



Threat to School Safety: Hold and Secure

#400.32

Adopted:	July 2012
Last Reviewed/Revised:	September 23, 2025
Responsibility:	Superintendent of Education
Next Scheduled Review:	September 2029

PURPOSE:

The Brant Haldimand Norfolk Catholic District School Board ("the Board") recognizes the importance of emergency planning and its responsibility to provide immediate care and assistance to students and staff during emergency situations, to mitigate the impact of the emergency, control the situation and resume normal operations as soon as possible. The purpose of this administrative procedure is to establish consistency across the Brant Haldimand Norfolk Catholic District School Board regarding school response when a Hold and Secure is initiated.

APPLICATION AND SCOPE:

The Board is committed to enacting a measured response to emergencies with the foremost commitment to preserving the life and the safety of all staff, students and volunteers, as well as protecting property, and restoring operations as quickly as possible. This administrative procedure applies to all Board staff and sets out their obligation to support the implementation of Hold and Secure procedures.

REFERENCES:

- [Education Act](#)
- Board Policy Emergency Preparedness and Response OPS 400.04
- Board Emergency Response Manual
- School Emergency Response Manual
- Ontario Ministry of Education: "Guidelines for developing and Maintaining Lockdown Procedures for Elementary and Secondary Schools in Ontario" – June 25, 2009

FORMS:

- N/A

APPENDICES:

- N/A

DEFINITIONS:

Hold and Secure: is a safety procedure used when there is an external threat near the school, but no direct threat inside the building. It is a preventative measure to ensure student and staff safety while allowing the school day to continue with minimal disruption. Hold and Secure is typically activated in coordination with local police services when:

- There is criminal or police activity in the surrounding neighborhood.
- A dangerous person or situation is identified near, but not on school property.
- A community emergency such as a nearby bank robbery, or search for a suspect is underway.



ADMINISTRATIVE PROCEDURES

1.0 Responsibilities

All school staff shall follow this administrative procedure adhering to the specific directions for principals, teachers and support staff.

- 1.1 **Police** - are responsible for supporting the schools in terms of the safety of students and staff. In most circumstances it is Police Services who notify the Board and/or school when schools must go into a Hold and Secure.
- 1.2 **Principal/Supervisor** - is a direct resource for police and responsible for the overall safety of staff and students and for ensuring that all staff and students are aware of the procedures involved in a Hold and Secure response. The principal/supervisor will ensure one Hold and Secure drill is conducted each year.
- 1.3 **Staff** - are responsible for the safety and well-being of students and will understand and efficiently implement all parts of the Hold and Secure procedures.
- 1.4 **Students** - have a responsibility to be familiar with the Hold and Secure procedures and to respond quickly to the staff during a crisis.
- 1.5 **Parents/Guardians** - are responsible for reinforcing their children's responsibility to follow directions during a crisis situation at school.

2.0 Mandatory Requirements

- 2.1 All publicly funded school boards in Ontario must establish Procedures to ensure the development and implementation of comprehensive individual school Hold and Secure measures and emergency response plans.
- 2.2 A minimum of one Hold and Secure drill should be performed each school year.

3.0 Initiating a Hold and Secure

- 3.1 The Hold and Secure response is designed to secure the building from outside entry while continuing indoor school operations as normally as possible.
- 3.2 Typically, a Hold and Secure is initiated by local Police Services. Police Services determine and notify the school when it can come out of Hold and Secure.
- 3.3 Hold and Secure is used to secure the school due to an ongoing situation outside and not related to the school that requires all people to remain in the building.
- 3.4 The school continues to function normally, with the exterior doors locked until the situation is resolved.
- 3.5 All movement in and out of the school is restricted. No one is allowed to leave or enter the building during a Hold and Secure.
- 3.6 The principal/supervisor will immediately notify the Superintendent and Communication Services.
- 3.7 The principal will gather and use the Emergency Measures Supply Kit.

4.0 Communication During a Hold and Secure

- 4.1 The use of proper terminology regarding school emergency procedures is very important. All schools have been outfitted with an Emergency Broadcast System that is used to inform the school when a Hold and Secure is initiated.
- 4.2 All school emergency plans will clearly explain when and why the term Hold and Secure will be used.
- 4.3 The announcement to initiate the procedure will be made in plain, clear language. Secret codes or passwords to announce a Hold and Secure will not be used. The following is the terminology preprogrammed into Emergency Broadcast Systems used in every school in the district:



"Attention all occupants, this facility is in a hold & secure situation, all staff begin hold & secure protocols now"

- 4.4 The principal/supervisor will inform all occupants, tenants and visitors (permit holders, daycare centres, etc.) that a Hold and Secure response has been initiated.
- 4.5 The main office will ensure that both a telephone line and a cell phone connection are kept open for incoming communication from Police, Board personnel etc.
- 4.6 The all-clear message to end the Hold and Secure is performed through the PA by school administration.

5.0 Securing Persons

- 5.1 Students/staff will remain in their classrooms and designated areas.
- 5.2 The exterior doors are locked until the situation is resolved.
- 5.3 Designated staff will monitor exterior doors for potential entry of staff/students and to prohibit anyone from leaving.
- 5.4 All movement in and out of the school is restricted. No one (including staff and students) is allowed to leave or enter the building during the Hold and Secure.
- 5.5 Students and staff outside the school building and in portables may be directed to proceed indoors promptly.
- 5.6 In some cases, staff and students are directed to move as far as possible from doors and windows.
- 5.7 Students and staff who are some distance from school buildings may need to assemble at the school's emergency evacuation location, pending further instruction.
- 5.8 Hold and Secure signs are posted on exterior doors.
- 5.9 Windows and window coverings will be closed.
- 5.10 Lights may be left on unless otherwise advised.
- 5.11 Attendance will be taken in each room (including all classrooms, cafeterias, gyms, hallways, libraries, offices, etc.) noting those who are absent or unaccounted for. This information will be reported if requested.
- 5.12 Depending on the specific situation, most inside school activities can continue inside the school during a Hold and Secure response. In some cases, no movement outside of classrooms or designated areas will be allowed.
- 5.13 Adults should remain calm and reassure students that the situation is under control. Students should be aware that the Hold and Secure response may be in effect for an extensive period of time.
- 5.14 No calls for information should be made to the office. Updates will be provided.
- 5.15 The principal will contact the Brant Haldimand Norfolk Catholic District School Board's Student Transportation Services at 519-751-7532 to advise of the Hold and Secure response.
- 5.16 Prepare a message for the school answering system indicating that a Hold and Secure response is in effect at the school.

6.0 Hold and Secure Response School Bus Considerations

- 6.1 A Hold and Secure may happen during or near transit times. In such cases, the principal will notify the Brant Haldimand Norfolk's Catholic District School Board's Transportation Services that a Hold and Secure response has been initiated at your school. The Transportation Department will provide direction.
- 6.2 **School Bus Arrivals**
If buses are arriving at the school with students:
 - Redirect to an alternate drop-off site.
 - Use bus lists to record the names of students who have been relocated.
 - If necessary, notify parents/caregivers to collect students at the alternate site.



6.3 School Bus Departures

If students can be safely dismissed from the school:

- Have staff escort students to buses using the most secure exit.
- Use bus lists to record the names of students who are placed on buses.
- Have staff remain on site until all students have departed by bus or have been collected by parents.

If students cannot be safely dismissed from the school:

- Retain students pending instructions from Police and Emergency Services, Superintendent, Manager of Communications and Student Transportation Services.

6.4 School Buses in Transit

If a school bus approaches a designated drop-off site where:

- a. Emergency Services are restricting access, **or**
- b. Transportation Dispatch has advised of an emergency situation; the driver will follow established Brant Haldimand Norfolk Catholic District School Board's Student Transportation protocols.

7.0 Ending a Hold and Secure

- 7.1 When the principal receives information from Police or Emergency Services that the Hold and Secure response may be lifted (i.e. the danger has passed), the principal will:

- 7.1.1 Make a P.A. announcement stating: "*The Hold and Secure response has been lifted*".
- 7.1.2 Unlock doors/windows and resume normal routines.
- 7.1.3 Communicate specific instructions as required (e.g. revised bus schedules, dismissal procedures, etc.).

- 7.2 If the principal has invoked the Hold and Secure response independent of Police or Emergency Services, it is the responsibility of the principal to consult with the local Police to ensure that the danger has passed.

8.0 Follow-Up

- 8.1 In consultation with Communication Services:

- Update the school answering system message.
- Prepare a scripted response to be given to callers.
- Amend auto-attend message if needed.
- Prepare a letter for the school community to communicate the details of the incident and response.

- 8.2 Debrief the incident and response with staff.

- 8.3 Debrief the incident and response with students as needed.

9.0 Communication with Parents/Guardians/Community

9.1 General

- 9.1.1 School Principals will communicate general information regarding school emergency measures.
- 9.1.2 Schools will provide regular emergency procedure reminders for parents including the emergency off-site location for staff and students should the need arise to relocate students in an emergency.
- 9.1.3 Parents are encouraged to ensure their contact information at the school is up to date so they can easily be reached by staff in the event of an emergency.



9.2 During a Hold and Secure

- 9.2.1 Depending upon the circumstances, it is not always possible to provide instant public notification of a Hold and Secure or other emergency situations at a school. While all efforts will be made to provide timely information regarding any ongoing emergency to parents/guardians (including using social media), the primary concern of the school board in such instances is to ensure the safety and security of students, staff and property.
- 9.2.2 Parents and guardians must not contact their children in the school via cell phone.
- 9.2.3 Communication Services will facilitate all communication during lockdowns, Hold and Secure, and shelter in place situations, in consultation with Police Services.
- 9.2.4 Communication Services will provide assistance with all messaging and information.
- 9.2.5 Regular updates will be provided if a Hold and Secure school situation is prolonged.
- 9.2.6 The Board and/or school will send home communication regarding the incident at the earliest possible opportunity.
- 9.2.7 In extreme cases, Police Services may determine that a parent, guardian or caregiver staging area needs to be established where parents, guardians or caregivers can go to learn the most up-to-date information about the situation at the school.