



## Thameside Primary School: Lockdown Procedure

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<b>Policy reviewed by:</b>	Sophie Greenaway
<b>Key Changes:</b>	<p>Changes made to terminology:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• "Children need to remain quiet and calm" changed to "Children should be supported to remain as calm and quiet as possible."</li> <li>• "Staff must block internal classroom doors..." changed to "Staff should block internal classroom doors wherever safely possible."</li> <li>• "Office staff should remain in their office" changed to "Office staff should remain in a secure space, if safe to do so."</li> </ul> <p>One Page Summary added to start of policy.</p> <p>Addition of sections for contractors/visitors.</p> <p>Addition of sections at end with regards to mental health &amp; debrief.</p>



## One-Page Summary: Lockdown at Thameside

**Purpose:** To protect pupils, staff, and visitors by securing the school site in response to an identified threat.

### Types of Lockdown:

- **Partial Lockdown:** External threat; pupils stay inside but continue normal activities. Doors locked.
- **Full Lockdown:** Immediate internal or external threat. Staff and pupils hide silently in secure spaces.

### Staff Actions:

- Check emails for instructions.
- Lock doors, draw blinds, block visibility.
- Keep pupils calm using "PAL" (Pause, Adult, Listen).
- Take register and report missing pupils discreetly.

### Pupil Actions:

- Follow adult instructions.
- Stay quiet and calm.
- Do not use mobile phones.

### Communication:

- Emergency Services: 999
- Parents: via text/email/website



**Lockdown** is the ability to restrict access quickly, prevent staff and pupils from moving towards danger, or frustrate or delay the identified risk from entering or moving within the school. Lockdown procedures enable a school to close down and protect itself and those within it from an identified and urgent risk very quickly, such as the following:

- An intruder on the school's site or nearby
- A local incident, such as a civil disturbance or risk of air pollution
- A fire adjacent or in the vicinity of the school site
- A dangerous dog or another animal which is nearby
- A firearms or weapons attack.

**The school's Lockdown Manager is: The Headteacher**

The Lockdown Manager's specific responsibilities are as follows:

- Activate the lockdown procedure
- Implement the internal communication system as detailed below
- Activate the panic / lockdown buttons located in the main office
- Contact Emergency Services asap
- Brief the Emergency Planning Team on the initial incident asap
- Inform the LA asap

*In the event that the Headteacher is off-site, the Deputy head will act as the Lockdown manager, then an Assistant Head, then the School Business Manager.*

**Lockdown Arrangements**

Lockdown arrangements should be determined by schools on an individual basis, as they will be dependent to a large extent on local circumstances such as premises design and layout, class arrangements, resources available, etc.

Thameside Primary has two types of lockdown; 'partial' and 'full'. Staff are alerted to any type of lockdown via email (or mobile phones).

Lockdown procedures will be regularly supported with staff training refreshers (INSET days). Practices will also be implemented termly (Autumn, Spring and Summer).



An overview sheet outlining the school's procedures will be displayed in the staffroom and other places throughout the school as appropriate (see Appendix A).

Due to the fast-moving nature of incidents that require lockdown it is important that all staff are able to act quickly and effectively. Staff have clear roles and responsibilities and it is of vital importance that the school's lockdown procedures are familiar to members of the senior management team, school administrators, teaching staff and non-teaching staff. Pupils at Thameside are aware of the plan. (Regular practices will increase their familiarity).

Staff's understanding will be regularly checked with regular training refreshers. After a lockdown drill, the School Business Manager will monitor and review the effectiveness and resolve any identified problems. A report will be written and presented to the Headteacher.

Parents too should know that the school has a lockdown plan and that it will be regularly tested. However, it is not advisable to share the school's full lockdown plan.

**Thameside believes that it is good practice to:**

1. Conduct a number of table top exercises with the senior leadership team to test the procedures against various scenarios.
2. Induct new staff on Lockdown procedures at Thameside
3. Rehearse lockdown arrangements with all staff and pupils.
4. Display lockdown drill (shelter drill) information in every classroom alongside information relating to fire drills.
5. Review effectiveness of these procedures regularly.

**Personal Emergency Evacuation Plans (PEEPs)**

PEEPs must be in place for any pupil or staff member who may require assistance during a lockdown. This includes individuals with hearing impairments, mobility issues, SEND needs, or language barriers.

The AHT for Inclusion will:

- Ensure all necessary PEEPs are written and reviewed each term.
- Ensure relevant staff know their responsibilities.

Templates are available on common and should be completed during induction for relevant individuals.



## **Thameside's Lockdown Plan**

The following procedures **MUST** be followed:

### **1. Partial Lockdown**

**Alert to staff:** Alongside sounding the pulsating alarm, 'Partial shelter now' will be communicated to staff by email (and also via two members of SLT circulating school from either end asap)

In a partial lockdown staff and pupils should remain in the school building and all doors leading outside should be locked. No one should be allowed to enter or leave the building; however, teaching and work can continue as usual. This may be as a result of a reported incident / civil disturbance in the local community with the potential to pose a risk to staff and pupils in the school. It may also be as a result of a warning being received regarding the risk of air pollution, etc.

### **Immediate action**

- All outside activity to cease immediately, pupils and staff return to building. Staff supervising children should get children to line up immediately and walk into the school building via the nearest door. This may mean two classes coming through the same classroom doors.
- All of these people are likely to need special arrangements to help them in emergencies, arrangements which should be described in a Personal Emergency Evacuation Plan (PEEP). Local fire wardens may need to play a role in PEEPs. Those who need assistance may include disabled people, young children with SEND, or someone with a temporary condition which might hinder their escape (e.g. broken leg). The reason they need assistance could be they are unable to hear the lockdown alarm or move quickly enough. Some people (for example children or people with learning difficulties) may not fully understand the rules lockdown. Well thought through PEEPs are important in making our workplaces safe for everybody and demonstrate our commitment to improving accessibility.
- All staff and pupils remain in building and external doors and windows locked.
- Free movement may be permitted within the building dependent upon circumstances.
- In the event of an air pollution or chemical, biological or radiological contaminants issue, air vents, fans, heating and air conditioning systems should be closed or turned off.
- Use anything to hand to seal up all the cracks around doors and any vents into the room – you aim to minimise possible ingress of pollutants.
- Children should be supported to remain quiet and calm (remind them of the acronym PAL which stands for Pause Adult Listen).
- Staff should await further instructions.

All situations are different. Once all staff and pupils are safely inside, senior staff will conduct an ongoing and dynamic risk assessment based on advice from the Emergency Services. The Head teacher will inform the Local Authority.

A 'partial lockdown' may also be a precautionary measure, but puts the school in a state of readiness (whilst retaining a degree of normality) should the situation escalate.



Emergency Services will advise as to the best course of action in respect of the prevailing threat.

## 2. Full Lockdown

**Alert to staff:** Alongside sounding the pulsating alarm, 'Full shelter now' will be communicated to staff by email (and also via two members of SLT circulating school from either end asap)

A pulsating alarm will sound, signifying an immediate threat to the school and may be an escalation of a partial lockdown. The aim of a full lockdown is for the school and its rooms to appear empty.

Door fob controls located on certain doors around the building will slow down ingress to parts of the main building but will not stop movement around the building as the green emergency release buttons located by each door can release the door to aid entry and exit. Staff are trained on the use of these release buttons in any evacuation event. Staff will still need to adopt the full lockdown measures in the event of a 'full' lockdown as set out below.

### Immediate action

- All pupils/staff stay in their classroom or move to the nearest indoor classroom.
- Children with a Personal Emergency Evacuation Plan (PEEP) may need to be lifted or carried by school staff if there is imminent danger to life. Local fire wardens may need to play a role in PEEPs.
- Staff should block internal classroom doors wherever safely possible using door wedges/stops – a piece of furniture should be moved in front of the door, for example, if wedges are unavailable. Lock doors if available.
- Staff should keep their personal mobile phones with them, switched to silent, in order to allow communication via text from the Head teacher.
- Office staff should remain in a secure space.
- External doors locked. Classroom doors locked (where a member of staff with key is present).
- Windows locked, blinds drawn (if available), internal door windows covered (so an intruder cannot see in).
- Pupils/staff sit quietly out of sight and where possible in a location that would protect them from gunfire (bullets go through glass, brick, wood and metal. Consider locations behind substantial brickwork or heavy reinforced walls). Ideally they should congregate together close to an alternative exit, so that if necessary to evacuate this can be carried out quickly and quietly. They could sit underneath their desks if this is possible.
- Lights, smartboards and computer monitors turned off.
- Mobile phones turned off (or at the least turned onto silent so they cannot give away your position).
- A register to be taken of all pupils/staff in each classroom/office (recorded on paper). Once in full lockdown mode, staff should notify the office immediately of any pupils not accounted for and any additional pupils/staff in their classroom.



- Communicate register of staff/pupils to the Head teacher using a discreet communication channel (see below).
- Children should be supported to remain quiet and calm (remind them of the acronym PAL - Pause; Adult; Listen).
- Staff should await further instructions.

A lockdown will remain in place until it has been lifted by a member of the school's senior leadership team or by the emergency services. The official lockdown termination announcement to be used is 'stop shelter' (so that all staff know that it is authentic).

Staff and pupils remain in lock down until it has been lifted by a senior member of staff/emergency services. At any point during the lockdown, the fire alarm may sound which is a cue to evacuate the building (a fire alarm will always trump the lockdown).

During the lockdown, staff will keep agreed lines of communication open but not make unnecessary calls to the central office as this could delay more important communication.

#### **Examples of discreet communication channels might be:**

- Where staff have access to an internal e-mail system, they should access their account and await further instruction, if safe to do so. In practical terms, staff would need to be familiar with accessing their account through a variety of means eg laptop, smartphone or tablet.
- Where a school uses 'Parentmail' (Teachers2Parents) then staff could be put into a defined user group. This could then be used to communicate instructions via text message in an emergency.

#### **In the event that the Fire Alarm sounds during full lockdown**

- 1) A Fire Alarm usually means "get out and stay out" as you are moving from a place of danger (inside) to a place of safety (outside)
- 2) A lockdown means "get inside, lock doors and windows, turn off ventilation and get out of sight of the danger outside of the building".

These are 2 totally opposite responses.

If whilst in full lockdown the fire alarm goes off, each member of staff should assess 3 options/scenarios:

- a. Confirm the fire is real, then get out and go to normal fire evacuation point (we would not recommend this if the danger is outside and visible) (two members of SLT should assist with identifying the fire via the Fire Alarm Panel in the Reception and alert classes if possible).
- b. Confirm the fire is real and get out and go elsewhere away from the cause of the lockdown (the person/persons representing the danger) – This also has inherent dangers, especially when dealing with children as general advice is to run/hide/tell from the danger and with children this is problematic, however it may well be the best course of action. The member of staff should assess the situation and base



their decision on imminent risk of life. They should inform SLT via the agreed communications channels to communicate the decision.

c. Confirm the fire isn't real and stay inside the building under lockdown conditions (look for signs of a real fire, smell of smoke, actual smoke- if you can't see any signs then might be better to wait until you spot signs if the danger is outside and visible.)

Once the fire has been ruled as a false alarm, this will be communicated to staff by both mobile phone and email and the lockdown can continue. The school will keep emergency services informed via 999 at all stages.

### **Communication between parents and the school**

Arrangements for communicating with parents in the event of a lockdown are shared either parent text/mail (Teachers2Parents) or via the school website.

In the event of an actual lockdown, any incident or development will be communicated to parents as soon as is practicable. It is obvious that parents will be concerned but regular communication of accurate information will help to alleviate undue anxiety.

Parents will be given enough information about what will happen so that they:

- Are reassured that the school understands their concern for their child's welfare, and that it is doing everything possible to ensure his/her safety.
- Do not need to contact the school. Contacting the school will block the school's telephone lines when they are needed to communicate with the outside world.
- Do not come to the school. They could interfere with emergency support provider's access to the school and may even put themselves and others in danger.
- Wait for the school to contact them about when it is safe to collect their children, and where this will be from.
- Are aware of what will happen if the lockdown continues beyond school hours.

### **Where possible information will be sent via text message.**

Should parents present at the school during a lockdown under no circumstances should members of staff leave the building to communicate directly with them. Pupils should not be released to parents during a lockdown.

Finally, parents should wait for the school to contact them about when it is safe to collect their children and where this will be from; parents should also be made aware of what will happen if the lockdown continues beyond school hours.

### **Emergency Services**

It is important to keep lines of communication open with Emergency Services as they are best placed to offer advice as a situation unfolds.



It may be possible to contact the emergency services to notify the police by calling 999 if there is an identified immediate threat to life, such as an intruder onsite. For example, office staff may be in a position to alert the emergency services from a secure location. Staff should not put themselves under any risk if it is not safe to do so.

The school site may or may not be cordoned off by Emergency Services depending on the severity of the incident that has triggered the lockdown. Emergency Services will support the decision of the Head teacher with regarding the timing of communication to parents.

### **Visitors and Contractors During Lockdown**

- All visitors must sign in using Inventry and wear visible ID lanyards.
- Lockdown instructions will be displayed at Reception.
- During a lockdown, staff must account for visitors and contractors via Inventry.
- A member of SLT or the SBM will coordinate support for visitors during and after the lockdown.

The School Business Manager is designated to account for visitors on-site in the event of a lockdown and will determine these by accessing Inventry.

### **Support for staff and pupils**

In the event of a prolonged lockdown or more severe scenario, emergency services, local authorities and voluntary sector organisations will work together to co-ordinate practical and emotional support to those affected by any emergency, also referred to as humanitarian assistance. A reception centre for friends and family could be set-up outside of the cordoned area.

### **Mental Health & Debriefing Support**

Lockdowns, especially full or real ones, can be distressing. Following a drill or incident:

- Teachers will check in with pupils and notify SLT of any concerns.
- The school's ELSA and Mental Health Support Team (MHST) will be available.
- Staff can access support through the Employee Assistance Programme (EAP) or speak to a senior leader.
- Debriefing sessions will be offered where appropriate.

### **Useful contacts**

#### **School, in event of Lockdown:**

Onsite Caretaker school mobile number: 07498 762 232

School Business Manager: 07787 803 251

#### **Local authority:**



Justin Patient  
Emergency Planning & Risk Management Officer  
0118 937 2235  
[justin.patient@reading.gov.uk](mailto:justin.patient@reading.gov.uk)

*S Greenaway July 2025*



## *Thameside Primary School*

### **Emergency Procedures**

#### **Fire Alarm**

In the event of the fire alarm sounding please leave the school buildings by the nearest fire escape route and assemble on the playground.

#### **Lockdown**

**Partial Lockdown** Alert to staff: 'Partial shelter now'

**Full Lockdown** Alert to staff: 'Full shelter now'

In the event of a lockdown alert, stay indoors, in the room/classroom that you are in. If you are outside when the alert is raised, make your way to the nearest classroom or hall.

An e-mail will be sent to 'All Staff' giving instructions as to what to do – please ensure this is checked and not on the screen for the children to read. It is therefore important that a computer is always logged on (and e-mail accounts opened) during teaching sessions. Internal phones, mobiles or walkie talkies (if applicable) may also be used for communication.

#### **If you are with children it is important to:**

- remain calm
- reassure them
- remind them to follow your instructions



## The Script

*Every day, we do things to keep ourselves safe. Let's think of some examples. What do you put on before you start riding a bike? What do you do before walking across the road? Another way we stay safe is by practicing for things that probably won't happen but it is good to be prepared for just in case. One way we do this at school, for instance, is by practicing fire drills. Practice helps us know what to do just in case of an emergency.*

Another kind of situation we can prepare for is when we need to keep you safe from a stranger while you are at school. This would probably never happen but just like a fire drill, we can practice our response so we are prepared.

Sometimes, will practice this in a drill called a "Shelter Drill." During this drill, the teachers lock us inside for safety. Your teacher will tell you when we are having a shelter drill.

Here are the steps of what we do during a shelter drill: The acronym is PAL.

**P is for PAUSE:** First, pause and take a deep breath. Breathing helps your mind work.

**A is for ADULT:** Wherever you are, find a trusted adult. If you are in the classroom, stay there and find your teacher or other adult in the room. If you are outside, look for the teacher or other adult closest to you to tell you what to do and where to go.

**L is for LISTEN:** Listen to the adult's instructions. The adult will know what to do and will tell you. This is trickier than a fire drill because depending on where you are, you won't always go to the same place each time. You will know what to do if you listen. Also during this time, the teachers will lock the doors to their classrooms. When everything is safe, the adult will tell you that everything is all clear and we can go back to our regular school day.

*We are all here to keep you safe. Practice means we are prepared and can feel confident that we all know what to do just in case. Having a plan like this and practicing what to do in a shelter drill means that we don't have to worry about these concerns and instead we can focus on having fun and learning at school.*