Howden Junior School: CRITICAL INCIDENT AND LOCKDOWN PROCEDURE

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With reference to:

The Department for Education – Emergency Planning and Response Guidance (First Published 2019 and updated October 2023

https://www.gov.uk/government/publications/emergency-planning-and-response-for-education-childcare-and-childrens-social-care-settings/emergency-planning-and-response-for-education-childcare-and-childrens-social-care-settings

https://www.gov.uk/government/publications/school-and-college-security

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This procedure should be read in conjunction with the following documents:

- Fire Evacuation Procedure
- The Education Alliance Health and Safety Policy
- Safeguarding and Child Protection Policy

1.INTRODUCTION

As part of our Safeguarding and Health & Safety arrangements in school, all staff and children need to be aware that in certain rare circumstances, we may need to follow a 'critical incident or lockdown' procedure to ensure that all children, staff and visitors are safe and secure. These circumstances are most likely to relate to an event or hazard which is taking place outside the school building, posing a risk or threat to the school community, and warranting a 'critical incident or lockdown' procedure. This procedure will be implemented where there may be a serious or potentially serious risk to the school community such as:

- Serious weather conditions
- A dangerous animal (e.g. dog, swarm of insects etc) on site
- An intruder on site who may pose a risk
- A major fire or chemical spillage in the vicinity

In addition to our normal site security arrangements, in such circumstances it may be necessary to implement a PARTIAL or FULL LOCKDOWN.

The need to initiate such procedures and the chances of such incidents occurring will be minimised by the vigilant and consistent implementation of our day-to-day site security procedures by all staff.

2.PROCEDURES

2.i Responsibilities

The headteacher, or in their absences the designated member of SLT (senior leadership team), will take responsibility for managing the situation and communicating to staff in the initial stages of any procedure. The headteacher or designated member of SLT will take responsibility for contacting other external services, such as the emergency services, or delegating this responsibility depending on the circumstances.

Staff will usually be notified of a critical incident / lockdown procedure by internal phone system in conjunction with the school bell sounding 5 times so those outside will also be aware that a lockdown is taking place. This is likely to be delivered by the headteacher or a senior staff member / directed administrative member of staff. In order to support the smooth and safe implementation of procedures, school staff should prepare for such an event by reading and following this guidance carefully, to be able to take informed action.

2.ii Communication systems

Effective communication of information and instructions to staff is key to the operation of this procedure.

In the event of a lockdown, staff will be kept informed by the internal phone system.

It is impossible to predict circumstances that might require such action, the time of day or the time of year. The timetable will affect what the children are doing and how they are dispersed; therefore, detailed procedures cannot be laid down and staff need to understand that they may need to make a professional judgement in certain circumstances, dictated by the need to protect the children in their care and themselves as effectively as possible. In doing so they may need to depart from the following general procedures but must, in this case, be able to justify such actions.

2.iii Initial notification

PARTIAL LOCKDOWN - immediate action (Code Amber)

In the event of an incident of medium threat level existent outside the school building (e.g. a swarm of insects outside), a **Code Amber** will be called on the internal phone system and/or school bell:

- Staff remain calm and will remind children to remain calm, be quiet and follow instructions.
- All pupils and staff must remain in the building.
- All outside activities must cease, and staff must supervise a calm return to the nearest safe entrance.
- All external doors and windows are made secure but ensure that if evacuation is required all emergency exits are operational and accessible, i.e. not locked
- No one is allowed to leave the building
- Staff will be responsible for ensuring children with specific SEND are supported in such situations
- Class registers and staff list are checked, office updated and missing children or staff reported.
- Free movement is allowed within the building and as far as possible normal activities in the building continue

Once all pupils, staff and visitors are safe, SLT will conduct an ongoing risk assessment and inform all supervising staff of the next steps by direct contact.

Staff await further instructions.

If required, Emergency Services and the LA Critical Incident (01482-392999) number will be contacted.

FULL LOCKDOWN - immediate action (Code RED)

This signifies an immediate threat of higher level (e.g. a threatening person onsite) and could be an escalation of a partial lockdown or a new danger. Staff will be notified of **Code RED** the internal phone system.

The following measures must be taken unless the developing situation requires staff decisions to take alternative actions in the interests of the immediate safety of children and staff. In brief we will follow the CLOSE procedure:

- **C**lose all windows & doors and pull down the blinds

- **L**ock up
- **O**ut of sight and minimise movement
- **S**tay silent and avoid drawing attention
- **E**ndure. Be aware you may be there for some time

In detail: **UNLESS OTHERWISE ADVISED**

- All pupils and staff must remain in the building.
- Administrative staff remain if possible, in the office area
- All outside activities must cease, and staff must supervise calm return to the nearest safe entrance.
- All external building doors are made secure.
- External classroom doors locked but ensure that if evacuation is required, all emergency exits are operational, clear and accessible.
- Turn off the lights, fans or mobile air conditioning units (this will reduce noise and the risk of exposure to any chemical/biological attack)
- Staff will be responsible for ensuring children with specific SEND are supported in such situations.
- No one is allowed to leave the building.
- Windows secured and blinds drawn (where fitted).
- Internal classroom doors closed and if needed barricaded / locked.
- Class registers and staff list are checked, if possible, office updated, and missing children or staff reported
- If possible, check for missing / injured pupils, staff, and visitors – only if possible and not posing additional risk.
- Pupils sit quietly out of sight as much as possible.
- Lights, white boards, and class computers / tablets turned off.
- If possible, staff keep laptop, tablet, PC open to receive internal communications.
- Emergency Services and the LA Critical Incident (01482-392999) number contacted.
- Staff await further instructions, either in person, via staff email or landline as appropriate
- Staff and children remain in lockdown until it has been lifted by the agreed signal.

It is important to state that any Code Red procedure may escalate to a full evacuation, therefore staff must remain vigilant for updates in the live situation.

2.iv Suspending lockdown.

When a decision has been made to suspend the Partial or Full lockdown, or to step down from Full to Partial, the staff will be informed in the most appropriate way for the nature of the event, e.g in person or by the internal phone system.

3. COMMUNICATION WITH PARENTS

Parents will, if possible, be alerted to full lockdowns by email as soon as practicable.

They will be reminded not to contact the school or come to the school as school may be operating under the advice of emergency communication and emergency services. Parents will be reassured and asked to wait for further information or advice.

4. LOCKDOWN PRACTICE AND SIMULATION

A Partial Lockdown procedure will be practised twice a year. It will be appropriate to practise at a different time of day with each drill, and any monitoring improvements to the procedure should be actioned directly. A record will be kept of practice simulations and held in Health and Safety Site Records.

Consideration will be given to the escalation to a Full Lockdown at once-yearly practice where appropriate.

SLT and other appropriate staff will test the above procedures against a number of varied scenarios in order to identify any site-specific issues that require further development of the procedures, e.g. during break times.

5. BOMB THREAT PROCEDURES / CRITICAL EVACUATIONS

It is foreseeable that staff members who are in direct contact with an outside line on the telephone system could receive a telephone bomb threat. Guidance on the Bomb Threat procedure should be kept attached to all telephone record clipboards for such an incident.

The following procedures must be implemented should any member of staff ever receive such a call. It is fully appreciated that someone receiving a telephone bomb threat may well be caught off-guard. We therefore ask all line managers to remind team members of the need to be vigilant at all times and to be prepared to follow these procedures.

5.i Threat received by telephone

- Keep calm
- Keep the caller talking
- Never hang up on the caller
- Do not investigate the location of the device yourself

- Follow each step on the check list **(see appendix 1)**

Notify the Headteacher or the senior person in charge immediately by doing the following

- Indicate that you have received a bomb threat and give:
  - Your name
  - Telephone extension number (if appropriate)
  - Your exact location in or around the building
- Outline brief details of what has been said.
- Keep your telephone line clear and await further instructions; you may be telephoned for further clarification.

5.ii Threat received by email

- Immediately notify the Headteacher/senior person in charge outlining details of the bomb threat.
- The email containing the threat should not be forwarded or deleted.
- The Information should be copied using "Print Screen" or the "Snipping Tool" and forwarded in a new email to the Headteacher/senior person in charge.
- Notify the police using the emergency telephone number.

5.iii Bomb threat alarm

On notification from the Headteacher or the senior person in charge, if they suspect it is a real threat, the caretaker or member if the admin team will activate the fire alarm using the nearest control panel. **The school is trained to respond with a full evacuation on hearing this alarm.**

5.iv Critical Evacuation

The Headteacher / senior leader in charge will determine whether or not to evacuate the school based on the available information, including advice from emergency services.

If an evacuation is decided, the purpose of evacuation is to move people from an area where they might be at risk to a place of lesser risk. Evacuation may not always be the first response. Advice will be sought from the police where possible. Evacuation may need to take place in response to situations such as:

- A threat call directly to the building
- A threat call received elsewhere and notified to you by the police
- The discovery of a suspicious item in the building or the discovery of a suspicious item or vehicle outside our building
- The discovery of a suspicious item elsewhere notified to school by the police or neighbours.

The Headteacher/senior person in charge will decide how the evacuation procedures will be communicated. It may be appropriate to use normal fire evacuation procedures, but alternative methods of communication may need to be sought. Alternative evacuation plans will be brought into effect should the need arise.

The routine fire assembly point may not be the appropriate place to evacuate to, although this might be used as an initial staging post before redirecting occupants elsewhere if, for example, an evacuation route would take people past a suspect device or vehicle outside school or through an area believed to be contaminated by CBR materials, evacuation may be the riskiest course of action. The use of alternative evacuation plans will be practiced as part of our normal procedures to ensure there is safe and efficient movement away from the building.

5.v Assembly Points

All staff and pupils move in an orderly and purposeful fashion to their clearly identified assembly points (identify different assembly points depending on the location of the threat on map). If the assembly points need to be changed due to the threat, a senior staff of the school will direct staff and pupils to a safer location.

The police may take control of the school and no one should be allowed back into the buildings until the Headteacher / senior person in charge has received the all clear from the police.

6. INTRUDER / LIVE THREAT IN THE BUILDING

If a dangerous intruder has entered the building, and an immediate evacuation is required, staff will be notified by Fire Alarm.

In this situation, the aim will be to ensure children and staff are safe to leave the building as quickly and calmly as possible, pupils lining up on the playground. As with all live situations, an alternative procedure may need to be followed, and in this situation, school leaders may be advised by emergency services.

If moving the children and staff to the nearest internally secured space because evacuation is not a viable option - **Code RED** indicated will be called on the phones. Staff should then undertake the FULL LOCKDOWN CLOSE PROCEDURE, locking both classroom doors and remaining vigilant for further instructions.

7. SUSPICIOUS PACKAGES

Suspicious packages may be received in the post as mail or may be discovered in any part of the building as unattended and unidentified packages or other items, for example unattended baggage.

Staff members should consider:

- Is the package hidden or does it appear to be simply left behind as lost property?
- Is it clearly suspicious e.g. visible batteries, wire, tape etc?
- Whether or not it is typical of the environment in which it is found (e.g. a carrier bag left in the entrance hall).
- Whether there has been a specific threat to the school or to the local authority (LA) or community.

A judgement will then be made whether or not to evacuate the premises and seek police assistance. Evacuation will then follow the same processes as set out in Bomb Threat Procedures / standard Fire Evacuation.

7.i Staff procedures for handling post

Generally, the school community is considered a relatively low-risk target for suspicious postal items. We may at times receive advice from the police if the level of threat has increased.

Staff members whose job it is to routinely handle post should be alert to possible risks and should ensure they are familiar with the possible indicators of a suspicious package such as a letter bomb. Line managers must ensure that these staff members are aware of updates to specific guidance and procedures and should ensure that:

- all sources of incoming mail (eg Royal Mail, courier, hand delivery) are included in our screening process.
- the office that receives mail has ready access to hand-washing facilities, including soap and detergent.
- Members of the office staff are aware of usual patterns of deliveries and types of item
- Members of the office and caretaking are briefed of any unusual deliveries.

7.ii Letter bombs

'Letter bombs' may be explosive or incendiary; or chemical, biological or radiological (CBR). If we receive a suspicious delivery, it is unlikely we will know which type it is, so procedures have to take into account all eventualities.

If any member of the team finds a piece of mail they believe to be suspicious they should:

- Refer to the guidance poster displayed in the Main Office
- Report immediately to Headteacher/senior person in charge
- Notify the police using the emergency telephone number.
- Isolate the suspicious package away from public areas.
- If possible, photograph the package.

We advise all staff when routinely handling mail to:

- Open post with letter openers or other implements
- Open packages with the minimum movement

- Not to blow into envelopes or shake out the contents.
- Keep their hands away from their noses and mouths while opening mail.
- Always wash their hands after opening mail
- Members of staff are aware that, should packages suspected of containing biological, chemical, or radiological material ever be received, they should ideally be placed in a double sealed bag. We do not consider, at this time, that staff members handling post need personal protective equipment such as latex gloves and face masks. However, should a need ever be identified such equipment will be provided.

7.iii Suspicious packages

Do not handle the package if you have any suspicion. The following may be indicators of a suspicious package:

Protruding wires	Even the best prepared device can come adrift in transit
Points of Origin	Check the postmark. Be wary of foreign / unusual postmarks
Address of sender	If this is given - Look for conflict between the address and the post mark
Writing	Be aware of illiterate or unusual handwriting and use of block capitals
Balance	Is the letter or parcel uneven or lopsided
Weight	Does the package seem to be excessively heavy for its size

Appendix 1

BOMB THREAT CHECKLIST

1. Remain calm and talk to the caller
2. Don't hang up
3. Keep the caller talking for as long as possible
4. Note the caller's number if displayed on your phone
5. If you are able to, record the call

Actions on Call:

Caller's Number

Time of call

Date of call

Call reported to

Time

Date of report

Information on caller if given (e.g. sex, age, race)

Length of call

Write down the exact wording of the threat:

ASK THESE QUESTIONS & RECORD ANSWERS AS ACCURATELY AS POSSIBLE

1. When is the bomb going to explode?	
2. Where did you put the bomb?	
3. When did you put it there?	
4. What does the bomb contain?	
5. What kind of bomb is it?	
6. What does it look like?	
7. How will it be detonated?	
8. What will make the bomb explode?	
9. Did you place the bomb? If not you, who did?	
10. What is your name?	
11. What is your address?	
12. What is your telephone number?	
13. Where are you?	
14. Why have you placed the bomb?	
Record time call completed:	

□ Irrational
□ Well Spoken
□ A message read by threat maker
□ Incoherent
□ Taped message
□ Abusive/foul
□ Other

Threat language

Caller's Voice

□ Calm
□ Angry
□ Excited
□ Slow
□ Rapid
□ Soft
□ Loud
□ Laughing
□ Crying
□ Normal
□ Distinct
□ Slurred
□ Raspy
□ Intoxicated
□ Stuttering
□ Lisp
□ Cracking Voice
□ Deep
□ Ragged
□ Clearing throat
□ Disguised
□ Accent
□ Deep breathing
□ Familiar – if so, who does it sound like?

Background

Noises:

□ Factory machinery

Report Immediately to the Headteacher. Do not speak with anyone else. Call 999 and await further instruction.

□ Street noise
□ Crockery
□ Voices
□ PA system
□ Music
□ Motor noises
□ Public phone
□ Animal noises
□ Clear
□ Static
□ House noises
□ Office machinery
□ Local call
□ Aircraft

Appendix 2

Timeline following Bomb Threat/Suspicious Package

Date:

Time	Action

Department for Education

Lockdown Template

There are important differences between the lockdown and shelter arrangements. Lockdown is necessary when children and staff need to be **locked** within buildings for their own safety i.e. in an emergency situation such as a hostile intruder, terrorist attack or other criminal activity.

Signals

Alarm or signal for lockdown shelter	Internal phone system/school bell stating CODE RED or AMBER
Signal for stand down / all-clear	Communicated by internal phone system.

Incident Control Officers & Response Team

Role	Name	Emergency Contact Number
Incident Control Officer		
Deputies		
Communications Officer		

It is important to remember that it is very much **the exception** to evacuate a building in the event of a hostile intruder. Unless the location of the intruders is known, a "blind" evacuation may be putting people in more danger (e.g. from an intruder or device at one of the entrances/exits) than if they had remained within the building.

Rooms most suitable for lockdown
1 Classrooms
2 Hall
3 Learning Lounge
4 Office area

It is important to make sure that items that could be used as weapons (kitchen implements, sports equipment, tools, cleaning products) are securely locked away when not in use.

Communication arrangements Wherever possible use silent communications and keep noise to a minimum especially if the intruders are close by. Make sure any communications devices are secure and cannot be intercepted.
Two-way radios
Classroom telephones
Mobile phones
Instant messaging / email
Other (TVs / Whiteboards / etc)

Alternative place of safety in the event that it is considered necessary to leave site (for example, partner school/college / leisure centre) must be pre-arranged.	
Name of venue	Howden School
Type of venue	Secondary School
Contact name	Mrs Tester
Contact telephone number	01430 430448
Walk 15 minutes Depending on the situation HJS could relocate to HIS.	

Other useful contacts:

Name	Emergency Contact Number
Luc Perquin, Estates Director	01482 631208
LA Critical Incident	01482-392999

Action Plan for FULL LOCKDOWN – inside building	Completed by (sign and time)
It is important that all staff members, visitors and children follow the direction of the Headteacher / designated deputies in the event of a critical incident. Staff must ensure they have read the Critical Incident Policy to ensure they are prepared to carry out appropriate actions should the critical event arise. A full lockdown could quickly become an evacuation and all individuals should be prepared for this to change.	
Emergency Services and the LA Critical Incident (01482-392999) number contacted	
All pupils, visitors and staff must remain in the building	
Administrative staff remain if possible and safe to do so in the office area	
All outside activities must cease and staff must supervise calm return to the nearest safe entrance	
All external building doors are made secure	
External classroom doors locked but ensure that if evacuation is required, all emergency exits are operational, clear and accessible	
Turn off the lights, fans or mobile air conditioning units (this will reduce noise and the risk of exposure to any chemical/biological attack)	
Staff will be responsible for ensuring children with specific SEND are supported in such situations	
Windows secured and blinds drawn	
Internal classroom doors possible closed and if needed barricaded / locked	
Class registers and staff list are checked if possible, office updated and missing children or staff reported	
If possible, check for missing / injured pupils, staff and visitors – only if possible and not posing additional risk	
Pupils sit quietly out of sight as much as possible	
Lights, white boards and class computers / tablets turned off	
If instructed, radios will be switched off also – where risk of radios being used is raised	
If possible, staff keep laptop, tablet, PC open to receive internal communications	
Staff await further instructions, either in person, via staff email or on radio as appropriate	
Staff and children remain in lockdown until it has been lifted by the agreed signal.	

Department for Education

Self-Assessment Emergency Incident Planning Checklist

The checklist below sets out critical information which should be included in your plans as a minimum. If you answer NO to any of the questions below, you should review your plans/arrangements and consider developing them. Any residual risks should be recorded and managed appropriately.

Critical/Emergency Incident Planning	Yes/No	Comment/Action
Site and building security checklist		
Are your buildings secure during operating hours?		
Can public access be restricted?		
Are your identification arrangements robust?		
Do you have a process for dealing with a security alert?		
Do you regularly review your security arrangements?		
Site plan		
Does your plan clearly mark all points of entry?		
Does your plan include locations of hazardous chemicals, gas / electric / water shut of valves?		
Does it clearly indicate safety equipment such as fire extinguishers, evacuation chairs etc?		
Does your plan clearly identify safe zones / lockable rooms?		
Does your plan indicate which areas are covered by CCTV?		
Is your plan regularly reviewed?		
Business Continuity plans		
Do these arrangements identify critical activities?		
Do these arrangements identify contingency arrangements?		
Are these arrangements reviewed (at least every 12 months) plus following activation and/or implementation?		
Have these arrangements been tested/exercised in the last 12 months?		
Do they include a Communications Plan?		
Do they include a Short-term loss or shortage of staff or skills plan?		
Do they include information about how a closure or partial closure of the premises / facilities would be managed?		
Do they include a how you would manage a technology failure?		
Do they include information about Suppliers and Contractors failure?		
Have these arrangements been tested?		
Are these arrangements regularly reviewed?		
Evacuation plans		

Are Incident Control Offices and deputies clearly identified?		
Do these arrangements include on-site evacuation point(s)?		
Do these arrangements include alternative off-site evacuation point(s)?		
Are these arrangements regularly reviewed (at least every 12 months) and following an incident?		
Are these arrangements regularly tested?		
Do your Bomb Alert plans include		
Do these arrangements include on-site evacuation point(s)?		
Do these arrangements include alternative off-site evacuation point(s)?		
Does your plan include Bomb Threat and Suspicious Package procedures?		
Are these arrangements regularly reviewed (at least every 12 months) plus following activation and/or implementations?		
Have these arrangements been tested?		
Shelter (Invacuation) Plan		
Do the arrangements include designated rooms?		
Do they include actions to mitigate the risk of harm/injury?		
Are these arrangements regularly reviewed (at least every 12 months) plus following activation and/or implementations?		
Have these arrangements been tested?		
Lockdown plan		
Do the arrangements include designated rooms?		
Do they include actions to mitigate the risk of harm/injury?		
Do they include information about equipment that could be used as a weapon?		
Are these arrangements regularly reviewed (at least every 12 months) plus following activation and/or implementations?		
Have these arrangements been tested?		
Post Incident Support Checklist		
Do your arrangements clearly identify sources of help		
Do your arrangements include communication plans?		
Do your arrangements include how you would support students, parents/carers and staff		

Summary	**Yes/No**	**Comment/Action**
Do you ensure that the following groups are aware of all of the above plans?		
Staff (inc Volunteers)		
Governors		
Students		
Contractors		
Visitors		

Do you ensure that the following groups are suitably trained to respond to incidents and emergencies?		
Staff (inc Volunteers)		
Governors		
Students		
Contractors		
Is this training/information regularly reviewed including following activation/implementations of any of the above plans/arrangements?		