

OAKMONT Education

Policy



Emergency Planning and Response

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Aims

This policy is established to ensure comprehensive preparedness and effective response measures to safeguard the safety, security, and well-being of students, staff, and visitors during all types of emergencies. These include public health incidents, severe weather, utility failures, security threats, and other disruptions as detailed in the emergency planning and response guidance for education and childcare settings provided by the government.

This policy applies across all potential emergency scenarios that might affect the institution. It outlines detailed procedures and responsibilities to manage such situations effectively, adhering to the standards set in the aforementioned guidance document.

Emergency Preparedness:

Emergency Plans: The school maintains an updated Emergency Response Plan (ERP) that addresses various potential incidents, including severe weather, health epidemics, fires, and security threats.

Training and Drills: Regular training and emergency drills will be conducted to ensure everyone knows their roles and responsibilities. This includes fire drills, lockdown drills, and evacuation drills.

Communication: A robust communication system is in place to alert everyone on school premises of an emergency.

Protocol for Handling a Child with a Weapon at School

Immediate Response:

Do not confront the child directly: If a child is found to be in possession of a weapon, staff should avoid confronting the child in a manner that may escalate the situation. Instead, they should try to keep the child calm and isolated from other pupils if possible, without risking their own safety.

Initiate a lockdown if necessary: Depending on the situation, if the child is displaying threatening behaviour or the situation is deemed potentially dangerous, initiate a lockdown following the school's lockdown procedures to ensure the safety of all students and staff.

Alert Authorities:

Contact 999 immediately: School staff should inform the headteacher or director. Provide detailed information about the situation, including the location within the school and descriptions of the child and the weapon.

Communication:

Discreet internal communication: Use the school's internal communication system to inform relevant staff members about the incident discreetly to avoid panic. Provide clear instructions on how to proceed, ensuring that all staff members are aware of the lockdown and are keeping pupils secure and calm.

Parental notification: Prepare to inform parents about the incident at an appropriate time, ensuring that factual information is conveyed to avoid misinformation and panic. Communication should reassure parents about their children's safety and inform them about steps being taken to resolve the situation.

After the Incident:

School staff should fully cooperate with the police during their investigation, providing access to school facilities and any relevant information that may assist in safely resolving the situation.

After the incident, provide immediate psychological support and counselling to pupils and staff affected by the incident. This support should be extended over the following weeks to manage trauma and anxiety related to the event.

Conduct a thorough review and debriefing of the incident with all relevant staff and police to evaluate the response and improve the school's safety protocols. This should include an assessment of how the child obtained the weapon and measures to prevent such incidents in the future.

Lock down procedures

Initiation:

Criteria for Lockdown:

A lockdown will be initiated when a credible threat to the safety of pupils and staff is identified that requires securing in place. Examples include, but are not limited to, nearby criminal activity, an intruder on site, or other security threats.

The headteacher, or a designated deputy in their absence, has the authority to initiate a lockdown.

Notification:

The initiation of a lockdown will be communicated immediately using the school's emergency alert system, which includes mobile phone alerts and other digital communication tools as available.

Clear, concise instructions will be provided, specifying that it is a lockdown (not a drill) and outlining initial steps to be taken.

Actions During Lockdown:

Immediate Actions:

- All pupils and staff must remain calm and swiftly move to the nearest classroom or designated safe area. These areas should be clearly marked and known to all through regular drills.
- Secure all entrances and exits to prevent unauthorised access. Staff responsible for areas near exterior doors should ensure they are locked and report their status via the school's communication network.
- Lock all doors and windows, turn off lights, and draw blinds to minimise visibility from outside.
- Everyone should stay away from windows and doors, sit against walls or low to the ground to provide the smallest possible visible target, and maintain silence to avoid attracting attention.

During Lockdown Maintenance:

- Staff and pupils should await further instructions or the all-clear signal. All classroom teachers should have access to a means of silent communication with the headteacher or emergency coordinator for updates.
- Teachers should account for all pupils present and report any absences or additional individuals present to the headteacher through secure communication channels.

Communication with Authorities:

Coordination with the police

The headteacher or designated emergency coordinator will maintain direct communication with the police and emergency responders. They will provide updates on the situation and receive instructions or support as needed.

Information about the threat level and law enforcement guidance will be relayed to staff discretely to avoid causing undue alarm but ensure preparedness for possible actions, such as evacuation.

Internal Communication:

Throughout the lockdown, the headteacher or emergency coordinator will continue to communicate with staff through the school's secure communication system to provide updates, changes in the status of the threat, and instructions for next steps.

Post lockdown procedures

Damage Assessment:

Procedures for Assessment:

- Immediate activation of the Emergency Response Team (ERT) to assess the extent of damage to the school facilities following an emergency.
- Utilisation of a pre-designed checklist to evaluate the structural integrity, utilities, and accessibility of all school buildings and grounds.

Reporting Damage:

- Establishment of a centralised reporting system where all assessments are documented and communicated to the school administration.
- Immediate notification to local emergency services and infrastructure repair services for urgent issues.
- Regular updates to stakeholders, including the local authorities and parents, about the extent of damage and expected recovery timelines.

Prioritisation of Repairs:

- Prioritisation based on a tier system where repairs critical to the safety and operational continuity of the school are addressed first.
- Allocation of resources to critical areas such as electrical systems, plumbing, structural integrity of buildings, and secure entrances/exits.
- Coordination with insurance providers and contractors to expedite repair processes.

Emotional and Psychological Support

Counselling Services:

Immediate availability of psychological support to address potential trauma and stress post-incident.

Partnership with local mental health organisations to provide additional resources and support for pupils and staff.

Setup of dedicated safe spaces within school premises for individuals needing immediate emotional support.

Normalisation of School Activities:

- Gradual resumption of regular school activities with modifications as needed to accommodate ongoing recovery efforts.
- Organisation of group sessions and workshops to discuss the incident, facilitated by mental health professionals, to aid collective healing.
- Monitoring and ongoing support for pupils and staff showing prolonged signs of distress, offering extended counselling and resources.

Review and Debrief

Post-Incident Meetings:

- Convening of initial debriefing sessions with the ERT, school leadership, and relevant staff within 48 hours of the incident to evaluate immediate response effectiveness.
- Inclusion of feedback from all participants in the emergency response, identifying strengths and areas for improvement.
- Scheduling of follow-up meetings involving wider school community stakeholders, including parent representatives and local authorities.

Updates to Emergency Plan:

- Incorporation of lessons learned into the existing emergency plan, with specific adjustments made to protocols that may have underperformed.
- Regular training updates and drills adjusted based on new insights and strategies developed from the incident review.
- Commitment to a continuous improvement cycle, ensuring the emergency plan remains dynamic and responsive to new challenges and information.

These sections aim to ensure that Oakmont School not only effectively manages the immediate aftermath of an emergency but also supports the school community in recovery and learning from the incident to enhance future preparedness.

Roles and responsibilities

Headteacher: Oversees the implementation of the emergency response and lockdown procedures.

Teachers and Learning support assistants: Responsible for securing pupils, providing instructions during the lockdown, and maintaining calm.

Directors: Ensures that all safety equipment and communication systems are operational.

Pupils: Follow all instructions given by teachers and staff during an emergency or lockdown