

APPENDIX B: LOCKDOWN PROCEDURES FOR ELEMENTARY AND SECONDARY SCHOOLS

INTRODUCTION

Staff, students, and visitors in Ontario's schools have the right to learn, work, and be present in a safe and secure environment. However, the possibility of a major incident of violence is a reality that cannot be overlooked. Everyone who spends any amount of time in an Ontario school on a regular basis needs to know how to protect themselves and how to protect students in the event of a major incident or threat of school violence.

Given the dynamic, complex, and fluid nature of such incidents, continuous communication, assessment, and coordination by first responders and the principal, vice-principal, or designate are of paramount importance in ensuring an effective response. School board and police department staff must bring this understanding to all planning and training related to lockdown procedures.

Plans and procedures reflecting the following policy must be included in the school's Emergency and Crisis Response Plan, which must be appended to the protocol.

PURPOSE

Based on lockdown procedures that have already been established in many Ontario schools, the following policy is being provided to help elementary and secondary schools ensure their lockdown plans meet basic requirements and to ensure a degree of consistency across the province.

MANDATORY REQUIREMENTS

While much of what is provided will be termed *Effective Practices*, there are two key elements which the *Ontario Association of Chiefs of Police* (OACP) is recommending as mandatory requirements by the Ministry of Education:

1. All publicly funded school boards in Ontario must establish a lockdown policy to ensure the development and implementation of individual school plans.
2. A minimum of two lockdown drills must occur each school year. It is recommended that one lockdown drill occur before September 30.

In developing lockdown plans, each elementary and secondary school should consider the following policy.

TERMINOLOGY TO BE USED

Clear and precise terminology is paramount. Plans must distinctly delineate when to implement a "lockdown" compared to other terms. The language used to initiate a lockdown should be straightforward, unambiguous, and eliminate any potential for misunderstanding regarding expectations. Avoid the use of covert passwords.

Lockdown

Definition A safety protocol implemented in educational institutions to secure students, staff, and faculty in response to a perceived threat or emergency situation, such as a potential intruder or external danger (e.g. locking all doors, hiding in classroom, evacuating to safety if possible).

Use Should be reserved for instances of significant incidents or credible threats of school violence occurring within or directly related to the school. Overusing or misusing "lockdown" may desensitize staff and students, leading to a lack of seriousness when genuine emergencies arise.

Hold and Secure

Definition Involves securing the perimeter of a school building to prevent individuals from entering or leaving due to a threat or emergency situation in the vicinity, while normal activities continue inside the school

Use 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., a criminal incident near a school but not on school property).

School boards must use the above terminology in developing local plans to ensure consistency across the province. This policy focuses primarily on lockdowns.

ROLES AND RESPONSIBILITIES

Clearly defined roles, responsibilities, and expectations are critical in emergency situations. At a minimum, plans should include expectations with respect to staff, students, parents, and police. The lockdown policy should address issues such as accessibility and communications for students with special needs.

Principal

The principal has several crucial responsibilities to ensure the safety of its students and staff. These include:

- developing the final content of the plan;
- coordinating exercises;
- inviting police, fire and emergency medical services to participate in these initiatives;
- regular training of students and staff; and
- the general safety of staff and students.

In the event of a real incident, such as a threat or criminal offence, the police take over the management of the situation and subsequent investigation, but the full cooperation of the school management is imperative to facilitate an effective response.

Staff

School staff, particularly the principal, have the overall responsibility for the training, safety, and well-being of students. During a violent incident, principals, vice-principals, or designates have additional responsibilities in terms of working closely with police. It is important to note that it is not necessary for a lockdown to be initiated by the principal, vice-principal, or designate; any staff member can call a lockdown as needed.

Students

Students are expected to acquaint themselves with the plan and promptly follow staff instructions during a lockdown. Any student possessing information or prior knowledge of an individual or potential situation that could lead to a violent incident must promptly disclose such information. This applies both before and during an incident. It's important to note that in nearly every instance of major violence at a school, it was discovered later that one or more students had prior knowledge of the situation but chose not to report it.

Police

Police must respond to and investigate violent incidents. During a violent incident, police will assume command and control of the response and investigation but will liaise and work closely with school administration and other emergency services throughout the process. Police must be familiar with the locations and internal designs of schools within their areas of patrol. Police can also contribute to educating students in matters related to safe schools.

Parents and Guardians

Parents and guardians will be informed of the existence of this plan by the principal. Parents should review and discuss their child's responsibilities with respect to following directions and disclosing any incident-related information during a violent incident. During a crisis, parents are to follow instructions given by the police services through a dedicated phone application, when available, or through communications emanating from the police service's communication services. Parents and guardians must not attend the school during a crisis. This could impede the critical work being carried out by emergency services. The location of the family reunification site will be disclosed by police as soon as possible.

School Councils

Members of School Councils need to support the local school plan and assist the school principals in promoting awareness of the plan throughout the broader school community.

PREPARATION AND PLANNING

Crisis and Evacuation Kits

On the onset of a lockdown, police will access the fire box to obtain the master key. Additionally, as soon as possible, emergency personnel will require specific information and materials that are essential to an efficient response. These include:

- a complete list of staff and students;
- class schedules and time tables;
- attendance records for that day;
- access to video footage (CCTC);
- floor plans of the school including environmental and mechanical systems;
- master keys; and
- telephone numbers including teachers with access to cellular phones.

These materials should be made easily available either in paper or electronic format.

Floor Plans

Accurate floor plans are a key component of lockdown plans and are important from both a planning and a response standpoint.

Effective Practices

Consideration should be given to colour coding floor plans using three colours, such as red, green, and blue. Red indicates danger areas of the school that cannot be locked down safely, with green identifying areas where staff and students are to proceed to safely lock down. Blue areas identify command post locations, which will be utilized by police depending on the nature of the incident.

Normally, the main office will be a command post location, with another area within the school identified as an alternate command post location. A third off-site command post location should be identified within the individual school plan in the event that neither on-site command post location is available. Information regarding command post locations should **not** be publicly circulated.

Floor plans should be posted throughout the school, at least in every classroom and at every entry point to the school. In multi-level buildings, it is suggested that only the floor plans relevant to a specific level be posted on that level.

Hard copies of floor plans should be provided to police, along with electronic copies if available.

Identification of Buildings, Exterior Doors, and Classrooms

To assist police in responding to a major incident or threat of violence, buildings, entrances, and all rooms within buildings need to be clearly identified.

Effective Practices

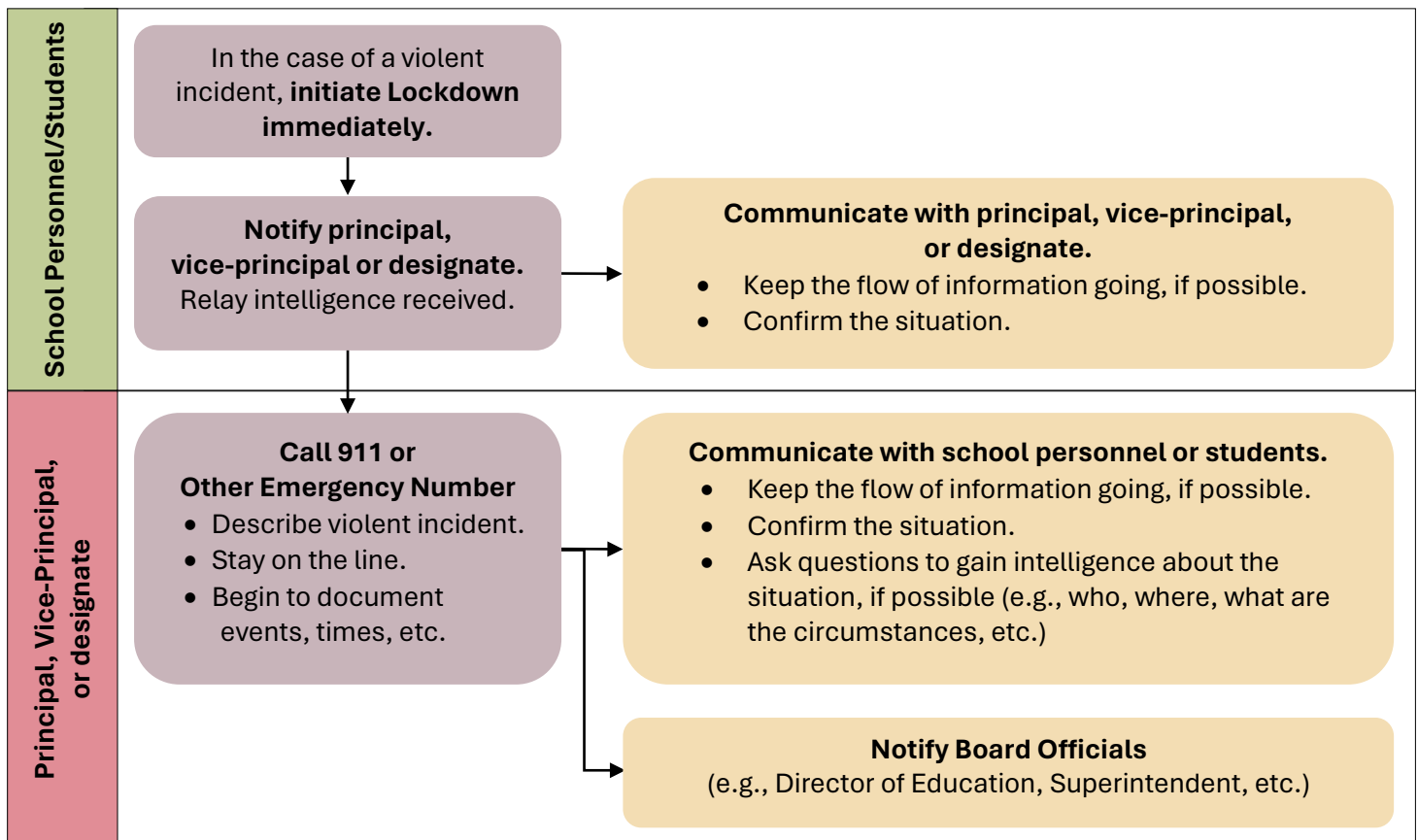
In situations where more than one building exists on school grounds, each building should be clearly identified on all sides of the building with a building identifier, such as a number. All portables shall be clearly identified as well.

All exterior doors should be clearly identified (e.g., doors A, B, C, etc.).

All rooms within the building should be clearly marked with room numbers.

INITIATING LOCKDOWN

Plans should emphasize the importance of locking down as quickly as possible. At the first indication of a major incident of school violence, the lockdown must commence immediately. Any staff member can initiate a lockdown.



Call 911 or Local Emergency Number

The person receiving notification of the violent incident calls 911 or local emergency number or requests someone to immediately call 911. If you are the only one in the office, you should attempt to initiate the Lockdown before calling 911. A call to 911 will initiate assistance from police services, as well as fire and ambulance services if required.

When you call 911:

- identify yourself, the school's name, and full address;
- describe situation (provide all known information);
- identify whether 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 if known; and
- begin to document times and events relating to the incident.

If you haven't already done so, notify the principal/vice-principal or designate of the situation and provide all known information about the incident.

Violent Incident

When a Violent Incident Occurs

Although every effort is made to ensure a safe school environment, staff, and students need to be aware of the possibility that a violent incident can occur at any time or in any location within a school.

If you observe a violent incident, **DO NOT CONFRONT THE SUSPECT.**

It is critical to notify the principal, vice-principal, or designate. As well, if it is safe to do so without danger to yourself or others, obtain the following details:

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| • location and number of suspects; | • description of weapons; |
| • suspect moving or stationary; | • possible motive or threats made; and |
| • identity of suspect; | • any known injuries and location of casualties. |
| • description of physical appearance (e.g., clothing, build, etc.); | |

When Principal, Vice-Principal, or Designate is Notified of a Violent Incident

When a violent incident is reported, staff in the office need to keep the flow of information ongoing, obtaining as much detail about the incident as possible from the initial observer. A priority at this point is to confirm a violent incident is occurring. It is important to note that it is not necessary for a lockdown to be initiated by the principal, vice-principal, or designate, as any staff member can call a lockdown as needed.

Announcing Lockdown or Hold and Secure

When alerted to a violent incident, promptly initiating a lockdown, contacting 911 (or the local emergency number), and informing the principal, vice-principal, or designate should occur simultaneously. Responding personnel must exercise individual judgment on prioritizing actions, always prioritizing the safety of students and staff at risk. Remember the following guidelines: **If possible, flee; if not, seek refuge; and if found, defend yourself.**

Decisions regarding evacuation or lockdown will depend on the judgment of staff members in different areas of the building. Factors to consider include:

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| • the location of the threat; | cross the path of the threat; |
| • the nature of the threat; | • the ability to secure and/or barricade the room that is being occupied; |
| • the mobility of the threat; | • alternate means of evacuation; |
| • a clear means of evacuation that will not | |

- the number of students involved;
- any victims requiring immediate attention; and
- the use of random or targeted violence to any one or several individuals.

These are only some considerations. The common sense, judgment, and leadership of staff members will determine the appropriate actions to be taken.

If the incident is taking place beyond the limits of the school property, a hold and secure could be the better course of action as to permit the school to function normally, with the exterior doors remaining locked until such time as the situation near the school is resolved. The primary intention here is to keep the students safe within the school.

Lockdown and Hold and Secure Procedures

The person receiving the report of a violent incident initiates the lockdown procedure as follows:

1. Activate all public address (PA) systems (inside and outside).
2. Clearly and calmly announce on the public address (PA) system whether it is a Lockdown or a Hold and Secure situation. If possible, utilize a pre-recorded message to consistently broadcast the lockdown instructions.
3. Upon hearing the announcement, staff will immediately initiate appropriate procedures.
4. During this time, occupants will disregard fire alarm system and school bells unless otherwise informed.
5. The Lockdown or Hold and Secure is in effect until cancelled by police, principal, vice-principal or designate.

Note: Depending on the individual school plan and the situation (e.g., location and actions of the suspect) consideration must be given to the controlled evacuation of students to identified secure areas. See [Individual School Plan](#) for details relating to your school.

The Major Incident Commander from police will coordinate activities on the scene.

Effective Practices

All staff, especially those stationed in the main office, should undergo training. Upon receiving information indicating the need for a lockdown, the individual receiving such information must promptly activate the school's public address (PA) system indoors and outdoors, announcing the lockdown. There should be no hesitation in initiating the lockdown, and the decision to do so should be made immediately by the staff member who receives the call to the office, without delay for the purpose of consulting with the principal, vice-principal, or designate beforehand.

School boards should consider both auditory (PA) and visual notification systems inside and outside the school to announce a lockdown. Consider using strobe lights or other visual indicators alongside the PA system in areas with high noise levels, such as cafeterias and outdoor spaces, to ensure the safety of hearing-impaired individuals and to ensure that all staff and students receive important announcements.

It is recommended that the actual wording announcing a lockdown be affixed on or near the microphone, so that it is clearly visible and can be read by the person announcing the lockdown.

Where possible, the message announcing a lockdown should be recorded and available to be launched as a repeated message.

LOCKING DOWN

If the threat is nearby and there are no safe exit routes available, you have the option to remain in a classroom or another location that can be secured and barricaded. Locate an area within the room that offers good protection and place any solid items available between yourself, the students, and the threat. Police responding to the incident will be informed of your situation and will locate you accordingly. They should have a master key to access the room. Do not open the door unless you are absolutely certain that it does not pose a risk to you or others.

Lockdown describes the steps that school staff members take to ensure the safety and security of school occupants during a violent incident. These steps are outlined below. Every attempt should be made to respond quickly and calmly.

Procedures During Lockdown

In School Buildings

During the lockdown phase, the priority is to ensure the safety and well-being of students. They should be directed away from danger and guided to the nearest secure area. Staff should remain with the students and, if possible, secure the doors to implement the lockdown. Once in the secure area, staff should assess for any injuries and determine their severity. Necessary steps should be taken to provide aid to the injured individuals while ensuring the safety of everyone involved.

In Classrooms and Portables

Students should be directed to move away from doors and windows, maintaining quietness and following staff and police instructions. Lights should be switched off, and blinds closed to minimize visibility into the room. Staff need to be mindful of sightlines, avoiding them as much as possible, and considering covering any windows in classroom doors. If available, staff and students should take cover behind solid objects.

Contact with the office should only occur for vital information regarding the violent incident. It's crucial for staff and students to remain silent, refraining from talking or calling out. While cell phones may be utilized to text essential emergency details, excessive usage should be avoided to prevent overwhelming communication lines. Handheld radios can also convey crucial information, with audible sounds muted, and volume minimized.

Staff should take attendance and complete an attendance report, disregarding fire alarm systems and school bells unless otherwise instructed. Everyone should remain in the secure location until notified by appropriate personnel on further actions to take. If a door lacks a locking mechanism, staff should explore ways to secure it using items like door wedges, chairs, or desks. Barricading doors should also be considered for added protection.

Detailed procedures for locking down a classroom or other secure areas should be outlined in plans. It's recommended that before locking a door, staff gather everyone nearby into their classroom or

secure area if safe to do so. Additionally, strategies should be developed for assisting students in coping with an extended lockdown or Hold and Secure. Access to emergency medications for prevalent medical conditions should be ensured, with the goal of making the classroom appear vacant.

Effective Practices

Plans must address unique challenges associated with portables, such as their thin wall construction. To mitigate potential risks, it is recommended to tip desks onto their sides with the desktops facing outward, serving as an additional barrier against stray rounds. Additionally, plans should outline procedures for effectively and safely locking down a school portable.

In the Main Office

In the event of an emergency, several critical steps must be taken to ensure the safety and security of all individuals involved. Firstly, it is imperative to notify the principal, vice-principal, or designate immediately. Simultaneously, contact the police via 911 or the local emergency number to alert them to the situation.

Next, all staff and students should be instructed to vacate hallways and relocate to secure rooms. Once inside these rooms, they must lock their doors to prevent unauthorized entry and ensure their safety. Additionally, the office should be locked to facilitate uninterrupted communication with staff and emergency responders.

A designated individual should be assigned to remain at the intercom as a communicator, ensuring clear communication channels for emergency updates and instructions. It's essential to maintain clear access to the intercom for emergency use, including providing portable radios if staff are outside in the playground with children. These coordinated actions are crucial for effectively managing emergencies and ensuring the safety of everyone involved.

In the Washrooms

Plans should address what staff and students should do if they are in a washroom when a lockdown is called.

Effective Practices

Washrooms, being unable to be locked, should be identified as danger (red) areas during planning for a lockdown. Students should evacuate washrooms if possible and move to an area that can be safely locked down (green).

For elementary schools, it is recommended that plans designate adults who normally work in close proximity to student washrooms to check the washroom(s) prior to locking down themselves, if it safe to do so. After gathering students in the immediate vicinity of their classroom door into their classroom, they would quickly check both male and female washrooms to which they have been assigned in the planning phase, if it is safe to do so, and take any students found in the washrooms into their classrooms to lock down. If it is not possible to leave the washroom, students and/or staff should lock stall, sit on the toilet, and lift legs.

For secondary schools, it is recommended that training include an explanation to students that they are responsible for getting out of the washrooms immediately upon hearing a lockdown announced and getting to the nearest classroom or other area that is identified as a safe (green) area.

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

Plans need to indicate that staff and students should be moved from washrooms into classrooms but not if it means moving into immediate danger. In those instances, staff and students should remain in the washroom and attempt to make the washroom appear vacant.

In Open Areas

Plans should recognize that open areas, including cafeterias, libraries, and hallways, are the most vulnerable areas of a school, making them the most likely location for a shooting and the most difficult areas to quickly and effectively secure.

Effective Practices

Considerable time and attention need to be given to open areas during the planning phase. All possible options should be considered to best address these highly vulnerable areas, including the possibility of evacuating to the exterior of the school. This may be the best option if these areas are adjacent to exterior walls and have doors leading to the outside. It is very important during staff and student training that everyone understand what to do and where to go if a lockdown is called when they are in an open area.

Childcare and Other Facility Occupants

As many schools have licensed childcare centres or other tenants and community groups using school premises, those organizations or individuals must be taken into consideration at all stages.

Effective Practices

It is important that principals, vice-principals, or designates ensure the appropriate staff from organizations sharing facilities are included in the development and implementation of lockdown procedures and that these organizations participate in aspects of planning, training, and drills.

Outside of School Buildings When a Lockdown Is Called

Not all students and staff will be inside the building when a violent incident occurs. Procedures must address where staff and students outside the school should go in the event of a lockdown. These procedures should also address how people who are outside the school building will know where the evacuation sites are located.

If you find yourself outside the building during an evacuation, adhere to the steps outlined in the evacuation plan. Staff members should exercise their judgment based on their specific location outside, always prioritizing the safety of students and themselves as their primary responsibility.

Effective Practices

To ensure that those who are outside school buildings are aware that the school is locking down, the PA system must be capable of being activated outside the school. Consideration should also be given to include an exterior visual indicator (e.g., strobe lights) that can be used to indicate that a lockdown has been called.

Those who are outside the school when a lockdown is called shall not re-enter the school but shall proceed immediately to the pre-determined off-site evacuation location(s). Once at the location, staff and students shall remain in that location until further advised by the principal, vice-principal, designate, or police. Plans should include the taking of attendance at the off-site evacuation location(s). Neighbouring schools may not be the best option as off-site evacuation locations, as they too may lock down once they become aware of an incident at a nearby school.

Note: When a Hold and Secure situation occurs and staff and students are outside the building, they should re-enter the building prior to the exterior doors being locked.

CONTROLLED EVACUATION

Every school plan must detail procedures to facilitate a safe and effective partial or full evacuation of the facility. See [Appendix D: Guidelines for Evacuations in the event of a fire, bomb threat, or violent incident](#) and consult your school evacuation procedure.

Police or school board will inform parents of the designated family reunification site. Direct families to this location where they can receive information.

Everyone involved in the evacuations should refrain from talking to others about the situation unless they are providing information to school officials or police for investigative purposes. If staff are trying to calm students, they should avoid making up stories. When receiving messages from family and friends, staff and any persons involved should refrain from discussing any details with them.

In the event of a prolonged situation or a situation where the threat has been contained, plans should include provisions for a controlled evacuation of the areas of the school not in the vicinity of the contained area. Please consult [Appendix D](#).

Effective Practices

Police will make the decision as to whether a controlled evacuation of a school under lockdown is a viable option and will direct the evacuation process. This will normally be done on a room-by-room basis, with evacuees being escorted by police to the evacuation location.

COMMAND-AND-CONTROL

The command-and-control section is vital during a violent incident.

During an emergency, it is crucial for school officials to maintain Command and Control until the arrival of the police. Once law enforcement is on-site, Command and Control will transition to the police services. Police supervisors will oversee and direct the overall response to the incident, ensuring coordination and effective management. Meanwhile, the principal, vice-principal, or designate will collaborate closely with the police, providing necessary support and information via telephone to aid in the response efforts. This

collaborative approach between school officials and law enforcement is essential for effectively managing the situation and ensuring the safety of all individuals involved.

Should the violent incident develop into a more prolonged event then a formal Command Post would be established in a suitable location by the attending police service. The location would be determined at the time of the incident by the incident commander, as there are many different scenarios that the incident may take, and police tactics would have to be considered.

FIRE ALARMS

Plans should address the issue of how to deal with a fire alarm activation after a school has gone into lockdown.

Effective Practices

If a fire alarm is pulled once a lockdown has been called, staff and students shall not respond as they normally would to a fire alarm, but shall remain locked down, if it is safe to do so. Staff and students must always be aware of other dangers such as fire and be prepared to respond accordingly to ensure their own safety.

ROLES AND RESPONSIBILITIES

Police

Once the police arrive on the scene, they assume ultimate command of the incident, and it is imperative for all staff, students, and other occupants to provide full cooperation and adhere to police directives. Police will take control of access to the school premises and any designated off-site locations, ensuring the safety and security of everyone involved.

Police will assign an officer to the family reunification site to communicate information to staff, students, and families. Families arriving on-site will be directed to the pre-designated family reunification site, where they can receive updates and necessary information regarding the situation. This coordinated approach by law enforcement aims to facilitate effective communication and support, ensuring the well-being of all individuals impacted by the incident.

Principal, vice-principal, or designate

- The principal, vice-principal, or designate remains primarily responsible for the safety of students and staff.
- The principal, vice-principal, or designate will meet police on arrival and describe the situation (if possible).
- The principal, vice-principal, or designate and staff cooperate with police to make appropriate decisions.

Staff, Student, and Other Occupants

Staff, students, and other occupants need to be aware that any site(s) may contain crime scene evidence. As such, they should:

- avoid unnecessarily tampering with or disturbing evidence;

- to the extent possible, leave all objects exactly as they are to protect the crime scene for law enforcement investigations;
- discourage others from disturbing potential evidence; and
- keep the area isolated.

PROCEDURES TO END A LOCKDOWN

Plans should include how a lockdown will be terminated, which should be site specific.

Effective Practices

Procedures to conclude a lockdown will vary based on location. Options may include a general announcement via the PA system by the principal, vice-principal, or designate, or a room-to-room visit from police or the principal, vice-principal, or designate. To ensure authenticity, an identification process should be implemented during room-to-room checks. Local plans should also address procedures for ending lockdowns at off-site evacuation locations. In all instances involving police response, plans must stipulate that the decision to terminate a lockdown requires approval from the on-scene police incident commander.

SCHOOL RECOVERY FOLLOWING A LOCKDOWN

Plans should include provisions to address the aftermath of a school lockdown.

Effective Practices

A debriefing shall occur in all situations following a lockdown. The nature and severity of the incident will dictate who should be included in the debriefing. After all lockdowns, the school board's Trauma Response Plan should be initiated. In all cases, communication with parents is vital.

Actions taken following violent incidents can have a major impact on the well-being of staff, students, and the broader community.

Follow-up procedures may include:

- involving the school board's Crisis Response Team to provide counseling for staff and students;
- providing appropriate information to parents, guardians, staff, students, and the broader school community regarding the incident;
- conducting a debriefing session – uniformed officers will lead an operational debrief, while the school board conducts a session with its staff; furthermore, police and school boards may collaborate on a joint review of the incident at the management level to explore potential recommendations;
- coordinating police and school board news releases;
- evaluating the adequacy of the Violent Incident – Emergency and Crisis Response Plan and making modifications as necessary;
- identifying lessons learned and developing further preventative measures;
- maintaining close contact with any injured victims and families;

- maintaining close co-operation with police services to facilitate completion of investigations; and/or
- completing all necessary legal, insurance, and administrative forms and documents as required.

In serious situations where injuries or loss of life occurs, the school board's Trauma Response Plan must be initiated with help from local agencies (e.g., counselling centre, Indigenous support teams etc.) as required.

If students are directed to the family reunification site, the school day will be officially concluded.

TRAINING

This plan will be of little value in a violent situation if it is not exercised on a regular basis. The principal will be required to review this plan with staff (including supply teachers, parent volunteers, etc.) at least once during each school year. The local police service responsible for community policing at each school should be invited to participate in annual training sessions.

Each school will be responsible for training their students to educate them on how to react when police arrive at the scene.

Plans should address initial and ongoing training of staff, students, and visitors to the school.

Effective Practices

Orientation programs for new teachers must include mandatory lockdown training sessions. Schools should establish a systematic approach to conduct annual lockdown review training for all staff members. Additionally, secondary schools should consider organizing assemblies to educate students on lockdown procedures. Given the young age of elementary students, it is recommended that classroom teachers take responsibility for training students at this level.

Moreover, any training provided to students with special needs should align with the expectations outlined in their Individual Education Plans (IEPs). Whenever feasible, it is beneficial to have police partners present during training sessions to assist with the instruction of both staff and students.

To ensure broader community awareness, information for parents can be disseminated through newsletters, school or board websites, or evening sessions dedicated to discussing lockdown plans. Furthermore, fire and emergency medical services personnel should be invited to participate in training sessions to enhance coordination and response efforts.

DRILLS

Fire drills have long been accepted as an important and effective tool in preparing staff and students for procedures to be followed in the event a fire breaks out in a school. Equally important is the practicing of lockdown drills in preparation for a major incident of school violence.

Mandatory Requirements (Ministry of Education)

Each school shall conduct a minimum of two lockdown drills during each school year.

Effective Practices

School personnel shall invite police partners to all drills. The principal is responsible for setting the date of drills and overseeing the drill with police support and/or assistance. Consider including fire and EMS personnel during drills, so they become familiar with lockdown plans. Staff, students, and parents should be given some warning of an impending drill. Procedures should include a plan to alert neighbouring schools of lockdown drills, especially if fire and EMS personnel have been invited to participate. A short debriefing should be included after all drills to identify areas for improvement. Many boards have established a tracking system to record drill dates, thereby ensuring accountability and compliance.

MEDIA

Plans shall include provisions for dealing with media.

Effective Practices

The Media Liaison Officer from police will direct and coordinate the handling of the media. Police will make media releases or post information on their communication application during the crisis. Releases made upon the conclusion of the crisis will be made after consultation with school authorities. Likewise, school authorities should refrain from making any comment to the media without first consulting police during or subsequent to an incident.

Police are responsible for addressing media with respect to the criminal incident involved and police response to an incident. Board personnel are responsible for dealing with media on issues of staff and student safety. It is strongly advised that media personnel from police and school boards share news releases prior to their release to the media, so that both police and school officials are aware of what the other is saying. A spirit of cooperation is highly recommended in terms of police and school officials working closely on media issues.

COMMUNICATION WITH PARENTS, GUARDIANS, AND THE COMMUNITY

Communication with parents, guardians, and the community in general is important to ensure a good understanding of lockdown procedures without instilling fear.

Effective Practices

Consider sending a newsletter to each home at the beginning of the school year to inform parents of lockdown procedures and to encourage parents to reinforce with their children the importance of understanding the procedures and following staff direction.

Parents need to be informed of where they should proceed in the event of an actual incident involving a lockdown and how police and the school board will communicate this to parents. Communication with parents around the importance of lockdowns is vital. Parents should be informed of what is expected should they arrive at school during a drill or if they are present within the school when a lockdown is called.

In all instances of a lockdown that was not a drill, it is recommended that a notification to parents be sent home with each student at the conclusion of the school day or as soon as possible.

Parents should be encouraged to ensure that their contact information is kept up to date so they can easily be reached by staff in the event of an emergency.

PLAN REVIEW

Each school's plan, along with the board-wide plan, must undergo a comprehensive annual review.

Individual School Plans

While it is important to maintain consistency across the school board in terms of emergency response, it is vital that each school addresses their unique open areas (e.g., cafeteria, gymnasium, library, etc.) and off-site evacuation areas.

The following items must be considered on a site-specific basis:

- Evacuation Plan (include a primary & secondary evacuation point);
- Lockdown Plan;
- location of emergency items (see [Crisis and Evacuation Kits](#));
- specific duties assigned (e.g., kit updates, personnel at evacuation site, etc.); and
- submission of the most recent individual school plan to the respective school board.

The principal of each school shall review their individual school plan annually and make appropriate updates.

Effective Practices

A page should be included within the plan that allows for documentation of when the plan was reviewed and who reviewed it, along with a signature area. Where boards develop a web-based application to record when drills have been completed, a separate page could be created to allow for the recording on the website of the date the plan was reviewed annually.

EMERGENCY CONTACTS

Schools will maintain an updated emergency contact list, reviewed biannually, and incorporate it into the Violent Incident Emergency Response Quick Reference. This document will be provided to the local police service.

Emergency (Police, Fire, Ambulance)	
Evacuation Sites (Primary & Secondary)	
Board Official (including cell phone numbers)	
Bus Companies	
Hospital(s)	
Other numbers	