

EDSTART SCHOOLS

Critical Incident and Lockdown Policy

HEALTH, SAFETY & OPERATIONS

Policy owner	EdStart Specialist Education Ltd
Applies to	EdStart Schools – All Sites
Category	Health, safety & operations
Approval and validity	September 2026 to September 2027
Review trigger	Annual review, or earlier following statutory, regulatory or operational change

Status: This 2026 version supersedes all previous versions.

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 whilst ensuring the safety of all pupils and staff. 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 in the school)
- An intruder on the school site (with the potential to pose a risk to staff and pupils)
- 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
- The close proximity of a dangerous dog/animal roaming loose

Signals

Signal for lockdown School email and IT sounder Verbal confirmation – Staff phones Signal for all clear Verbal confirmation – telephone or in person

Lockdown

Rooms most suitable for lockdown All classes to remain in own classrooms

Entrance points (e.g. doors, windows) External doors should be secured Fire doors Internal doors All windows
Communication arrangements Staff phones

Notes If someone is taken hostage on the premises, the school should evacuate the rest of the site.

Ref Initial Response Sign/Time

LD1 Following daily printed Registers and Visitors Sign Logs. Ensure all students are inside the school building. Alternatively ask students to hide or disperse if this will improve their safety LD2 Lock/secure entrance points (e.g. doors and windows) to prevent the intruder from entering the building. All staff to assist LD3 Dial 999. Dial once for each emergency service that you require. All staff who have access to a telephone to do so LD4 Ensure people take action to increase protection from attack:

- Block access points (e.g. move furniture to obstruct doorways)
- Sit on the floor, under tables or against a wall
- Keep out of site
- Draw curtains/blinds
- Turn lights off
- Stay away from windows and doors All adults are responsible for their own class L5 Ensure that pupils, staff and visitors are aware of an exit point in case the intruder does manage to gain access L6 If possible, check for missing/injured pupils, staff and visitors L7 Remain inside until an all-clear has been given, or unless told to evacuate by the emergency services
- Staff will be alerted to the activation of the plan via agreed sounding system, email and phone message as appropriate.
- Pupils who are outside of the school buildings are brought inside as quickly as possible, unless this endangers them or others. If children remain outside, they will move to the nearest place of safety on or off site
- Those inside the school should remain in their classrooms with their teacher.
- All external doors and, as necessary, windows are locked (depending on the circumstances, internal classroom doors may also need to be locked)
- Once in lockdown mode, staff should notify the office immediately of any pupils not accounted for via telephone (mobiles to be used if an internal line not available) and instigate an immediate search for anyone missing if safe to do so
- Staff should encourage the pupils to keep calm
- As appropriate, communication with the Emergency Services will be established and the Local Authority notified
- Parents will be notified as soon as it is practicable to do so
- Pupils will not be released to parents during a lockdown
- If it is necessary to evacuate the building, the fire alarm will be sounded, and everyone should leave the building and exit as stated in the school fire plan. It is of vital importance that the school's lockdown procedures are familiar to all members of the school staff. To achieve this, the lockdown procedures will be reviewed and discussed in 'Whole School' staff meetings, twice a year

Alert to Staff "Partial Lockdown"

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, pupil and staff to return to the building. (Staff will be alerted via verbal communication.)
- All staff and pupils remain in the building and external doors and windows locked.
- Movement may be permitted within the building dependent upon circumstances, but this must be supervised by a member of staff

All situations are different, once all staff and pupils are safely inside, senior staff will conduct on-going risk assessment based on 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. Emergency Services will advise as to the best course of action in respect of the prevailing threat.

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 to return to classroom
- External doors locked. Classroom doors locked and blocked
- Windows locked, blinds drawn, pupils sit quietly out of sight under desks
- Register taken/head count- the office will contact each class in turn for an attendance report via telephone
- 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
- During lockdown, staff will keep agreed lines of communication open, via telephone and e-mail, but will not make unnecessary calls to the central office as this could delay more important communication

In the event of an actual lockdown, any incident or development will be communicated to parents as soon as is practicable. Parents will be given enough information about what will happen so that they:

- Are reassured that the school understand 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. They could interfere with emergency 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 for you to come and collect their children, and where this will be from.

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 depending on the severity of the incident that has triggered the lockdown. Emergency Services will support the decision of the Headteacher regarding the timing of communication to parents. In the event of a prolonged lockdown or more severe scenario, the Local Authority has the capacity to provide humanitarian assistance by establishing a Reception Centre for family and friends outside of the cordoned area.