

St Mark's Catholic Primary School- Lockdown Procedure

As part of St Mark's Catholic Primary Schools duty to keep children safe in school the following procedure is in place to ensure an effective response to an internal or external incident which could be a threat to the safety of pupils and staff in the school.

Lockdown procedures may be activated in response to any number of situations, these may be:

1. A reported incident, disturbance in the local community
2. An intruder on the site or in the local community which poses a risk to pupils, staff or visitors.
3. A warning being received regarding a local risk of air pollution (smoke plume, gas cloud etc)
4. A major fire in the vicinity of the school
5. The close proximity of a dangerous dog roaming loose

In order to warn of these dangers we use our internal email system followed by a continued alarm signal using the school bell system.

Signal

Signal for Lockdown – School email to all staff alert. Alarm/Bell System - Continuous

Signal for All Clear – School email to all staff. Verbally from management/designated person.

Alarm/Bell system- silent

Signal for evacuation – Alarm/Bell system: continuous, staff to then follow off site evacuation procedure from the Fire Safety and Emergency Evacuation Plan.

Lockdown Procedures:

Students remain in their classrooms.

- All pupils who are outside the school building are to be brought inside as quickly as possible
- All pupils and staff to stay in classroom or Staff to stay in their offices.
- If the lockdown occurs at break or lunchtime, as long as safe to do so, teaching staff should return to their classroom to support their students.
- Lock internal/external doors, windows and close blinds, switch off air conditioning units and close vents
- Ensure car park gate is secured.
- Fire doors are closed (but not locked).
- All windows closed.

Communication:

- Email via classroom laptops, ipads or computers.
- Private mobile phones to be switched on ready to receive or send text messages and instructions.

Once the school is in Lockdown

1. Staff should remain calm and Staff should encourage pupils to remain calm.
2. All pupils to be seated on the floor, if necessary seated under tables away from windows.
3. Register to be taken and Class teachers must inform the school office of any child not accounted for; this can be done by email to the school enquiry line or telephone. This will alert designated person to start an immediate search.

4. Designated person to establish communication with emergency services as soon as possible (999)
5. Another designated person to establish communication with Birmingham City Council School and Governors support (0121 303 2193).
6. Where the incident may have a wider impact than the school itself the Birmingham City Council Resilience Team should be notified (0121 303 4825 - Central).
7. If necessary parents should be notified as soon as it is practicable (Teachers 2 Parents). Parents will be advised NOT to panic or come to the school. We will also advise parents of All Clear.
8. Pupils will not be released to Parents during a Lockdown.
9. If it is necessary to evacuate the building, the fire alarm will sound. Staff to then follow off site evacuation procedure from the Fire Safety and Emergency Evacuation Policy.
10. Staff must wait for instructions from management or designated person and must not make unnecessary calls to them as this could delay more important communication.
11. Following the Lockdown, management and designated person should meet and review the situation.

1 Partial Lockdown

Alert to staff: "Partial lockdown"

This may be as a result of a reported incident or civil disturbance in the local community with the potential to pose a risk to pupils, staff and visitors in the school. It may also be as a result of a warning being received regarding the risk of air pollution, etc.

Immediate actions:

- All outside activity to cease immediately with pupils and staff returning indoors.
- All pupils and staff to remain indoors and external doors and windows should be locked.
- Free movement may be permitted within the building, dependent upon the circumstances.

All situations are different; once all pupils and staff are safely indoors, senior staff will conduct an ongoing and dynamic risk assessment based on advice from the Emergency Services. This can then be communicated to staff, who can inform pupils if they are old enough to understand. "Partial lockdown" should be seen as a precautionary measure which puts the school in a state of readiness should the situation escalate, whilst retaining a degree of normality.

In the event of an air pollution issue, air vents can be closed where this is possible, as an additional precaution. Emergency Services will advise as to the best course of action in respect of the prevailing threat.

2 Full Lockdown

Alert to staff: "Full lockdown"

This signifies an immediate threat to the school and may be an escalation of a partial lockdown.

Immediate actions:

- All pupils return to base (classrooms)
- External doors locked.
- Windows locked and blinds drawn.
- Pupils sit quietly out of sight (e.g. under desk or around a corner and away from windows).
- Register taken - the administrative office will contact each class in turn for an attendance report if this is possible.

Staff and pupils remain in lockdown until it has been lifted by a senior member of staff or the Emergency Services. At any point during the lockdown, the fire alarm may sound which is a cue to evacuate the building.

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

Examples of discreet communication channels:

- All staff must ensure, where staff have access to an internal email system then they should access their account and await further instruction. In practical terms, staff would need to be familiar with accessing their account through a variety of means e.g. laptop, smartphone or tablet.

Communication With Parents and Carers

- **Where a school uses “Parentmail” then staff could be placed into a defined user group which could then be used to communicate instructions via text message in an emergency.**

School lockdown procedures, especially arrangements for communicating with parents and carers, should be routinely shared with parents and carers, although it is not advisable to share entire lockdown plans. In the event of an actual lockdown, it is strongly advised that any incident or development is communicated to parents and carers as soon as is practicable. Parents and carers will obviously be concerned but regular communication of accurate information will help to alleviate undue anxiety.

Parents and carers should 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 their child’s safety,
- do not need to contact the school as calling the school could tie up telephone lines that are needed for contacting emergency service providers,
- do not come to the school as they could interfere with access by emergency service providers and may even put themselves and others in danger, wait for the school to contact them about when it is safe to come to collect their Pupils, and where this will be from.

This part of the plan must reassure parents and carers that the school understands their concern for their pupils’ welfare and that everything that can possibly be done to ensure pupil’s safety will be done. However, it may also be prudent to reinforce the message “...**the school is in a full lockdown situation. During this period the switchboard and entrances will not be staffed, external doors locked and nobody will be allowed in or out...**”

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

In the event of a prolonged lockdown or more severe scenario, Birmingham City Council has the capacity to provide humanitarian assistance by establishing a Reception Centre for family members outside of the cordoned off area.

Lockdown Situations when Away From School

Schools must also consider what would happen if a lockdown situation should arise when a group is away from school, whether this be on a short visit, day trip or longer trip that involves a party staying away, possibly even in a foreign country.

It will always be necessary to carry out a risk assessment prior to such visits and it is important to consider what would happen if an emergency situation arose that was out of the control of the staff who are supervising the pupils on the trip.

It will be necessary to give some guidance to pupils prior to the trip, and this should be reinforced during the trip itself. Parents and carers also need to be provided with information about the procedures that would be followed.

It is almost impossible to predict the circumstances where an emergency situation might arise in a way that specific planning can be undertaken. As a minimum it will be prudent to show pupils an emergency meeting point if the party gets separated and remind them to follow instructions from the Emergency Services. If the trip involves staying in a hotel or hostel the staff leading the trip should identify areas of the building where they are most likely to be able to protect the safety of the Pupils in their care. Pupils could even be asked to disperse or hide if this will aid their safety.