) Who gives the signal?**

Potentially any member of staff could be the first to raise an alarm for a lockdown so it is important that all employees are aware of the plan and instructions are available in every room.

### **Once the signal is initiated who does what?**

- Head teacher/Deputy head teacher- As a team, check the halls are clear of students, inform emergency services then find a safe space themselves.
- Teacher/ Pastoral staff - Detain students in the classroom/offices/stockrooms, keep pupils calm and keep them secure by locking windows and doors. Keep an attendance log of all students in the room and update when safe to do so.
- Support staff/Pastoral staff – direct pupils inside or drop and cover as appropriate. Assist teachers inside the classrooms.
- All staff – Do not allow anyone in or out until given the all clear by an appropriate authority.

## **D) Dealing with the concerns of the children**

As part of the curriculum diet the children receive, we introduce the British Values of

- democracy.
- the rule of law.
- individual liberty.
- mutual respect for and tolerance of those with different faiths and beliefs and for those without faith

This also drives our Prevent strategy. For more information, please see our policy on Prevent and Channel, on the school website - <http://www.oxenhopeprimary.org.uk/> .

We do feel it is important that pupils know what action to take if a lockdown happens at school. Becoming familiar with lockdown drills will improve the likelihood of these procedures being implemented swiftly and effectively (which could prevent injury and even save lives).

There are many different ways Oxenhope staff use to inform pupils about this subject. An assembly is used to explain an emergency drill and outline the actions pupils would be required to take; this is then to be followed up by an exercise of the drill.

Some of the issues outlined during training sessions are sensitive and may potentially upset pupils, especially the youngest. Staff are well placed to assess what level of information should be provided to pupils on the reasoning behind implementing a lockdown.

A class session will be used to focus on preparing for emergencies.

Elements of these sessions could be included in one teaching session or spread over several during a term.

This work also fits into objectives from the National Curriculum.

#### **E) Dealing with the concerns of parents/carers**

Parents/carers need to be informed when teaching is taking place on this subject so they can prepare for any possible impact this may have on their children.

Routinely informing parents/carers of the procedures will reassure them that our school is prepared and able to look after their child.

Methods of informing parents/carers about preparing for emergencies at Oxenhope C of E Primary School involve:

- Including safeguarding information within the school newsletter
- Emergency planning information on the school website - Lockdown procedures at Oxenhope Church of England Primary School
- Distributing information about safeguarding at parent/carer evenings
- Sending a letter home via pupils

#### **Reasons for a lockdown to be initiated:**

- Someone who is out of control and threatens the safety of our pupils, staff, or himself/herself;
- Someone who has a gun or weapon;
- An intruder;
- Hazardous chemicals outside the building;
- An extreme weather related event;

When an incident occurs the priority is to safeguard those on-site (i.e. pupils, staff, parents/carers, visitors) and alert the emergency services if necessary. Other organisations, such as the local authority, can then be informed as appropriate.

When responding to an incident the emergency services will need unrestricted access to and from the school site. This can sometimes prove difficult, as parents/carers are likely to visit the school immediately upon hearing of an incident. Parents may be requested to stay away from the school, as they could otherwise worsen the situation and the police services would be the best resource in ensuring this.

#### **Raising the alarm**

All staff are trained that when information is received, the school's lockdown procedures are activated. There should be no hesitation in announcing the lockdown, and the decision to call the lockdown should be made immediately by whoever receives information, and should not be delayed.

In order to reduce stress for staff and pupils the actual procedure of a lockdown is displayed at fixed points, is clearly visible and can be read by any person. In emergent stressful circumstances even the most composed individuals may have difficulty remembering exact procedures. By pre-printing procedure and practicing it, staff can ensure that procedure is delivered accurately.

## **Lockdown procedures at Oxenhope Church of England Primary School**

Once inside a secure area, staff and students should;

- Stay away from doors and windows; turn off lights; close blinds;
- Beware of sight lines if there is a window in the classroom door,
- Consider covering window;
- Take cover if available (get behind something solid);
- Remain absolutely quiet
- Teachers to take attendance (this may not be the individuals in their class but whomever they have in their lockdown space);
- No mobile phone use unless necessary to communicate regarding the incident.
- Mobile phones should be put onto silent and vibrate disconnected.

This follows recommendations from the National Counter Terrorism Security Office of RUN-HIDE-TELL.

### **Classrooms and other secure areas**

Before locking a door, staff should gather everyone in the immediate vicinity into their classroom or other secure area, if it is safe to do so.

### **Open areas – School Library/Explorers space, Main Hall, All Corridors**

Staff should gather everyone in the immediate vicinity together. If children are alone in these areas staff from other areas such as offices should gather children into their safe space immediately.

#### **School Library/Explorers space**

Staff/children should lock the link corridor door and lockdown in the toilet space and secure the door.

Should a lockdown occur during an explorers session, staff should barricade the hall door and lock the link corridor door cover windows and lockdown in the toilet space and under tables/other furniture.

#### **Main Hall**

Staff/children should lockdown in the nearest available safe classroom or in the kitchen office

#### **All Corridors**

Staff/children should find the nearest available safe office/storeroom/classroom

#### **Toilets:**

As the main door into the toilet areas cannot be locked children need to evacuate toilets if at all possible and get to an area that can safely be locked down.

Designated adults who work in close proximity to toilets need to check them before locking down themselves, if it safe to do so, and take any students found in the toilets, into their classrooms/offices to lockdown.

As a last resort, staff or children trapped in a toilet area, should attempt to somehow secure the bathroom door, enter a cubical, lock the door and climb on top of the toilet.

### **Outside Areas**

If the threat is outside and if children and staff are outside they must make their way into school if it is safe to do so and find the first safe space to lockdown immediately, this may not be their normal classroom.

If the threat is inside and the children and staff are outside, then the staff and children must remain outside drop and cover and find a place to hide. This could be off the school premises. Staff must remain calm and keep an accurate record of numbers of children in their care.

### **Terminating a lockdown**

The announcement that the lock-down has been terminated will be in the form of a room to room visit from police/school personnel so that the occupants of a locked room know in fact that whoever is giving them the all-clear, is in fact authentic.

In all cases where police have responded, the decision to end a lockdown can only be made after approval of the on-scene police.

### **School recovery following a lockdown**

A debriefing will occur in all situations following a lockdown this will take place through;

- Senior Leaders hold a debriefing with police personnel or on their own to discuss the impact of the lockdown and noting any areas which need addressing
- Staff talking to pupils and supporting anxiety
- Senior Leaders talking to pupils
- Senior Leaders talking to staff
- Senior Leaders reviewing procedure and making immediate changes to policy and facilitating further training

The nature and severity of the incident will dictate who should be included in the debriefing.

In all cases, communication with parents is vital and will take place as soon as possible.

### **Lockdown training and practice**

Oxenhope C of E establishes a method to conduct lockdown review training for all staff, during each school year.

Whenever possible Senior Leaders will attend any available training delivered by outside agencies in order to update their policy and procedures.

Induction for new teachers should include lockdown awareness.

Due to the young age of some primary pupils, classroom teachers be responsible for training students so that this can be age appropriate however they will do so under the guidance of the Senior Leadership Team.

## **Lockdown practice exercises**

The purpose of an exercise is to validate procedures documented within the lockdown plan (in the same way that fire drills are practiced). Although they cannot fully replicate the pressure of a real incident, exercises can help to reinforce training, give confidence to staff that they have the necessary knowledge and skills to respond to an emergency and increase the likelihood of procedures working in practice.

They are also particularly adept at highlighting areas of the response that may initially have been overlooked when developing the plan.

At Oxenhope C of E Primary School, staff and pupils undergo training on relevant parts of the emergency plan before participating in an exercise. Staff are aware of their roles and responsibilities and are confident in carrying them out.

Practise exercises take place in two main ways at Oxenhope C of E Primary School:

### **1. Table top exercise**

A discussion based exercise about what would happen in certain situations and what we, as children and staff, would do to keep safe

### **2. Live exercises**

A live exercise involves physically acting out the response to a scenario.

## **Safety in a live exercise**

We feel it is important to recognise that we do not to maximise fear amongst our children. Therefore, we have chosen some phrases to say to our children during exercises.

“This is a drill” and “The drill is over” will be used in practise. This will be used as a way of indicating to participants that something has occurred which **is** part of an exercise.

“This is for real” and “The lockdown is over” will be used in a real situation. This will be used as a way of indicating to participants that something has occurred which is **not** part of an exercise.

### **Lockdown Exercise Review list**

1. Parents were informed prior to a drill or after an actual event.
2. Scenario was reviewed with staff prior to the event.
3. Pupils/staff went inside, closed the doors, and closed and locked all windows.
4. Blinds, curtains and windows were closed.
5. Rooms were designated for people to go to during a drill.
6. Someone called emergency services
7. Check whether anyone left the building during drill or actual event.
8. Register of children, staff and visitors during and after the event.
9. Debriefing after drill or event by Senior Leaders.

**Policy written by Alice Jones**

**Reviewed July 2018**

# **Instructions for lockdown**

**To initiate a lockdown blow the whistle 3 times and shout 'LOCKDOWN'.**

## **If you hear the lockdown signal:**

1. Lock your door or barricade with furniture
2. Shut and lock and cover windows
3. Place children against the wall, so any intruder looking in cannot see them or go under tables. If the threat is a chemical or toxic release everyone should cover their nose and mouth (their own clothing can be used)
4. Take attendance of whomever is in the same safe space
5. Turn out lights and computer monitors.
6. Keep children as quiet as possible.
7. Turn mobile phones to silent and disable vibrate
8. If children are outside guide them to the nearest designated safe place. If that is not possible they need to disperse, drop and cover.
9. Anyone in the hallway should move to the closest classroom/office/storeroom immediately.
10. Support staff should move to the nearest designated safe place - if possible - or stay in the area they are in, secure the doors, and turn out the lights.
11. Stay in safe areas until directed by the emergency services or members of staff to move or evacuate. Never open doors during a lockdown, even in the event of a fire alarm.
12. If an evacuation occurs, everyone will be directed by the emergency services to a safe location. Once evacuated teachers should take attendance to account for all children present in class.

