

Administrative Procedure 141

Threats to School Safety

Limestone District School Board is committed to the safety of all of its students and staff as well as the broader school community. Staff, students, and visitors in Limestone District schools have the right to learn, work, and attend a safe and secure environment. However, the possibility that a major incident of violence or a severe environmental concern may occur is a reality which cannot be overlooked. Therefore, everyone who works or spends any amount of time in a school on a regular basis must know how to protect themselves and how to protect our students in the event that a major incident does occur. To this end, community partnerships and protocols have been developed in collaboration with local emergency services representatives including, but not limited to, ambulance, fire and police. The goal of such efforts is to promote and foster safe learning and working environments by proactively communicating, planning, and training in an effort to prevent, where possible, violence from occurring in schools and where violence does occur, preparing for a quick, coordinated and effective response.

1.0.0 OBJECTIVE

To establish a comprehensive procedure in preparation for and response to emergency situations, which includes specific plans to keep students, staff and others safe in the event of a serious accident or potentially violent incident.

2.0.0 EMERGENCY PROCEDURE PLANNING

- 2.1.0 Emergency procedures training for all staff will occur as part of their initial school orientation at the commencement of their assignment, and will be updated annually at the first staff meeting in September for all school staff. As part of the planning process for site-specific plans, all tenants should receive training on the procedures. Lockdown training for students will be conducted each semester at the secondary level and each term at the elementary level. Schools are encouraged to ask local police to be part of or lead such training sessions for both staff and students.
- 2.2.0 The principal will provide staff with information about the four emergency procedures as outlined in 3.0 below and teachers will instruct classes accordingly giving consideration for the students' age and understanding.
- 2.3.0 All schools are responsible for conducting a minimum of **four** emergency procedure drills each school year (one Shelter in Place; one Hold and Secure and two Lockdown). At shared sites and/or adjacent school sites, drills should be scheduled at the same time and conducted simultaneously. The principal, or vice-principal in consultation with the principal, is responsible to set the date of the drills, oversee the drill with police support/assistance, if possible, and to provide staff, students, Tri-Board Student Transportation, local police, the school supervisor, and families with some advanced notice of the impending drill. Fire and emergency medical services personnel may also be invited to participate in the drill.
- 2.4.0 Each family of schools supervisor will follow an established tracking system to record emergency procedure drill dates each school year, for the schools under their supervision.

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- 2.5.0 The principal will provide staff with information about the four emergency procedures as outlined in 3.0 below and teachers will instruct classes accordingly giving consideration for the students' age and understanding.
- 2.6.0 As each school is unique, site-specific plans must be developed and implemented based on these procedures and any supplemental materials.
- 2.7.0 In sites where there are child-care centres, community workspaces, twin schools, LDSB satellite offices, and so forth, plans need to be developed in consultation with all building occupant groups as well as the Safe Schools Team. A custodian should also be included in the planning process if they are not a member of the Safe Schools Team.
- 2.8.0 Clear communication plans need to be followed to ensure that all building occupants are informed in the event emergency procedures are activated. The communication plan must also include notification of the Director's Office, field trip supervisors, itinerant staff, and alternate program centres.
- 2.9.0 It is of paramount importance that consistent terminology is used throughout the system. The provincial terminology is mandatory to describe the type of situation occurring at or near a school. The terms are to be used consistently in all publicly-funded schools as it allow for smooth integration when staff, students, families and emergency personnel are transferred from one school to another.
- 2.10.0 Given the impact of such events, a de-briefing must occur with students, school staff, and other building occupants after a drill or an actual event has occurred. Where an actual event has occurred, the debriefing must also include appropriate emergency services and Educational Services staff.

3.0.0 DEFINITIONS:

- 3.1.0 **Emergency Evacuation Plan:** All schools have detailed evacuation plans to remove students and staff in the event of a serious incident where everyone must leave the building. This plan must include at least two appropriate locations, one of which must be beyond a two-kilometre radius from the school. A fire or gas leak in the school is an example of an event requiring evacuation. A chemical spill close to the school is another example. The Director's Office must be notified immediately if a school is placed in an evacuation status due to emergency circumstances.
- 3.2.0 **Shelter in Place:** Shelter in Place is a response to an environmental or weather-related situation, where it is necessary to keep all building occupants within the school. For example, this procedure might be used in the event of a chemical spill, blackouts, or extreme weather. Signs indicating a Shelter in Place status must be posted on exterior doors. The Director's Office must be notified immediately if a school is placed in a Shelter in Place status.

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- 3.3.0 **Hold and Secure:** Hold and Secure is a response to a threat in the general vicinity of a school. This could be a police pursuit, a crime in progress or an active search by local police for a known dangerous offender. Staff, students and visitors are considered to be safe inside the school. External doors to the building must be secured as fast as possible, signs indicating a Hold and Secure status must be posted, and staff/students/visitors on property must be brought inside the building. Occupants do not leave the building. The Director's Office must be notified immediately if a school is placed in a Hold and Secure status.
- 3.4.0 **Lockdown:** A lockdown threat to safety is in the school building (interior doors are locked. Exterior doors remain locked or unlocked in accordance with normal practice prior to the situation.) A Lockdown should only be used when there is a major incident or threat of school violence within the school, or in relation to the school. Building occupants remain in the building in secured locations. The Director's Office must be notified immediately after the Lockdown is instituted and 911 has been called.
- 3.5.0 **Isolated (Location Specific) Hold & Secure:** At times, it may be necessary for a Principal or designate to enact an internal hold and secure to ensure student and staff safety. Incidents like this would typically involve keeping students and staff in their classrooms until the incident or potential hazard had been resolved. Examples of this could include an ambulance attending to an injured student or staff member, or a student whose behavior is worrisome and they are in the hall. Notification of this internal hold and secure will depend on the type of incident and its location.

4.0.0 RESPONSIBILITIES

All members of the school community have responsibility for supporting and implementing the emergency procedures and school level plans.

- 4.1.0 **Principal:** The Principal is responsible for adhering to LDSB Emergency Procedures Protocols, overall school planning, the final content of the school plan, scheduling of drills, advising families, inviting police, fire and EMS to participate in and be aware of planning and drills, training of students and staff; and the overall safety of staff and students. In an actual incident (not a drill), the police are responsible for management of the threat and subsequent criminal investigation; however, the Principal shall provide full cooperation with police.
- 4.2.0 **Staff:** School staff have the overall responsibility for the training, safety and well-being of students. Staff in non-school sites also have a responsibility to take part in training and follow the direction of the site administrator. Administrators (Principals and Vice-Principals), during a violent incident, have additional responsibilities in terms of working closely with police.
- 4.3.0 **Students:** Students have a responsibility to be familiar with the emergency procedures and to quickly respond to staff directions during a crisis situation. Any student with prior information or knowledge of an individual or a potential situation which may result in a violent incident must come forward with that information as soon as possible.

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- 4.4.0 Police: Police are responsible for responding to and investigating violent incidents. During a violent incident, police will assume command and control of the response and investigation and will liaise closely with school and Board administration and other emergency services throughout the process.
- 4.5.0 Parents/Guardians: Parents and guardians must be informed of the existence of the emergency procedures and should reinforce with their children, student responsibilities to follow directions during a crisis and disclose any information they may have prior to or during a crisis situation. Parents should be informed they are not to use their cell phones to communicate with their children during emergency procedures. Parents/guardians are responsible for keeping their child's contact information up to date so they can easily be reached by staff in the event of an emergency.

5.0.0 PROCEDURES

- 5.1.0 It is recognized that each potential crisis will be unique to the particular site and its inherent characteristics. The following recommended set of guidelines, which conform to current expectations of the Ministry of Education, have therefore been developed for school use to facilitate consistency across the district when responding to crisis situations. The Associate Superintendent of Safe and Caring Schools can be consulted in the creation of site specific emergency procedures/plans. Each school will implement these procedures in light of their school's unique structure and/or needs while also taking into consideration special needs of staff and student.
- 5.3.0 As many schools have licensed child-care centres, LDSB satellite offices, or other tenants and community groups using school premises, it is important that Principals ensure the appropriate staff members from those organizations are included in the development and implementation of these procedures at each school site and clear communication plans are created.
- 5.4.0 Emergency procedures in the school's Emergency Response Plan will contain a floor plan, which will be updated annually to include renovations which have impacted upon the school's layout. The floor plan will be colour-coded using red, green, and blue. Red indicates the areas of the school that cannot be locked down safely; green identifies areas sealed off by a working lock; and blue identifies potential command post locations. The floor plan will include the designation of at least two, potential evacuation sites (one of which must be outside a two-kilometre radius from the school) as well as two potential in-school command posts. Although the floor plan is a starting point for police information, the nature of the incident will determine the real impact and corresponding actions.
- 5.5.0 There will be signage in place to identify school buildings and portables, exterior doors, and classrooms. Portables will be clearly marked on all sides with a number. Exterior doors will be marked with A, B, C, and so on at the top of the doorway in clockwise sequence. The main entrance should be designated as exterior door A. All rooms within the school building have a number which is displayed at the doorway to the room.

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6.0.0 COMMUNICATION

- 6.1.0 The police will respond to the media with respect to the criminal incident and the police response to the incident. The LDSB Communication Department will coordinate the Board's media response in consultation with the Director of Education, as it relates to matters of staff and student safety.
- 6.2.0 Communication with families is essential. Parents/guardians will be informed about the school's emergency procedures in the school's Emergency Response Plan on an annual basis through some form of communication. This communication will inform them of what is expected of them should they arrive at the school during a drill, or if they are present within the school when an emergency procedure is called.
- 6.3.0 When the school plans for an emergency procedures drill, parents/guardians will be given some form of advance notice prior to the lockdown drill through established communication practices.
- 6.4.0 If the emergency is not a drill, some form of communication will be shared with families as soon as possible after the event. The LDSB Communications Department will lead any communication surrounding the incident.
- 6.5.0 Following an emergency that is not a drill, debriefing opportunities will be offered for students, staff, and families as well as support documents for everyone involved. The nature and severity of the incident will dictate who should be included to support that debriefing opportunity. It is anticipated that the Board's Crisis Response Team will support and/or lead these debriefing sessions.
- 6.6.0 Emergency procedures will be reviewed annually as part of the normal review cycle and update of the school's Emergency Response Plan.

Legal References

Occupational Health & Safety Act

Related Procedures & Documents

Code of Conduct (AP 350)

Safe Schools (APs 351-356)

Violence in the Workplace (AP 407)

Reporting and Investigating Violence in the Workplace (AP 408)

LDSB Emergency Procedures (Step-by-Step Guides for Evacuation, Shelter in Place, Hold and Secure and Lockdown)

Ministry of Education: Guidelines for Developing and Maintaining Lockdown Procedures for Elementary and Secondary Schools in Ontario, June 2009

April 2019