



Lockdowns, Hold & Secure and Shelter-in-Place

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Memo To: All Staff
From: Director of Education

ACCESSIBILITY:

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PURPOSE:

Flowing from the Region of Waterloo School Board – Police Protocol (APC013), the purpose of this administrative procedures memorandum is to establish consistency across the Waterloo Catholic District School Board (WCDSB) regarding school lockdown, hold & secure and shelter-in-place procedures. To ensure the effectiveness of this response framework, school administrators will have a thorough knowledge and understanding of the Region of Waterloo School Board – Police Protocol.

REFERENCES:

- Section 265 (1) (j) of the Education Act (Care of Pupils and Property)
- Section 6 of Ontario Regulation 298 (Emergency Procedures)
- Ontario Ministry of Education: Guidelines for Developing and Maintaining Lockdown Procedures for Elementary and Secondary Schools in Ontario – 2009
- APC013 -- Region of Waterloo School Board – Police Protocol (APC013)
 - Section 21 – Emergency Planning & Threats to School Safety
 - Schedule C – Emergency Response Agreement
 - Schedule F – Lockdown, Hold & Secure and Shelter-in-Place
- APH013 – Emergency Planning & Procedures
- WCDSB System Emergency Response Plan

FORMS:

- N/A

REPORTS:

- N/A

APPENDICES:

- N/A



COMMENTS AND GUIDELINES:

Background

Staff, students and visitors in Waterloo Region's Catholic 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 which 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 in the event of a major incident or threat of school violence.

Creating a safe and secure learning environment for all is a top priority of the Waterloo Catholic District School Board.

Mandatory Government Requirements

The following mandatory requirements were released by the Ontario Government on June 25, 2009:

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

Use of Proper Terminology Regarding School Lockdowns

The use of correct terminology in a crisis situation is very important. Therefore, all school lockdown, hold & secure and shelter-in-place plans will clearly explain when and why the term '**Lockdown**' versus other terminology is to 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 direct relation to the school. All individuals inside the school will immediately move to the nearest secure location and doors will be locked.

The term '**Hold and Secure**' will 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 bank robbery occurs near a school but not on school property). In this situation, the school continues to function normally, with the exterior doors being locked until such time as the situation near the school is resolved.

The term '**Shelter in Place**' will be used when it is necessary to hold all occupants inside the school to protect them from external situations such as chemical spills, blackouts, explosions or extreme weather conditions.

The **Lockdown** order will be made in plain, clear language:

“Attention please: This school is now in a lockdown.

Stay in your classroom or go to the nearest safe area NOW.

Follow all lockdown procedures.

Repeat: This school is now in a lockdown.

Stay in your classroom or go to the nearest safe area NOW”.

Roles & Responsibilities During a Lockdown:

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 take direction from police and provide full cooperation with police.

Staff – School staff members are responsible for the training, safety and well-being of students and will know, understand and efficiently implement the lockdown plan.

Students – Students have a responsibility to be familiar with the school's Emergency and Crisis Response Plan and the need to respond quickly to the direction of school staff and/or police during a crisis situation. Any student with information or prior knowledge about an individual or a potential situation which may result in a violent incident must come forward with that information immediately (including during a lockdown).

Police – Police are responsible for responding to and investigating violent incidents and emergency situations that require a police response 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 Emergency and Crisis Response Plan and should 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.

Communication with Police During an Active Incident:

When Police Contact the School

Communication about a threat, potential threat or active incident, if by police to the affected school(s), will occur via phone by the Police Communications Centre Supervisor, or designate, to the affected school Principal. In such a circumstance, police will advise the affected school's Principal of the threat or active incident, the corresponding required school response, and any other information able to be disclosed that would be of assistance. After conferring with police and taking all necessary steps to protect the safety and security of all, the school Principal will inform the WCDSB Chief Managing Officer and their School SO of the situation.

When the School Contacts Police

In instances where notification about a threat, potential threat or active incident is by a school's Principal to police, direct communication is to occur by phone to the Police Communications Centre **via 911**. Information to be disclosed by the Principal to the Police Communicator will include the nature of the threat or active incident, the corresponding school response, and all other information requested of them by the Police Communicator. After conferring with police and taking all necessary steps to protect the safety and security of all, the school Principal will inform the WCDSB Chief Managing Officer and their School SO of the situation.

Once the Emergency and Crisis Response Plan has been initiated by either of the aforementioned means, only the affected schools will be notified by the Police Communication Supervisor or designate. If, due to the dynamics of the threat, potential threat or active incident, schools previously deemed as unaffected become affected, the Principal(s) of the school(s) will be notified by the Police Communications Centre Supervisor, or designate, via phone and the aforementioned communication protocols initiated.

Initiating a Lockdown

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

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.

Lockdown Procedures:

Classrooms and Other Secure Areas

Before locking a door, all staff (including occasional, part-time, or itinerant teachers) will gather everyone in the immediate vicinity into their classroom or other secure area, but only if it is safe to do so. Once inside a secure area, staff and students will:

1. Stay away from doors and windows.
2. Turn off lights.
3. Close blinds.
4. Be aware of sight lines.
5. If the classroom door has a window, consider covering the window.
6. Take cover, if available (get behind something solid).
7. Remain absolutely quiet.
8. Take attendance (to be done by teachers).
9. Not use cell phones unless it is necessary to communicate regarding the incident. Phones that are being used for this purpose should be put on vibrate and all others should be shut off.
10. Consider barricading doors where possible, in addition to locking them. Barricading can sometimes provide additional protection against an intruder.

NOTE: 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.

Portables

Because of the thin wall construction of portables, all desks will be arranged in a circle and tipped onto their sides with desktops facing out. Students/staff will gather within the circle and remain down on the floor, below the top edge of the desks.

Washrooms During a Lockdown

As washrooms cannot be locked, students will evacuate washrooms if possible and get to an area that can safely be locked down. For **elementary schools**, plans will designate adults who normally work in close proximity to student washrooms to check the washroom(s), if it is safe to do so, prior to locking down themselves. They will take any students found in the washrooms into their safe area to lock down.

For **secondary schools**, students will be trained to exit washrooms immediately upon hearing a lockdown announced and go to the nearest safe area. As a last resort, staff or students trapped in a washroom will enter a stall, lock the door, and climb on top of the toilet.

Open Areas (Cafeterias, Gyms, Libraries, etc.) During a Lockdown

Open areas such as cafeterias, libraries, gyms, hallways, staircases, foyers and other open areas are the most vulnerable areas of a school -- making them the most likely areas for an attack to occur, and the most difficult areas to quickly and effectively secure.

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.

Outside the School During a Lockdown

Those who are outside the school when a lockdown is called will not re-enter the school but will proceed immediately to the predetermined off-site evacuation location(s). The WCDSB's 'Designated Emergency Holding Areas' are listed as Appendix B in the WCDSB System Emergency Response Plan. At the beginning of each school year all students and staff should be made aware of their school's emergency holding area. Once at the location, staff, students, and any visitors who may be present will remain at that location until further advised by the Principal or Police.

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

Child Care Centres and Other Facility Occupants During a Lockdown

A number of Waterloo Region's Catholic Schools have licensed child care centres or other tenants and community groups using school premises. In developing a lockdown plan for the building Principals will ensure the appropriate staff from organizations sharing the school building are consulted in the development and implementation of lockdown procedures -- and that these organizations participate in annual training and drills.

Controlled Evacuation During a Lockdown

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

Responding to a Fire Alarm During a Lockdown

If a fire alarm is pulled once a lockdown has been called, staff and students will not respond as they normally would to a fire alarm, but will 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 in order to ensure their own safety.

Dealing with the Media in a Lockdown, Hold & Secure or Shelter-in-Place

The Waterloo Regional Police Service in cooperation with an authorized WCDSB representative is jointly responsible for addressing the media with respect to a school lockdown. Media inquiries directed to the school will be forwarded immediately to the WCDSB's Chief Managing Officer.

In a lockdown situation the following Board staff members are authorized to speak to the media: the Director of Education and/or the School Superintendent and/or the Chief Managing Officer. The school Principal is only authorized to speak to the media with the consent of the School Superintendent and/or WCDSB Chief Managing Officer.

No other staff or students are authorized to speak to the media during or after a school lockdown.

Communication with Parents/Guardians/Community About a Lockdown, Hold & Secure or Shelter-in-Place

In an age of instant communication, it is human nature for parents/guardians and the general public to want immediate information about Lockdown, Hold & Secure or Shelter-in-Place situations involving schools.

Depending upon the circumstances, it is not always possible to provide instant public notification of a Lockdown, Hold & Secure or Shelter-in-Place situation 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 first ensure the safety and security of students, staff and property.

Parents, guardians and the general community are strongly discouraged from rushing to a school engaged in a Lockdown, Hold & Secure or Shelter-in-Place. Parents/guardians will not be allowed into the school, and students inside the school will not be allowed out until police deem it safe for them to leave. Moreover, the presence of bystanders may impede the work of emergency responders.

Parents and guardians are also strongly discouraged from attempting to contact their children in the school via cell phone. A ringing cell phone can draw an intruder's attention to the location of students and staff – jeopardizing not just their lives but potentially jeopardizing the lives of police inside the building.

In all cases where a Lockdown, Hold & Secure or Shelter-in-Place which was not a drill has been ordered, the school will send home a communication regarding the incident at the earliest possible opportunity.

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.

Ending a Lockdown

In all cases where police have responded, the decision to end a lockdown will be made only after approval of the on-scene Police Incident Commander or designate. Procedures for ending a lockdown will vary by location and will be clearly documented in each school's plan. Local plans will include procedures for ending lockdowns at off-site evacuation locations.

School Recovery Following a Lockdown

A debriefing will occur in all situations following a lockdown. The nature and severity of the incident will dictate who should be included in the debriefing and how any recommendations flowing from the debriefing will be handled. In serious situations where injuries or loss of life occurs, the Board's trauma response procedures will be immediately initiated.

Lockdown Training

All students and staff will be trained in how to respond to a lockdown. Orientation for new school staff will include mandatory lockdown training and individual schools will establish a method to conduct an annual lockdown plan review for all staff.

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

Secondary schools may consider assemblies to train students on lockdown procedures while -- owing to the young age of some elementary students -- classroom teachers may be responsible for training students at the elementary level. Where possible, it is advantageous to have police partners present during training, and to assist with the training of staff and students.

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.

Parents will be encouraged to review the lockdown procedures with their children.

Lockdown Drills

Fire-drills have long been accepted (and proven effective) as an important tool in preparing staff and students to respond to a fire. Lockdown drills are equally important in responding to violent incidents.

Mandatory Requirement (Ministry of Education):

“Each school shall conduct a minimum of two lockdown drills during each school year”. Secondary schools should conduct one drill per semester.

All schools will work cooperatively with police partners on lockdown drills. The Principal is responsible to set the date of drills and oversee the drills. It is suggested – although not mandatory – that schools invite their local fire service and EMS personnel to participate in drills to promote familiarity with lockdown plans. Each lockdown drill will be followed by a debriefing session to identify areas needing improvement.