

BCCA SCHOOL LOCKDOWN PROCEDURES

Dear Parents,

Here is continuing BCCA safety policy information.

Overview

Staff and students at British Columbia Christian Academy have the right to learn and work in a safe and secure environment. However, the possibility of a major incident of violence is a reality that cannot be overlooked. Everyone who spends any amount of time at BCCA on a regular basis needs to know how to protect themselves and others in the event of a major incident or threat of school violence. Creating a safe and secure learning environment for all is a priority of BCCA.

Policy and Guidelines

A) Use of Proper Terminology Regarding School Lockdowns

The lockdown order will be made in plain, clear language:

“ATTENTION PLEASE:
THIS SCHOOL IS NOW IN A LOCKDOWN.
STAY IN YOUR CLASSROOM
OR GO THE NEAREST SAFE AREA NOW.
FOLLOW ALL LOCKDOWN PROCEDURES.

REPEAT:
THIS SCHOOL IS NOW IN A LOCKDOWN
STAY IN YOUR CLASSROOM
OR GO TO THE NEAREST SAFE AREA NOW”.

Secret codes or passwords to announce a lockdown will NOT be used.

The term “Lockdown” will only be used when there is a major incident or threat of school violence within the school -- or in relation to the school. The overuse or misuse of lockdowns will desensitize staff and students to the seriousness of a lockdown.

The term “Hold and Secure” will be used when it is necessary to secure the school due to an ongoing situation outside and not related to the school (e.g., police incident occurs near the school but not on school property). The school continues to function normally, with the exterior doors being locked until the situation near the school is resolved.

The term “Shelter in Place” will be used when it is necessary to hold all occupants inside the school to protect them from external situations such as chemical spills, blackouts, explosions or extreme weather conditions.

B) Roles & Responsibilities During a Lockdown

Head Principal - The school Head Principal is responsible for overall lockdown planning, scheduling of drills, the training of students and for the 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; the Head Principal will be a resource to the police.

Staff – School staff members are responsible for the safety and well-being of students and will understand and efficiently implement all parts of the lockdown plan assigned to them.

Students – Students have a responsibility to be familiar with the lockdown plan and to respond quickly to the direction of staff during a crisis. Any student with information or prior knowledge of an individual or a potential situation that may result in a violent incident must come forward with that information as soon as possible (including during a lockdown).

Police – Police are responsible for responding to and investigating violent incidents at schools. During a violent incident, police will assume command and control of the response and investigation but will liaise and work closely with school administration and other emergency services throughout the process.

Parents/Guardians – Parents and guardians will be informed of the existence of the school’s lockdown plan and will be encouraged to reinforce with their children the responsibility of students to follow directions during a crisis and to disclose any information they may have prior to or during a crisis.

C) School Floor Plans

Accurate floor plans are a key component of lockdown plans and are important both from a planning and response standpoint.

Black and white floor plans will be posted throughout the school - including entry points.

Colour-coded floor plans will be used internally by school staff and provided to the Coquitlam RCMP.

Floor plans will be colour coded as follows:

- Red – danger areas that cannot be locked down safely
i.e. bathrooms, hallways, etc
- Green – areas within the school that can be locked down safely
- Blue – school main office (command post)

‘Lockdown Kits’ will be made available at the school main office and the high school admin office. Each kit will include:

- Master key sets;
- Copies of coloured site maps;
- Copies of important phone contacts.

D) Identification of Buildings, Exterior Doors, and Classrooms

To assist police in responding to a major incident or threat of violence all school buildings, entrances, and all rooms within buildings will be clearly identified. All portable structures will also be clearly identified.

Exterior doors will be clearly labeled. All rooms within the school and portable structures will be numbered

E) Initiating a Lockdown

If a lockdown becomes necessary, it is vital for it to be initiated as quickly and efficiently as possible.

At the first indication of a major incident of school violence - regardless of where it occurs in the school - notification will go immediately to the main office and, in consultation with school administration, the lockdown will commence accordingly.

All school staff members are authorized to initiate a “911” call if the circumstances warrant it. This call should be followed immediately by a call to the office.

The actual wording of the lockdown announcement will be permanently affixed on or within easy reading distance of the PA system so that it is clearly visible and can be read out verbatim by the person announcing the lockdown to the school.

All main office staff will be trained to be able to accomplish this task.

F) Procedures for Locking Down Classrooms and Other Secure Areas

The primary goal when locking down a classroom or another secure area is to make that area appear vacant to an intruder.

Before locking a door, staff will gather everyone in the immediate vicinity into their classroom or another secure area -- but only if it is safe to do so. Once inside a secure area staff will lock the doors and move everyone out of the immediate site line. Immediately upon completing this task, staff should:

- ensure everyone stays away from doors and windows;
- turn off lights;
- close blinds/drapes (where required);
- if there is a window in the classroom door, consider covering the window;
- take cover if available (get behind something solid);
- remain quiet and as still as possible;
- take attendance (teachers);
- draw everyone's attention to their cell phones. Ask everyone with a phone to turn it off and indicate it must not be used in any way, including text messages.

G) Procedures for Portables During a Lockdown

Portable classrooms pose some unique issues. Due to thin wall construction (which could be penetrated by firearms) desks should be tipped onto their sides in a large circle with the desktops facing out. Students and staff should then gather within the circle keeping their bodies below the top edge of the desks. This will provide an additional barrier for all.

H) Procedures for Washrooms during a Lockdown

It is possible that students or staff may be in a washroom when a lockdown is ordered. Since washrooms in the main building cannot be locked, they will be designated in the school's lockdown plan as a 'red' (danger) area that must, if possible, be evacuated during a lockdown. Students / staff inside a washroom when a lockdown is initiated will proceed to the nearest safe area.

LOCKDOWN PLANS FOR ELEMENTARY/ HIGH SCHOOL AREAS FLOOR will identify an adult who normally works near student washrooms. After gathering students in the immediate vicinity into their classroom the assigned adult will (if it is safe to do so) quickly check both the male and female washrooms to which they have been assigned in the planning phase and take any students found there into their classrooms or safe area to lock down.

For HS students there will be a training component that explains the responsibility of students to get out of the washrooms immediately upon hearing a lockdown announced and to get to the nearest classroom or other designated safe area. As a last resort, staff or students trapped in a washroom should attempt to secure the bathroom door (where there is one), enter a stall, lock the door, climb on top of the toilet and remain silent and still.

I) Procedures for Open Areas (Gym, Library, etc) during a Lockdown

Open areas such as libraries, gyms, hallways, staircases, foyers and other open areas are the most vulnerable areas of a school -- making them the most likely areas for a shooting to occur, and the most difficult areas to quickly and effectively secure.

The school's lockdown plan will identify a preferred safety option for each open area and student/staff training will ensure everyone understands the preferred option (where to go and what to do) while also ensuring everyone is aware of other options if a lockdown is ordered while they are in an open area, and the preferred option is not available.

J) Procedures for Child Care Centres and Other Facility Occupants during a Lockdown

BCCA has a licensed preschool centre and some other tenants and community groups using school premises.

In developing a lockdown plan, the Head Principal will ensure the appropriate staff from organizations sharing the school building are consulted in the development and implementation of lockdown procedures -- and that these organizations participate in annual training and drills.

K) Procedures for Exterior Areas of the School When a Lockdown is Ordered

Those who are outside the school when a lockdown is ordered will not, under any circumstances, attempt to enter the school but will instead proceed immediately to the school's pre-determined off-site evacuation location(s).

Attendance will be taken, and staff and students will remain in that location until further advised by administration or police.

Note:

When a "Hold and Secure" situation occurs (e.g. as a result of police activity on an adjacent street, etc.) and staff and students are outside the building, they should immediately re-enter the building prior to the exterior doors being locked.

L) Procedures for a Controlled Evacuation during a Lockdown

In the event of a prolonged lockdown situation -- or a situation where the threat has been contained (e.g. a barricaded individual contained by police in one section of the building) -- it may become possible for a controlled evacuation of the areas of the school not in the vicinity of the contained area.

Police will decide whether the controlled evacuation of a school under lockdown is a viable option and will direct the evacuation process. School staff -- including administrators -- will follow police instructions quickly and explicitly.

A controlled evacuation will normally be done on a room-by-room basis, with evacuees being escorted by police to the evacuation location.

M) Procedures for Responding to a Fire Alarm during a Lockdown

If a fire alarm is pulled once a lockdown has been called, staff and students shall not respond as they normally would to a fire alarm but shall instead remain locked down if it is safe to do so.

Staff and students must always be aware of other dangers such as fire, and be prepared to respond accordingly to ensure their safety.

N) Procedures to End a Lockdown

The procedure for ending a lockdown must include the same level of authenticity and authority as the procedure for initiating one.

The decision to end a lockdown can only be made by the on-scene police incident commander in consultation with the Head Principal -- and the actual procedure for ending the lockdown will vary by location and circumstance.

O) Procedures for Lockdown Training

All students and staff will be trained in how to respond to a lockdown. Orientation for new school staff will include lockdown training, and the Head Principal will establish a method to conduct an annual lockdown plan review for all staff.

Students will also be trained using methods deemed by the Head Principal appropriate for different divisions. Each division may consider assemblies to train students on lockdown procedures while -- owing to the young age of some elementary students -- classroom teachers may handle training students at the elementary level. Where possible, it is advantageous to have police partners present during training and to assist with the training of staff and students.

Lockdown information for parents will be communicated each year using a variety of methods including the school handbook, school newsletters, school open houses and the school website.

Parents will be encouraged to review the lockdown procedures with their children.

P) Procedures for Lockdown Drills

Fire drills have long been accepted (and proven effective) as an important tool in preparing staff and students to respond to a fire. Lockdown drills are equally important in responding to violent incidents.

BCCA will conduct two lockdown drills each school year.

Staff will be given warning of an impending lockdown drill. This will help avoid unnecessary panic and media interest.

Each lockdown drill will be followed by a debriefing session to identify areas needing improvement.

Q) Procedures for Dealing with the Media in a Lockdown

The Coquitlam RCMP, in cooperation with an authorized BCCA representative, are jointly responsible for addressing the media with respect to a school lockdown.

Staff or students are not authorized to speak to the media during or after a school lockdown.

R) Communication with Parents/Guardians about a Lockdown

Parents, guardians and the general community are strongly encouraged to remain away from any school engaged in a lockdown. There is nothing bystanders can do to change the situation inside the school, and their presence may, in fact, hamper the work of emergency responders.

Parents and guardians are strongly discouraged from attempting to contact their children in the school via cell phone. A ringing cell phone can draw an intruder's attention to the location of students and staff – jeopardizing not just their lives but potentially jeopardizing the lives of police inside the building.

Any parents, guardians, visitors or outside contractors inside a school when a lockdown is initiated must remain in a secure area with staff and students until the all-clear is given.

In all cases where a lockdown that was not a drill has been ordered, the school will send home a communication regarding the incident at the earliest possible opportunity.

Parents are encouraged to ensure their contact information at the school is up to date so they can easily be reached by staff in the event of an emergency.

S) Procedures for School Recovery Following a Lockdown

A debriefing will occur in all situations following a lockdown. The nature and severity of the incident will dictate who should be included in the debriefing and how any recommendations flowing from the debriefing will be handled.