



Lord Lawson of Beamish Academy

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Dear Parent/Carer

At Lord Lawson of Beamish Academy, the safety and wellbeing of your child are our highest priorities. As part of our ongoing commitment to maintaining a safe and secure environment for students, staff and visitors, I am writing to inform you that we will be conducting a lockdown drill on **Wednesday 7 October**.

A lockdown procedure is a standard health and safety precaution, similar to a fire evacuation drill. It may be used in circumstances where there is a potential risk to the safety of those on site and it is safer for everyone to remain indoors. The purpose of a lockdown is to protect students, staff and visitors by securing them in a safe location until any potential risk has passed.

Examples of situations where the lockdown procedure might be used include:

- A potentially dangerous person or animal on school premises
- A disturbance or dangerous situation in the local community that may impact the school
- A nearby chemical incident or other environmental hazard
- A terrorism-related incident.

During the previous academic year, students received information about our lockdown procedures through a dedicated assembly led by Mr Cooper and me. During this assembly, we explained why such procedures are necessary, what students should expect during a lockdown drill and, most importantly, reassured them that these exercises are designed to keep everyone safe.

In advance of this year's drill, all students will once again be reminded of the procedures and the reasons behind them. In addition, a dedicated assembly will be delivered to our new Year 7 students this Friday to ensure they understand the process, know what to expect and feel reassured and confident should such an event occur.

I would like to emphasise that this is simply a precautionary exercise designed to help us practise our response to an unlikely emergency situation. Regular drills help ensure that students and staff know exactly what to do should a real incident ever occur, allowing us to maintain the safest possible environment for our school community.

Should you or your child have any questions or concerns, please refer to the Frequently Asked Questions document enclosed with this letter or contact a member of our pastoral team, who will be happy to provide further support.

Yours faithfully

Dr A Fowler
Principal

Parent/Carer Lockdown Policy – FAQs

1. What is a lockdown and when would it be used?

- A lockdown is a safety procedure used to protect students, staff, and visitors from potential threats inside or near the school building. It is typically used during incidents such as intruders, violent behaviour, or external threats (e.g. police incident nearby).

2. What is the difference between a full lockdown and a partial lockdown?

- A **full lockdown** means all doors are locked, students and staff stay out of sight, and no one leaves their location until instructed it is safe to do so
- A **partial lockdown** may involve movement restrictions and increased vigilance, but normal lessons can continue
- In some cases, breaks or lunches will not take place outside during a partial lockdown.

3. What should I do if I hear the school is in lockdown?

- Please remain calm, monitor the school's official communication channels for updates on the situation
- **Do not** contact the school via telephone. We need to keep our phone lines available for dealing with the incident in school.

4. How will we be notified that a lockdown is taking place?

- The school uses several communication systems. These include ClassCharts notifications, text, e-mail, and social media. Information will be provided through these methods.

5. Can I come to the school to pick up my child during a lockdown?

- No. For everyone's safety, the school is secured during a lockdown. Parents and carers should not attempt to come to the school to collect their child.

6. How are students kept safe during a full lockdown?

- Teachers and staff are trained to follow lockdown protocols, which include:
 - Locking doors
 - Turning off lights
 - Locking windows
 - Closing blinds
 - Turning off air conditioning units
 - Where necessary, barricading their classroom or office door
 - Keeping students quiet and out of sight

7. What if my child is at the toilet or in the corridor when a full lock down begins?

- Students are required to go to the nearest classroom or office
- The member of staff will confirm with the attendance office they are safe and accounted for.

8. Will my child be able to use their phone during a lockdown?

- Students are not permitted to use mobile phones during the school day; the expectation remains the same in a lockdown
- Students' mobile phones will continue to be locked in their pouches.

9. How long does a lockdown usually last?

- The duration will depend on the nature of the incident
- Lockdown restrictions are only removed when it is deemed there is no longer a threat to the school community
- The school must remain in lockdown until an "all clear" is officially given.

10. Who is responsible for initiating a lockdown?

- The Principal or a delegated member of the Senior Leadership Team typically initiates lockdowns based on threat assessments
- The relevant member of staff will take guidance from authorities such as the Police when initiating such a process.

11. Are there different procedures for lockdown during breaks or lunch?

- Yes. Staff will direct students into the building and direct them to the classroom of their next lesson.

12. How often are lockdown drills carried out?

- Regular lockdown drills are scheduled to ensure all staff and students are familiar with procedures. It is likely there will be one drill per term.

13. What support is available after a lockdown?

- Debrief sessions will be provided to all persons involved
- Counselling may be available for staff and students affected by the event.

14. How are lockdowns different from other emergency procedures like fire drills?

- Fire evacuations require exiting the building. Lockdowns require securing and staying inside rooms. They are opposite in procedure and purpose.

15. How can I help prepare my child for a lockdown?

- Talk calmly with your child about the importance of following safety instructions
- Reassure them that drills and procedures are designed to keep them safe
- Encourage them to ask staff questions if they feel uncertain or anxious.

16. My child has special educational needs; how will they be supported during a lockdown?

- The school has plans to assist specific students with disabilities or special needs during emergencies, ensuring they receive appropriate support
- Your child will be aware if any specific support is to be provided to them during a lockdown.

17. Who can I speak to if I have concerns about the lockdown policy?

- Please email Dr Fowler or Mr Cooper if you have questions or suggestions regarding the policy using the email: principal@lordlawson.academy.