



School Lockdown Procedures Joint Guidance

Statement

- There is a threat to schools from a terrorist/extremist weapons attack.
- Presently the threat is LOW.
- However, it is LOW threat not 'No threat' and therefore schools should have a contingency plan and procedures in place to deal with it similar to fire procedures.
- Unlike Fire Procedures, which in most cases means evacuating to an external assembly area, this will most likely require 'Invacuation' to a safe area(s).
- Perhaps better described as temporary refuge areas, these are places that are safer than staying where you are and safer than immediately evacuating.
- The attached guidelines will assist in the production of a contingency plan and provide advice on the development of procedures.

Contingency Plan Guidelines

AIM

The aim is to protect children and staff from a terrorist/extremist weapons attack until the police arrive to take control of the situation.

METHOD

STEP 1

Carry out a vulnerability assessment of the school's campus using the 'traffic light' system. Using a plan of the campus, colour the areas red, amber and green, depending on how vulnerable to attack they are, red being the most vulnerable.

Note: The easiest way to do this is to put yourself in the position of the attacker and ask yourself 'how would you carry out an attack and where are the easiest places to gain access?'

STEP 2

The green areas are the most likely to provide protection or are difficult to find. Carry out a space assessment using approximately 0.5m² per person to calculate how many can be accommodated. If insufficient, then some of the amber areas may have to be used.

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Note: In making the choice of where to go, some other factors need to be considered.

- It is best to move people short distances – longer routes can lead to disruption and panic.
- Routes to safe areas also need to be safe, eg do not take people outside to move back indoors somewhere else.
- People need to be kept informed (every couple of minutes) while in these areas. This can be done using area defined Public Address (PA) systems or messaging on tablets.
- Ideally, facilities (toilets, water) should be nearby.
- It has been found that groups (classes) that know and work with each other are better kept together, lower stress.

STEP 3

Having calculated where people can be safely and comfortably accommodated, it is now necessary to write the procedures.

There are three key factors:

Time: As with a fire alarm, consideration should be given to using some form of panic alarm. This must be significantly different from the fire alarm to avoid confusion, the alarm can be qualified by the use of a PA system. Positioning of the panic alarm(s) will most likely be in the red areas, e.g. near the entrances, main office and control room.

Note: Sometimes it is very difficult to realise that an attack is taking place so time is of the essence.

Control: Control of an incident is essential, otherwise there is a strong chance of panic. An incident controller/coordinator should be nominated to take charge. Because of holidays/sickness/external meetings etc., it is advisable to nominate at least three incident controllers to ensure that one is on site at all times (during and after school). These people will require a small amount of training/guidance to instil confidence in the procedures.

Consideration should be given to the use of pagers. The duty incident controller picks up the pager on coming to work and returns it to the office on leaving. The caretaker has it out of hours. Not only is this a quick way to contact the incident controller, it also alarms if taken off-site, thus ensuring there is always an incident controller available.

Control is generally best operated from a control room. This room will have the CCTV monitors and recorders, access control data, alarm access, PA system initiation and good communications (phone, e-mail etc.). This should be in a safe area or be well protected so that it is not compromised during an incident. Inevitably, some schools will have these facilities in their main office which could be near the entrance and hence be vulnerable in the initial stages of an attack. In this case, consideration should be given to having duplicate facilities elsewhere in a safe area or up grading the protection of the office. This can be done relatively cost-effectively and with little disruption – advice is available if required.

Simplicity: Procedures must be kept simple and be usable under stress and at different times of the day, e.g. during arrival of students, lunchtime and during after - school activities.

It is strongly suggested that fire marshals are used to implement the procedures as these already have a responsibility for guiding and accounting for students in a fire incident. They will need some training and practice in these new procedures.

The NASUWT is working in partnership with GUK which specialises in the implementation of procedures and training that support the creation of a safe area in your school.