

ADMINISTRATIVE PROCEDURE 314**Violent Incident Emergency Response Plan
(Code Red - Lockdown)****1. Purpose**

This administrative procedure provides direction for emergency situations when a school cannot be safely evacuated. The procedure includes specific plans to keep students, staff members and others safe in the event of a violent incident or act of terrorism.

The level of preparedness to deal with such an incident by school staff members, students and police will have a major impact on the final outcome.

2. Definitions

Lockdown: A lockdown is a response to an emergency situation such as the presence of an armed intruder or act of terrorism which prevents school occupants from exiting the building safely. A lockdown isolates students, the staff and others from danger by requiring everyone to remain inside the building in secure locations. All staff members within the school are responsible for ensuring that no one leaves the safe area.

3. Common Plan, with Site Modifications

- 3.1 While recognizing that each school and potential crisis will vary, this administrative procedure provides a recommended plan of action for use in all schools of the Renfrew County District School Board. It is vital that all schools and police agencies follow this administrative procedure as printed, and do not change the plan, except to customize it for local situations.
- 3.2 These procedures must be modified, for example, in light of the unique layout of a school building or special needs in a particular site. Schools shall prepare floor plans outlining safe areas that can be locked and unsafe zones in the school, and will familiarize students, the staff and the police with these areas. It is essential to involve the school custodian in the development of the school plan because of the custodian's detailed knowledge of the building.
- 3.3 The police will be involved in developing the school lockdown plan and will be advised of any modifications to the plan once the plans are on file.
- 3.4 Site specific needs include mechanisms to communicate messages to those who may not adequately hear verbal communications and those who may not be readily mobile without assistance.
- 3.5 If a school has a child care centre, other tenants, or community groups using school premises, it is important that principals ensure that staff members from those organizations are familiar with the details of the lockdown procedures.

4. **Communicating the Plan**

- 4.1 Each school must develop a simple and concise school plan outlining the procedures to be followed. All permanent and occasional staff members and regular volunteers must be made aware of the school plan and be provided with a brief checklist version of the plan. Visitors must wear visitor name tags at all times and understand that they will be expected to respond quickly to the direction of the principal or designate in an emergency situation.
- 4.2 Students must be familiar with the plan and aware of their responsibility to respond quickly and quietly to the direction of the staff during a crisis. Students must be informed that in the event of a lockdown all students must report to the nearest safe area as identified in the school's plan. If they are outside at the time of the lockdown, they must not enter the building.
- 4.3 Parents and guardians need to be aware of the lockdown plan and must reinforce with their children the responsibilities of students to follow directions during an emergency. Parents and guardians should encourage their children to disclose any information they may have that could pose a threat to school safety (see section 6).
- 4.4 Members of school councils need to support the school plan and assist school administrators in promoting awareness of lockdown procedures throughout the broader school community.
- 4.5 Parents and community members must understand that they are not to call the school during a lockdown procedure and that they will not be permitted access to the building or to students until it is determined that it is safe for them to enter.
- 4.6 Emergency plans are of little value in a crisis situation if the plan is not exercised on a regular basis. School administrators are required to review this administrative procedure and the school lockdown plan with the staff at least twice during each school year.

5. **Lockdown Drills**

- 5.1 Implementation of the lockdown plan is the school's responsibility. Although police will assist with training and drills, the police are unlikely to be in the school at the outset of an incident. The entire staff must be prepared to implement the school plan quickly and effectively. The extent of the impact of the incident will be dependent on the ability of the school to respond as quickly as possible.
- 5.2 Elementary schools are required to have a minimum of two Code Red - Lockdown drills each school year. Secondary schools shall have a minimum of two drills, one in each semester. Schools should conduct one drill with the fire alarm ringing at the time of the drill to reinforce the need to ignore a fire alarm or school bells once a lockdown is initiated. Local fire departments need to be advised in advance.

- 5.3 The principal will plan the lockdown drills, ensuring that there are no surprise drills and no secret codes. The focus is on open sharing of every detail of the school plan so that students can be expected to follow staff directions promptly.
- 5.4 Police should be in attendance to monitor proceedings and participate in a debriefing following the drill, but the school is entirely responsible for implementing the lockdown.
- 5.5 Each school is required to keep a record of the date of the lockdown drills. This record shall be appended to the fire drill log required at each school site.

6. Prevention

- 6.1 Teachers must be proactive in identifying students who may be at risk of involvement in a violent incident so that action can be taken before a crisis develops. Any indication of a threat affecting the school must be investigated. The Behavioural Sciences Section of the OPP can assist local police with threat assessments for a person of concern.
- 6.2 Staff members must encourage students to confide in a trusted adult. Students can use the “Crime Stoppers” program if they want to make an anonymous report. Any student with information or knowledge prior to or during a crisis situation must come forward with the information immediately. In almost every incident of major violence at a school it was later learned that a student or students had prior knowledge or a suspicion of what was going to take place but failed to tell anyone. The “code of silence” must be broken.

7. Confirmation of a Violent Incident

- 7.1 Anyone observing a violent incident or threat to school safety must notify the school office immediately. If it is safe to do so, the observer should obtain the following details for the report to the office:
 - (a) location and number of armed intruders;
 - (b) if the intruder is moving or stationary;
 - (c) the identity or description of the intruder (build, clothing, etc.);
 - (d) description of weapons;
 - (e) possible motive or threats made; and
 - (f) any known injuries and location of casualties.
- 7.2 The observer shall not confront an armed intruder.
- 7.3 When a violent incident or threat is reported, the staff member in the school office needs to obtain as much detail about the incident or threat as possible from the initial observer. The priority is to confirm that a violent incident is occurring, lock down the school as quickly as possible, and then to be able to direct police quickly to the correct location.

- 7.4 After confirming that a violent incident is in progress, the office staff will immediately implement the Violent Incident Emergency Response Plan and focus on remaining calm.
- 7.5 Note: If gunshots are heard, the staff and students should know to go immediately into lockdown without the Code Red being announced over the public address system. A staff member (or student if the staff member is not present or incapacitated) would then notify the office to initiate the Emergency Response Plan, if possible to do so.

8. **Announcing CODE RED**

- 8.1 The staff member receiving the report shall activate Code Red, call 911, and notify the principal or designate as quickly as possible, by assigning tasks to different office staff members, if possible.
- 8.2 If there is only one person available in the office, Code Red shall be initiated before calling 911.
- 8.3 The person receiving the report of a violent incident initiates the Code Red procedure as follows:
- (a) activates all public address (PA) systems inside and outside the building; and
 - (b) announces clearly and calmly on the public address system:

“Emergency - CODE RED, CODE RED, CODE RED - Initiate Lockdown”

- 8.4 Upon hearing the Code Red announcement, the staff will immediately initiate lockdown procedures. The staff must take into consideration those within a site that may require alternate forms of communication as described in subsection 3.4.
- 8.5 The principal or designate will contact the director of education or designate who will inform the Plant and Transportation Departments.
- 8.6 All occupants of the building will disregard the fire alarm system and school bells unless otherwise directed.
- 8.7 Code Red is in effect until cancelled by the principal, the principal’s designate or the police.

9. **The 911 Call**

- 9.1 A call to 911 will initiate assistance from police services, as well as fire and ambulance services if required.

- 9.2 The person calling 911 will provide the following information:
- (a) the caller's name, the school name and full address;
 - (b) a description of the situation;
 - (c) whether anyone is injured and the severity of the injuries; and
 - (d) a safe route to the building and a safe entrance for police, where police will be met by the principal, if it is safe to do so.
- 9.3 The caller from the school will stay on the line and continue to provide information as requested by the emergency operator. It is essential to keep that line of communication open.
- 9.4 The person making the call will begin to document times and events relating to the incident. This information will greatly assist police services during and following the violent incident.

10. Lockdown Procedures in Classrooms and Portables

- 10.1 Staff members will direct students out of hallways to the closest secure classroom, or other area which has been predetermined to be a safe location, and remain with the students in this locked location. If the door does not lock, other systems may be used such as a bar to prevent entry. If there is no system to prevent entry, the location would not be designated as a safe area. Staff members will assess whether anyone is injured and the severity of the injuries and take appropriate measures to assist the injured without jeopardizing their own safety or that of others.
- 10.2 Curtains or blinds will be pulled and the lights turned off. Students are to move away from doors and windows. In consideration of sight lines into the room, students are usually safest when sitting along the length of the inside wall of the classroom. Students must remain quiet and follow staff or police instructions. The classroom should look and sound empty. Staff members must prepare students for staying in a lockdown situation for an extensive period of time. If gunshots are heard, everyone should lie on the floor.
- 10.3 In portables, because walls are often thin, desks should be placed on their side in a circle with desk tops facing out and students on the inside of the circle.
- 10.4 Individuals are to contact the office ONLY with vital information regarding the incident; for example: "I see the intruder in the southwest hallway".
- 10.5 Cell phones are NOT to be used by the staff or students unless communicating vital emergency information. A ringing cell phone may alert an intruder to a particular location. Also, excessive cell phone use in other violent incidents has shut down access to vital communication lines.
- 10.6 Teachers will take attendance in class and complete an attendance report, noting students who are in the room.

- 10.7 Students will not be allowed to use washrooms or lockers. No one will be released, except by direction of the principal, the principal's designate or police when an "all clear" or "release CODE" message is given.
- 10.8 As washrooms do not have doors that lock, students should be directed to move to the closest designated safe location as soon as it is safe to. Teachers in safe locations near washrooms would need to be mindful of this. In elementary schools, the closest classroom teacher should be assigned to check the washroom when it is safe to do so.

11. Lockdown Procedures in Open Areas

- 11.1 In cases where the lunchroom is a safe area, the procedures can be similar as in a class. If the lunchroom is not a safe area, school plans should have contingency plans for getting students and staff to a safe area. In some cases this might be the kitchen area of the cafeteria.
- 11.2 When safe to do so, the head custodian will report to the main command post to assist the police with questions about the layout of the school (see section 13).
- 11.3 Depending on the individual school plan and the locations and actions of the intruder, consideration must be given to the controlled evacuation of students from the cafeteria, library, gymnasium and other open areas of the school to secure areas, especially if there are doors leading directly to the exterior. Open areas are the most vulnerable during a violent incident. The school must have a contingency plan for a lockdown during a lunch period when many students are in open areas of the school.

12. Lockdown Procedures Outside the Building

- 12.1 Staff members will direct students in outdoor areas to immediately take cover. Students must be aware of a pre-planned designated location a safe distance from the school.
- 12.2 Students SHALL NOT ENTER the school. Staff members who are with the students, whether conducting an outdoor class or supervising at recess or the lunch break, shall endeavour to have students remain in the identified area and take attendance.
- 12.3 It is also important to have a pre-determined location for parents and the media away from the school building.
- 12.4 When it is safe to do so, students may be released to parents, and the staff will attempt to monitor student departures. A police officer will be assigned to the designated outside area(s) to communicate information to staff members, students, families and the media.

13. The Role of the Police

- 13.1 The police are responsible for responding and investigating violent incidents. During a violent incident, the police will assume command and control of the response and investigation but will liaise and work closely with school administrators throughout the process.
- 13.2 Police services are trained and experienced in responding to lockdown procedures. Police will be met by the principal or designate at the entrance recommended during the 911 call and have immediate access to the school plan, including a floor plan of the school. All outside entrances should be clearly marked on the exterior of the building and on the floor plans. Door “A,” “B,” “C,” etc. is the recommended entrance identification system. It is also recommended that all stairwells be identified as Stairwell 1, Stairwell 2, etc.
- 13.3 Police will implement the immediate rapid deployment method to stop the threat. This means that police officers will enter the building immediately, unless there is a hostage situation. In a hostage situation, the police will set up containment and wait for specialized resources.
- 13.4 A command post is the focal point for command and control of the emergency situation. This is where the police will direct the response to the incident and where the principal and head custodian will work closely with the police to provide required support.
- 13.5 The principal will identify a minimum of three locations, two within the school and one location off-site. The locations will be chosen for safety, security, access to communications links (public address system, phone, fax) and washrooms.
- 13.6 The following supplies are recommended for the main command post location: school floor plans; contact lists for system administrators; a quick checklist reference; student and staff lists with phone numbers; bus lists; markers, pens and paper; a megaphone; first aid kit; caution tape; telephone directory; student and staff timetables; and medical information for students.
- 13.7 Staff members, students and other occupants of the building need to be aware that any site may contain crime scene evidence. They should avoid tampering with or disturbing evidence. All objects, to the greatest extent possible, should be left exactly as they are found, to assist with law enforcement investigations.
- 13.8 The police will set up a media relations centre in the designated area outside the incident site. The police will handle media relations regarding the incident and police response. The director of education or designate will handle media relations regarding issues dealing with the students and school.

14. Follow-Up to the Violent Incident

- 14.1 Actions taken following violent incidents can have a major impact on the well-being of the staff, students and the broader school community.
- 14.2 Follow-up procedures may include the following:
- (a) involving a district Crisis Response Team to provide counselling for the staff and students;
 - (b) providing appropriate information to parents, the staff, students and the school community regarding the incident;
 - (c) debriefing by police of school administrators present at the time of the incident;
 - (d) coordinating police and school district news releases;
 - (e) evaluating the adequacy of the Violent Incident Emergency Response Plan and making modifications as necessary;
 - (f) identifying lessons learned and developing further preventative measures;
 - (g) maintaining close contact with any injured victims and families;
 - (h) maintaining close cooperation with police services to facilitate completion of investigations; and
 - (i) completing all necessary legal, insurance and administrative forms and documents as required.

Legal References:

Education Act s. 264: Duties of Teacher

Education Act s. 265: Duties of Principal

Ontario Regulation 289 - Operation of Schools: s. 23 Requirements for Pupils

Renfrew County District School Board References:

AP 311 - Violence Prevention and Reporting of Incidents

AP 313 - Emergency Evacuation Procedures for Persons with Physical Disabilities

AP 312 - Emergency Response

Form F314-1 Violent Incident Emergency Response Plan