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**Threat to School Safety: Lockdown  
AP 400.34**

<b>Procedure for:</b>	All school staff	<b>Adopted:</b>	July 4, 2012
<b>Submitted by:</b>	Trish Kings, Superintendent of Education	<b>Revised:</b>	N/A
<b>Category:</b>	Operations		

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**Purpose**

The purpose of this administrative procedure is to establish consistency across the Brant Haldimand Norfolk Catholic District School Board regarding school response to emergency situations specifically, Lockdown.

**Responsibilities**

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

**Principal**

The school Principal is responsible for overall lockdown planning, scheduling of drills, inviting police, fire and Emergency Medical Services (EMS) to participate in and be aware of planning and drills, training of students and for the overall safety of staff and students. In an actual incident (not a drill), the police are responsible for management of the threat and subsequent criminal investigation. The Principal will be a resource to the police.

**Staff**

School staff members are responsible for the safety and well-being of students and will understand and efficiently implement all parts of the lockdown plan assigned to them.

**Students**

Students have a responsibility to be familiar with the lockdown plan and to respond quickly to the direction of staff during a crisis situation. Any student with information or prior knowledge of an individual or a potential situation which may result in a violent incident must come forward with that information as soon as possible (including during a lockdown).

**Police**

Police are responsible for responding to and investigating violent incidents at schools. 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.

**Parents/Guardians**

Parents and guardians will be informed of the existence of the school's lockdown plan and will be encouraged to reinforce with their children the responsibility of students to follow directions during a crisis and to disclose any information they may have prior to or during a crisis situation.

**Information**

A. Mandatory Government Requirements

The following mandatory requirements must be adhered to:

1. All publicly funded school boards in Ontario must establish a lockdown policy to ensure the development and implementation of individual school lockdown plans.
2. A minimum of two lockdown drills must occur in every school each school year.



**B. Communication Used to Initiate Lockdowns**

The use of proper terminology regarding school lockdowns is very important; therefore, all school lockdown plans will clearly explain when and why the term "LOCKDOWN" versus other terminology is used.

The lockdown order will be made in plain, clear language:

- "Attention please, this school is now in lockdown.
- Stay in your classroom or go to the nearest safe area NOW."
- Follow all lockdown procedures.
- Repeat: This school is now in lockdown. Stay in your classroom or go to the nearest safe area NOW.

Secret codes or passwords to announce a lockdown will NOT be used.

The term "Lockdown" will only be used when there is a major incident or threat of school violence within the school – or in relation to the school. The overuse or misuse of lockdowns will desensitize staff and students to the seriousness of a lockdown.

**C. School Floor Plans**

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

Black and white floor plans will be posted throughout each school – specifically, in every classroom and at every entry point to the school. In multi-level schools, only the floor plan appropriate to that specific level will be posted.

Colour-coded floor plans will be used internally by school staff and provided to the Brantford Police Service, the Brant County O.P.P. and the Haldimand Norfolk O.P.P. electronically on an annual basis by the Brant Haldimand Norfolk Catholic District School Board.

**D. Identification of Buildings, Exterior Doors and Classrooms**

*To assist police in responding to a major incident or threat of violence, all school buildings, entrances and all rooms within buildings will be clearly identified. All portable structures will also be clearly identified.*

*Exterior doors will be clearly labeled (e.g. "A, B, C..."), all rooms within the school and portable structures will be numbered (e.g. Rm. 1, Rm. 224....Portable 1).*

**E. Initiating a Lockdown**

If a lockdown becomes necessary, it is vital for it to be initiated as quickly and efficiently as possible.

At the first indication of a major incident of school violence – regardless of where it occurs in the school – notification will go immediately to the main office and, in consultation with school administration, the lockdown will commence accordingly.

All school staff members are authorized to initiate a "911" call if the circumstances warrant it. This call should be followed immediately by a call to the office.

The actual wording of the lockdown announcement will be permanently affixed on or within easy reading distance of the PA system so that it is clearly visible and can be read out verbatim by the person announcing the lockdown to the school.

All main office staff will be trained to be able to accomplish this task.



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## **PROCEDURES FOR ACTUAL LOCKDOWN**

A lockdown response is initiated when imminent danger is present on the school site and the safety of students and staff is threatened.

For example – an active attacker is in the building or on school property/grounds.

### **1. Initiating Lockdown**

When the school receives reliable information that danger is present at the school site, the Principal will determine whether a lockdown response is necessary. If so, the following should occur as quickly as possible:

1.1 Initiate Lockdown response. Make the announcement stating:

- “Attention please, this school is now in lockdown.
- Stay in your classroom or go to the nearest safe area **NOW**.” Follow all lockdown procedures.
- Repeat: This school is now in lockdown. Stay in your classroom or go to the nearest safe area **NOW**.

1.2 Call 911 to communicate:

- The nature of the incident that has made a lockdown response necessary;
- School cell phone number for police use, if requested.

1.3 Inform all occupants, tenants and visitors (permit holders, daycare centres, etc.) that a lockdown response has been initiated.

1.4 Ensure that designated exterior doors remain unlocked to allow access for emergency personnel.

1.5 Once Emergency Services arrive, police personnel will create a Parent Staging Area where communication will be provided to the school community.

### **2. Securing Persons**

2.1 Students and staff outside school buildings and portables should move away from the buildings as quickly as possible, assemble at the school’s emergency evacuation location (to be determined by school) and remain there until further instructions are received.

2.2 Students/staff in classrooms, offices, portables, cafeteria, library, gym, etc., should close doors and lock if possible.

2.2.1 Portable classrooms pose some unique issues. Due to thin wall construction (which could be penetrated by firearms) it is recommended that desks be tipped onto their sides in a large circle with the desk-tops facing out. Students and staff should then gather within the circle keeping their bodies below the top edge of the desks. This will provide an additional barrier for all.

2.2.2 Recognizing that options will vary from school to school due to differing physical layouts, it is the responsibility of each individual school to assess all the vulnerabilities and develop a range of potential responses to violent incidents in open areas – including the possibility of evacuating to the exterior of the school. The school’s lockdown plan will identify a preferred safety option for each open area and student/staff training will ensure everyone understands the preferred option (where to go and what to do) while also ensuring everyone is aware of other options if a lockdown is ordered while they are in an open area and the preferred option is not available.



- 2.3 Students/staff in transition should the nearest room, close the door and lock if possible.

*Once a lockdown has been initiated, the school becomes an emergency site under the authority of the Police Service.*

- 2.3.1 It is possible that students or staff may be in a washroom when a lockdown is ordered. Since washrooms cannot be locked, they will be designated in the school's lockdown plan as a 'red' (danger area that must, if possible, be evacuated during a lockdown). Students/staff inside a washroom when a lockdown is initiated will proceed to the nearest safe area.
- 2.3.2 Lockdown plans for elementary schools will identify an adult who normally works in close proximity to student washrooms. After gathering students in the immediate vicinity into their classroom, the assigned adult will (if it is safe to do so) quickly check both the male and female washrooms to which they have been assigned in the planning phase and take any students found there into their classrooms or safe area to lock down.
- 2.3.3 Lockdown plans for secondary schools will include a student training component that explains the responsibility of students to get out of the washrooms immediately upon hearing a lockdown announced and to get to the nearest classroom or other designated safe area. As a last resort, staff or students trapped in a washroom should attempt to secure the bathroom door, enter a stall, lock the door, climb on top of the toilet and remain silent/still.

3. Teacher/Student Instructions

- 3.1 Windows and window coverings should be closed.
- 3.2 Interior glass panes should be covered wherever possible.
- 3.3 Lights must be turned off.
- 3.4 Students/staff must move as far as possible from doors and windows. It may be necessary to use school furnishings to secure a room or to provide shelter.
- 3.5 All cell phones, electronic devices, televisions, radios and computers must be turned off.
- 3.6 Students/staff must remain silent.
- 3.7 Students/staff should lie on the floor if gunshots are heard.
- 3.8 Remain calm and reassuring. Students should be aware that the lockdown response may be in effect for an extensive period of time.
- 3.9 Students/staff are to remain in secured rooms until further instructions are received. Under no circumstances should anyone leave a secured area to access washrooms, lockers, etc.



- 3.10 Given the unique, and possibly rapidly changing dynamic of a lockdown situation, consideration must always be given to evacuating the site or to relocating to another area in the building should a space become unsafe. Individual discretion must be used to determine the best course of action.
- 3.11 Under no circumstances should anyone be allowed access once a space has been secured.
- 3.12 No calls should be made to the office. Be aware that active attackers may use the P.A. system to access potential victims.
- 3.13 In the event that an individual has information that may aid the police response, e.g., the location of an active attacker, a direct call to 911 should be made using a cell phone. This must be done as quietly as possible.
- 3.14 If possible and safe to do so, attendance should be taken when the lockdown has been lifted.

#### 4. Procedures for Child Care Centres and Other Facilities

A number of schools have licensed child care centres or other tenants and community groups using school premises.

- 4.1 In developing a lockdown plan for the building, Principals will ensure the appropriate staff sharing the school building is consulted in the development and implementation of lockdown procedures.
- 4.2 The Principal will ensure that these organizations participate in annual training and drills.

#### 5. Responding to a Fire Alarm During a Lockdown

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 instead remain locked down, if it is safe to do so.

#### 6. Controlled Evacuation During a Lockdown

In the event of a prolonged lockdown situation – or a situation where the threat has been contained (e.g. a barricaded individual contained by police in one section of the building) – it may become possible for a controlled evacuation of the areas of the school not in the vicinity of the contained area.

- 6.1 Police will decide whether the controlled evacuation of a school under lockdown is a viable option and will direct the evacuation process. School staff – including administrators – will follow police instructions quickly and explicitly.
  - 6.1.1 A controlled evacuation will normally be done on a room-by-room basis, with evacuees being escorted by police to the evacuation location.

#### 7. Ending a Lockdown

The actual procedure for ending a lockdown will vary by location and circumstance.

- 7.1 Only police personnel determine when the incident is controlled and the danger has passed. No individuals or groups can be released from a secured area until authorized by a police officer. The Principal and police personnel will determine any necessary instructions as required, e.g., revised bus schedules, dismissal procedures, etc.
- 7.2 Only authorized personnel should speak to the media.



7.3 BRANT HALDIMAND NORFOLK CATHOLIC DISTRICT SCHOOL BOARD students should not be interviewed or photographed without parental permission.

**8. Follow-Up to a Lockdown**

8.1 In consultation with the Manager of Communications and the appropriate Police Services representative, the following will needs to occur:

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

8.1.1 In a lockdown situation, the following Board staff are authorized to speak to the media: the Director of Education and/or the School Superintendent and/or the Manager of Communications. No other staff or students are authorized to speak to the media during or after a school lockdown.

8.2 Schedule a meeting with staff to debrief the incident and response.

8.3 Schedule a meeting with students to debrief the incident and response as needed.

8.4 Complete and sign the School Lockdown Report and submit to the Family of Schools Superintendent.

**9. Communication with Parents/Guardians/Community About a Lockdown**

9.1 School Principals should communicate general information regarding school emergency measures – fire drills, lockdown drills.

9.2 Parents and guardians are strongly discouraged from attempting to contact their children in the school via cell phone.

9.3 For all cases where a lockdown which is not a drill has been ordered, the school will send home a communication regarding the incident at the earliest possible opportunity.

9.4 Any parents, guardians, visitors or outside contractors inside a school when a lockdown is initiated must remain in a secure area with staff and students until the “all clear” is given.

9.5 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.

**10. Lockdown Training**

All students and staff must be trained in how to respond to a lockdown.

10.1 Orientation for new school staff will include mandatory lockdown training.

10.2 Individual schools will establish a method to conduct an annual lockdown plan review for all staff.

10.3 Students will also be trained using methods deemed by the Principal appropriate for each individual school.



- 10.3.1 Secondary schools may consider assemblies to train students while elementary classroom teachers may be responsible for the training.
- 10.3.2 Where possible, it may be advantageous to have police partners present during training and to assist with the training of staff and students.
- 10.4 Lockdown information for parents will be communicated each year using a variety of methods including the school handbook, school newsletters, school open houses and the school website.
  - 10.4.1 Parents will be encouraged to review the lockdown procedures with their children.

## 11. Lockdown Drills

Fire drills have long been accepted as an important tool in preparing staff and students to respond to a fire. Lock drills are equally important in responding to violent incidents and are a mandatory requirement by the Ministry of Education. All schools will work cooperatively with police partners on lockdown drills.

- 11.1 The Principal is responsible to set the date of drills and oversee the drills – with police support/assistance. Although not mandatory, it is suggested that schools invite their local fire services and EMS personnel to participate in drills to promote familiarity with lockdown plans. Drills are to take place twice a year, in Term 1 and Term 2.
- 11.2 Staff, adjacent schools, the School Superintendent and the Manager of Communications will be given advance warning of an impending lockdown drill.
- 11.3 Each lockdown drill will be followed by a debriefing session to identify areas needing improvement.
- 11.4 The Principal must track lockdown drills and record required follow-up on the School Lockdown Report form (Appendix A). The completed form is to be sent to the school's Superintendent of Education when both drills have been completed, but no later than the end of each school year.

## 12. REVIEWING SCHOOL LOCKDOWN PLANS AND BOARD'S LOCKDOWN POLICY

Each school lockdown plan – as well as the Board's lockdown policy – will be thoroughly reviewed and updated as required annually.

- 12.1 Each school plan will include a page documenting when and who reviewed the plan, along with an area for the Principal's and School Superintendent's signature.

## Definitions

### Lockdown

Is initiated when imminent danger is present on the school site and the safety of students and staff is threatened.

## References

Section 265 (l) (j) of the Education Act (Care of Pupils and Property)

Section 6 of Ontario Regulation 298 (Emergency Procedures)

Section 11 (E) of Ontario Regulation 298 (Duties of Principals)

Board Policy 400.04 – Emergency Response 10/12/04

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



## SCHOOL LOCKDOWN REPORT

School Name: \_\_\_\_\_

YEAR	DRILL DATE	DEBRIEFING RECOMMENDATION	REQUIRED FOLLOW-UP
	(Drill #1 - Term 1)		
	(Drill #2 - Term 2)		

Principal Signature \_\_\_\_\_ Date \_\_\_\_\_

Superintendent Signature \_\_\_\_\_ Date \_\_\_\_\_

Please submit completed form to your Superintendent of Education  
no later than June 30 annually.