

Lockdown Policy and Plan

Clarity Independent School

**Bridge Barn Farm (Opposite Mayes Lane)
Woodhill Road
Sandon
CM2 7SG**

Clarity Independent School is committed to safeguarding...

"Our school is committed to our whole-school approach to safeguarding, which ensures that keeping children safe is at the heart of everything we do, and underpins all systems, processes and policies...We promote an environment where children and young people feel empowered to raise concerns and report incidents and we work hard in partnership with pupils, parents and caregivers to keep children safe."

Clarity Safeguarding Policy September 2024

Written by Debbie Hanson

This is version [1.2]

Written: January 2024

Mid-Year Update Date: September 2024

Updated by Name: Debbie Hanson

Rationale

On very rare occasions it may be necessary to quickly seal off the building so that it cannot be entered from outside. This will ensure that pupils, staff and visitors are safe in situations where there is a hazard in the school grounds or outside the school in the near vicinity.

Lockdown procedures should be seen as a sensible and proportionate response to any external or internal incident which has the potential to pose a threat to the safety of staff and pupils in the school. Procedures should aim to minimise disruption to the learning environment as much as possible, whilst ensuring that all pupils and staff are safe.

This lockdown policy and plan follows the updated [DfE guidance](#), [Essex County Council Guidance](#) and that of other highly recommended sources, such as [The Key for School Leaders](#).

A lockdown may be:

- **PARTIAL LOCKDOWN** (where the building is locked down but movement is allowed within the building and lessons continue as usual), or
- **FULL LOCKDOWN** (where the building *and* learning areas are locked down)

A lockdown is implemented when there are serious security risks for the premises due to for example:

- Nearby chemical spillage
- Proximity of dangerous animals
- Serious weather conditions
- A reported incident/civil disturbance in the community
- Attempted access by unauthorised persons intent in causing harm/damage

Summary (further details appended):

Notification

Staff, pupils and visitors will be notified that lockdown procedures are to take place immediately on hearing the Lockdown Alarm activated.

Office staff to alert adults in the cabins by school internal phone.

If children are outside playing, they will be alerted by the school Lockdown Alarm.

Procedures

Follow the CLOSE procedure:

C – Close all windows and doors

L – Lock up

O – Out of sight and minimise movement

S – Stay silent and avoid drawing attention to yourself

E – Endure, be aware you may be in lockdown for some time

Lockdown drills

Lock down practices will take place a minimum of once a year to ensure everyone knows exactly what to do in such a situation. Monitoring of procedures will take place and shared with staff so improvements can be made.

Conclusion

The lockdown will be dealt with calmly, efficiently and effectively and with as little disruption as possible to pupils' education. The safety of all will be paramount. This policy must be read in conjunction with all other school policies that refer to the care, safety and welfare of children.

Policy Update and Overall Responsibility

This policy will be updated annually / every two years in accordance with relevant guidance and regulations.

Overall responsibility for the Lockdown Policy and Plan in **Clarity Independent School** rests with the Head Teacher, Debbie Hanson.

Appendix 1: FULL Lockdown

Grab Sheet and Full Procedure Checklist

Step	Person responsible	Time	Initial
Sound alarm and begin lockdown procedure	Person identifying emergency / office staff		
Dial 999 and alert emergency services	HT / Office manager		
<p>All children, parents/care-givers, visitors and staff (bring mobile phone), go inside the building to (or stay in) the nearest classroom or the nearest safe place (this may be dependent on what and where the risk is)</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Classrooms (→ breakout spaces in Stingrays and Horses) • SLT Offices • Toilets • Kitchen • Office staff → HT Office bring mobile phone and begin ongoing, dynamic risk assessment and critical incident management plan <p>FOR ESCAPE PURPOSES, DO NOT LOCK EXTERNAL DOORS</p>	<p>All</p> <p>Office staff</p>		
Examinations – stop exam, note time, follow exams-specific items on ‘Exams Lockdown Procedure’	Invigilators		
<p>Secure rooms by:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Lock internal doors and windows • Close blinds and curtains • Turn off the lights, fans, IWB, close laptops, turn off mobile air conditioning units • Direct all children, staff, parents/care-givers and visitors to hide, including under desks and away from windows • Put any mobile phones on silent 	Teaching staff		



Step	Person responsible	Time	Initial
Account for pupils, staff and visitors using registers: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> Text all persons present to Receptionist mobile / Office Manager (including visitors) 	Teaching staff		
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> List absentees (record when, where and time last seen and possible areas for emergency services to search) 	Teaching staff		
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> If possible, check and search for missing or injured pupils, staff or visitors within your lockdown space but stay in your space 	Most senior person in room		
Stay calm and as silent as possible, and wait During and following a lockdown procedure, the use of social media sites and external communication from the school by non-delegated persons is strictly prohibited until the HT or member of the Crisis Management Team informs people differently.	All		
Make sure everyone is aware of an exit point in case an intruder gains access	Most senior member of staff in room		
Keep doors and windows locked shut and remain in lockdown positions until the all-clear has been given, or until you're told to evacuate, by the emergency services or the most senior member of staff on site. Do not leave your safe space until you have been given the all-clear directly.	All		
Critical Incident Management Team ONLY to notify parents / care-givers of initiation of lockdown procedure	Critical Incident Management Team ONLY		

Appendix 2: Procedure Following FULL Lockdown Release by Emergency Services or Critical Incident Management Team

Step	Person Responsible	Time	Initial
After attending Emergency Services have authorised the end of the lockdown, notification that the lockdown has officially ended will be cascaded to SLT, staff and pupils by the Critical Incident Management Team	Critical Incident Management Team		
Pupils and staff return to own class / work bases for roll call and care, including first aid and mental health first aid. If able to, and with all consideration to everyone's wellbeing, examinations and learning activities continue.	Class Teachers		
Office Receptionist, caretaker, cleaner and visitors return to reception for roll call and care, including first aid and mental health first aid	Receptionist		
Office Manager and HT stay in HT office, follow Critical Incident Plan, including: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Arranging notification of parents / care-givers • Arranging aftercare for staff by following the Post-Incident Wellbeing Plan • Liaise further with emergency services 	Critical Incident Management Team		
Letter home to parents as soon as possible the next day to inform them of the context of lockdown and to encourage return to school. Parent / care-givers encouraged to reinforce with their children, that the school is safe, and to celebrate them for following procedures in these very rare circumstances.	Critical Incident Management Team		
Review health and safety measures, risk assessments, plans, policies and procedures.	Senior Leadership Team		

Appendix 3: Procedures: Further Details

Emergency Services and Essex Local Authority Critical Incident Management Team

- Lines of communication with Emergency Services will be kept open, 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 Critical Incident Management Team with regards to the timing of communication to parents.
- In the event of a prolonged lockdown or more severe scenario, Essex Local Authority Critical Incident Team has the capacity to provide additional, strategic support including humanitarian assistance, for example by establishing a reception centre for friends and family outside of the cordoned area.

Notifying parents and Care-Givers at Time of Full Lockdown

Parents will be informed that;

- “Clarity Independent School is in lockdown. During this period the office phones and entrances will be un-manned, internal doors are locked and nobody is allowed in or out. Please do not call the school as this may tie up emergency lines, we will inform you of progress as soon as we can. Please do not come to the school, pupils will not be released to parents / care-givers / school transport during a lock down. We will inform you of progress as soon as we can.”
- Further later message if necessary, “If the end of the day is extended due to the lock down, transport will be notified and you and they will be notified, by Office Staff or Emergency Services, about the time and place from which pupils can be collected.”

Appendix 4: Partial Lockdown Grab Sheet

Partial Lockdown Rationale

'Partial lockdown' may be as a result of an incident occurring which is external to the school building and site:

- A reported incident / civil disturbance in the local community with the potential to pose a risk to staff and pupils in the school
- As a result of a warning being received regarding the risk of air pollution, etc.

'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.

Steps for Partial Lockdown	Person Responsible	Time	Initial
Alert staff giving message verbally to all school areas "Important - Internal lockdown procedure actioned." Cabins will be notified on the internal phones. Examinations are to continue unless further notification received.	HT or most senior member of staff team		
All outside activity is to cease immediately and pupils, parents already onsite / care-givers / visitors to return to their class bases with teaching staff.	Class teachers		
Everyone is to remain in the building with external doors and windows closed securely and internal doors locked.	All		
Movement may be permitted within the building dependent on circumstances but this must be supervised by a member of SLT.	SLT		
All situations are different, once all staff and pupils are safely inside, Critical Incident Management Team will conduct an on-going and dynamic risk assessment based on advice from the Emergency Services. This can then be communicated to staff and pupils.	Critical Incident Management Team		
Critical Incident Management Team will notify staff when this partial lockdown is released.	Critical Incident Management Team		



Appendix 5: Communicating Lockdown Drills to Pupils and Parents

Rationale

Talking to pupils and parents before a lockdown drill helps them prepare for this necessary practise, and in the rare event where this may be needed. It helps manage any anxiety they may feel.

At Clarity, we do this in class groups with their class teacher, with whom they are most familiar and comfortable.

- It allows them to discuss a security lockdown in a familiar environment for pupils
- Pupils may feel more comfortable asking questions (about lockdown or the reasons for it) with staff they're more familiar with
- Staff can **show** pupils what they'll need to do, as well as telling them
- Staff can tailor the way they discuss the drill based on the pupils they have in their classes based on the children's social and emotional developmental ages and special educational needs and disabilities (SEND) including information on their PEEP plans.
- Use the following visual aid to help explain where necessary.

Top Tips for Younger Pupils:

- Focus on "plans to keep us all safe" and "what to do in an emergency" – using the word 'lockdown' might confuse them, as they could think of COVID-19 precautions
- Tell pupils that "it's **very** unlikely we'll need to do this, but we have to practise just in case"
- Treat it like a fire drill, explaining that these are things the adults need to do to keep pupils safe, and this is how pupils can help
- Remind them that it's to keep them safe, and although it might feel exciting to be climbing under desks and turning lights out, it's important they take it seriously

Top Tips for Older Pupils:

By the time pupils are older, they'll probably be aware of the kinds of dangers they could experience.

- Be honest
- Allow them to drive the conversation, ask questions and express their fears
- Take the time to listen
- Emphasise that even though it's just a drill, it's important to take it seriously so that they're well-prepared in the **very** unlikely event that something does happen
- Be clear about how you expect them to behave
- Reassure them that your school has this under control, and practising the procedure is part of this
- Expect the topic to come up again in PSHE or form time, especially if there has been news coverage of school lockdowns in other countries. Make space for pupils' worries



Pupils will know:

- What the procedure is, step by step
- How we expect them to behave
- That this is just a drill, and they aren't in any real danger (e.g. by comparing it to a fire drill)

Our lockdown drill is scheduled to take place soon after we have spoken to the pupils and addressed any concerns they may have.

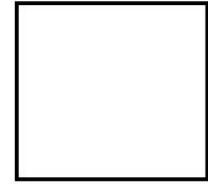
After the drill – class teachers are to:

- Praise your pupils and explain how their good behaviour kept them safe and out of harm
- Talk to your pupils about how they felt and take time to answer any questions they may have
- Ask if there was anything that your class could have done better when reacting to the drill
- Remind pupils that it was a drill and there's nothing for them to worry about
- Then go straight back to 'work as usual'



Appendix 6: Visual Aid, Communicating Lockdown Drill to Pupils

Lock Down Drill



A lock down drill is not a fire drill



it means there could be danger outside



or inside school



we will hear a very loud



horn sound



and we might see a red flag being waved



this means that we must go quickly inside if we are

outside, sit on the floor

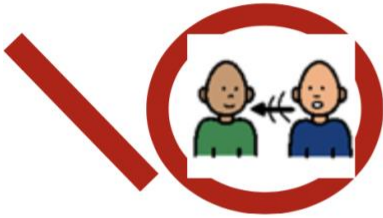


and close the blinds





This is to keep everyone safe



no talking

be quiet

wait until the drill is over

and your teachers say everything is ok .

Appendix 7: Letter to Parents Regarding Lockdown Procedures and Drill

DATE1

Re: Enhancing safety in our school: Security Lockdown Procedure

Dear parents / care-givers,

At Clarity Independent School, we take safeguarding and the safety of your child very seriously.

It's important that we put procedures in place and plan even for those events that are very unlikely to occur. As part of this, we have introduced a new safety procedure called "security lockdown".

I'm writing to let you know that we'll be practising this procedure on DATE2.

What is a security lockdown and when would it happen?

A security lockdown procedure is a standard health and safety procedure, similar to a fire drill.

Our security lockdown procedure would be used when there is a threat to the safety of our pupils, staff and others in the school, or outside the school in the local area, and when it's safer for everyone to remain in school rather than evacuate. The aim is to keep people safe by confining them to a secure place of safety. Situations where our security lockdown procedure may be used include:

- A potentially dangerous person or animal around or on the school site
- A disturbance or dangerous situation in the local community that could affect the school
- A nearby chemical incident or other risk of air pollution
- A critical incident around or on the school site

What is our school's security lockdown procedure?

- Notification is via a specific alarm which is different to the fire alarm
- All pupils / staff / visitors must move immediately inside the building, to their own, or the nearest, classroom where 'close down' procedures will be followed to keep everyone safe (e.g. close doors and windows, close blinds, switch off all devices etc.)
- Registers will be taken and communicated with the office base
- The emergency services will be called

Partial Lockdown

Sometimes there is a need for a partial, rather than full lockdown, where everyone must stay inside but may be able to move around within the building – this will be risk assessed by the Critical Incident Management Team and communicated with all those necessary.



Instructions for parents / care-givers in the event of any security lockdown

- We will inform you that the school is in lockdown, e.g. via mobile phone text messaging service
- Our priority is to keep everyone safe - Please do not attempt to call or come to the school at this time, as this may hinder our effort to contact and work with the emergency services
- Please do not discuss the event on social media, as this may spread false information, create panic and may hinder our effort to contact and work with the emergency services
- Clarity's procedure is that mobile phones are handed in upon arrival to the school; therefore, pupils will also not be able or permitted to use their mobile phones during a lockdown. Please do not, therefore, be alarmed if your child doesn't answer their phone
- If a lockdown continues beyond school hours, we will inform you again about a plan for how and when transport may collect your child

About our upcoming security lockdown drill

Prior to practising this procedure with pupils, staff will take time to talk to all pupils about security lockdown procedures and explain why they are important. They'll reassure pupils of their safety before the drill and answer any questions or concerns they may have. After the drill, they will reassure them that they are safe, and will emphasise that practising procedures like this will make sure that the school remains a safe place to learn.

I must emphasise again that this is simply a drill, so that in the very unlikely event of such a situation in the future, our pupils and staff are fully prepared and can stay safe.

There is more information about our lockdown procedures in our Lockdown Policy on our school website; www.clarity.essex.sch.uk/policies.

However, if you or your child have any concerns or questions, please do not hesitate to contact your class teacher or myself, so that we may answer questions and reassure any concerns.

Yours sincerely,

Debbie Hanson, Head Teacher and Director
BSc (Hons), QTS, PG Dip (Dyslexia and Literacy), AMBDA, APC, NPQH
Member of the Dyslexia Guild,
Associate Member of SASC (SpLD Assessment Standards Committee)