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LOCK DOWN

AND BOMB THEAT POLICY

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Reviewed by: Quality Assurance Team

Approved By: Proprietor/Governors

Effective Date: March 2024

Next Review Date: March 2026

Lockdown and Bomb Threat Policy

1: Introduction

The purpose of this policy is to enable Orion to meet its duty of care to safeguard pupils, staff and visitors by managing the level of risk to any external or internal incident which has the potential to pose a threat to the safety of staff and pupils within the school.

Lockdown procedures may be activated in response to any number of situations, but some of the more typical might be:

- A reported incident / civil disturbance in the local community (with the potential to pose a risk to staff and pupils)
- An intruder on the school site (with the potential to pose a risk to pupils and staff)
- A warning being received regarding a risk locally, of air pollution (smoke plume, gas cloud etc.)
- A major fire in the vicinity of the school

In the event of a lockdown Orion will ensure:

- Staff are alerted to the activation of lockdown by a recognised signal (Horn)
- Pupils who are outside of the school buildings will be brought inside
- Those inside the school should remain in their classrooms
- All external doors and, as necessary, windows will be locked
- Internal classroom doors are locked if circumstances require
- Staff notify the office immediately of any pupils not accounted for
- A search for missing pupils is instigated immediately
- Staff encourage pupils to keep calm
- Communication with the emergency services is established quickly
- Birmingham City Council are notified
- Parents should be notified as soon as it is practicable to do
- Pupils are not to be released to parents during a lockdown
- If it is necessary to evacuate the building, the fire alarm will be sounded
- Staff await further instructions

2: Responsibilities

It is the responsibility of the Governing Body and Head of School to ensure that this policy is implemented and monitored and that staff and pupils are familiar with lockdown procedures. A lockdown drill will be undertaken at least once a year. Parents will also know that the school has a lockdown plan, and a copy must be made available on the school's website.

3: Lockdown Arrangements

Partial Lockdown – Alert to Staff: 'Partial Lockdown'

This may be a result of a reported incident / civil disturbance in the local community with the potential to pose a risk to pupils and staff 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.
- All staff and pupils remain in the building and external doors and windows locked
- Free movement may be permitted within the building dependent upon circumstances

Once all staff and pupils are safely inside, senior staff will conduct an ongoing risk assessment based on the advice from the emergency services. This can then be communicated to staff and pupils. 'Partial lockdown' is a precautionary measure but puts the school in a state of readiness (whilst retaining a degree of normality) should the situation escalate.

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

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 action:

- All pupils return to base (Classroom or other agreed location)
- External doors locked, classroom doors locked, windows locked & blinds drawn
- Pupils sit quietly out of site (e.g. under desk or around a corner)
- Register taken - each class will e-mail the office with anyone missing or to confirm that everyone is accounted for.

Staff and pupils remain in lockdown 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.

During the lockdown, staff will keep lines of communication open.

Communication to Parents

School lockdown procedures, especially arrangements for the communicating with parents, will be routinely shared with parents either by newsletter 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, this will be decided by the Head of School. It is obvious that parents will be concerned by 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. Calling the school could tie up telephone lines that are needed for contacting emergency providers
- Do not come to the school and may even put themselves and others in danger
- Wait for the school to contact them about when it is safe for them to collect their child, and where this will be from

Orion understands parents concern for their children's welfare and everything that can possibly be done to ensure their children's safety will be done. However, if the school is in a full lockdown situation the school phone will be monitored closely for the **emergency services only** to contact us or us them and entrances will be locked but un-manned, external doors locked and nobody allowed in or out.

It is important that we 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 depending on the severity of the incident that has triggered the lockdown. Emergency Services will support the decision of the Head of School regarding the timing of communication to parents.

Bomb Procedure

Most bomb threats are made over the phone and the overwhelming majority are hoaxes, often the work of malicious jokers, although terrorists do make hoax calls with the intent of causing alarm and disruption. Any hoax is a crime and, no matter how ridiculous or unconvincing, must be reported to the police.

Calls may be of two kinds:

- Hoax treats designed to disrupt, test reactions or divert attention
- Threats warning of a genuine devise – These may be attempts to avoid casualties or enable the terrorists to blame others if there are casualties. However, genuine threats can provide inaccurate information about where and when a devise might explode. The member of staff receiving such a treat may be the closest that many people ever come to acts of terrorism.

In the event of a call:

- Stay calm and listen
- Obtain as much information as possible - try to get the caller to be precise about location
- Take the timing of the alleged bomb threat and whom they represent.
- If possible keep the caller talking and ask the following questions:

Where is it?

In which building is it and on what floor?

What time will the bomb go off?

What does the bomb look like and what colour is it?

What type of bomb is it and what type of explosive?

Who are you?

Why are you doing this?

Do you have a code word?

- When the caller rings off, dial 1471 (if that facility operates and you have no automatic number display) to see if you can get their number.
- Immediately report the incident to the Head of School to decide on the best course of action and notify the police. If you cannot get hold of anyone, and even if you think the call is a hoax, inform the police directly. Give your impression of the caller and an exact account of what was said.
- The fire alarm will be activated to evacuate the buildings as for a fire evacuation. No-one is to re-enter or enter any building until given clearance to do so by the police.
- If an examination is in progress evacuate candidates under exam conditions
- If you have not been able to record the call, make notes for the police. Do not leave your post - unless ordered to evacuate - until the police or security arrive.

Conducting a Search (Only if requested to do so by the Police)

All staff should check areas as they leave the building and report any unusual / suspicious packages to the Head of School.

- Initiate the search by the Head of School informing the senior staff members
- Divide the priority locations into areas of a manageable size for one or two searchers. Ideally, staff should search in pairs to ensure nothing is missed.
- Ensure that those conducting searches are familiar with the area and what to normally expect to find there. They do not need to be experts in explosives or other devices but able to recognise anything that should not be there, is out of place and not yet accounted for.
- Develop appropriate techniques for staff to be able to routinely search public areas without alarming any visitors or pupils present.
- During the searches, place particular focus on: areas that are open to the public; any closed areas such as cloakrooms, stairs, corridors and lifts; any evacuation routes and assembly points; car parks and other external areas

- Under no circumstances should a suspicious item found during a search be touched or moved in any way. The police should be informed immediately and they will ensure an appropriate response.

In the event of Orion being targeted the following messages will be sent to all parents by the main office:

- Dear Parents, The school has been safely evacuated, under our normal fire procedures, as a result of a bomb treat we believe to be a hoax. Please do not visit the school site until you receive the all-clear. - Head of School
- Dear Parents, All pupils and staff are safe. The Bomb threat was a hoax call. The school site is re-open. - Head of School

10: Policy Review

This policy will be reviewed bi-annually or at an earlier date if changes are required due to changes in Orion's risk assessment process or legislation and or guidance.