



HURON-PERTH CATHOLIC

District School Board

Emergency and Lockdown

Adopted:	October 26, 1998	Policy #:	P 2.1.6.
Revised:	September 28, 2026	Policy Category:	2.1. School Operations

BELIEF STATEMENT:

The Huron-Perth Catholic District School Board believes that every person is created in the image and likeness of God and possesses inherent dignity and worth. As a Catholic learning community, we are called to create and maintain schools in which students, staff, families, volunteers, visitors, and community partners experience environments that are safe, caring, inclusive, and respectful.

The Board recognizes that the safety and well-being of students and staff are essential conditions for learning, faith formation, and human flourishing. While serious threats of violence are rare, effective preparation, clear procedures, appropriate training, and strong partnerships with police and emergency services are necessary to protect members of our Catholic school communities.

The Board further believes that emergency preparedness must be approached with care and sensitivity, recognizing the age, developmental needs, abilities, lived experiences, and individual needs of students. Emergency planning and training will seek to build preparedness and confidence without unnecessarily creating fear or anxiety.

POLICY STATEMENT:

The Huron-Perth Catholic District School Board shall establish and maintain consistent procedures for responding to major incidents or threats to school safety in accordance with the *Provincial Model for a Local Police/School Board Protocol* and applicable legislation, regulations, Ministry of Education requirements, and local police/school board protocols.

Each elementary and secondary school shall develop, implement, maintain, and annually review a school-specific Emergency and Crisis Response Plan that includes lockdown procedures consistent with Board requirements and provincial direction.

The Board shall ensure that:

- 1. Common Terminology**

All schools use the provincially established terminology of Lockdown, Hold and Secure, and Shelter in Place. Plain and direct language shall be used when initiating an emergency response. Secret codes or passwords shall not be used.

- 2. School-Specific Emergency Planning**

Each school maintains an Emergency and Crisis Response Plan appropriate to its physical layout, student population, staffing, community context, child care arrangements, portables, shared facilities, and other site-specific circumstances.

- 3. Lockdown Drills**

Each school conducts a minimum of two lockdown drills during each school year. Drills

shall be planned and conducted in a manner appropriate to the age and needs of students and shall be followed by a debrief to identify opportunities for improvement.

4. **Training and Awareness**

Staff and students shall receive appropriate training regarding lockdown and emergency security procedures. New staff shall receive appropriate orientation, and reasonable efforts shall be made to ensure occasional, itinerant, part-time, child care, and other personnel working in Board facilities understand applicable emergency procedures.

5. **Accessibility and Individual Needs**

Emergency plans, procedures, training, and drills shall consider accessibility requirements and the individual needs of students and staff, including students with special education needs and students requiring medical, communication, mobility, sensory, behavioural, or other accommodations.

6. **Police and Emergency Service Partnerships**

Schools shall work collaboratively with local police services and, where appropriate, fire and emergency medical services in emergency planning, training, drills, and responses.

7. **Roles and Responsibilities**

The Chief Executive Officer (CEO) or designate shall establish Administrative Procedures identifying the responsibilities of Board staff, principals, school staff, students, parents/guardians, police, emergency services, and other school occupants. The principal is responsible for the implementation and maintenance of the school-specific Emergency and Crisis Response Plan, including staff and student training, scheduling required drills, reviewing procedures, and ensuring appropriate communication with community partners.

During an actual violent incident requiring police response, police assume responsibility for managing the threat and any resulting criminal investigation. School and Board personnel shall cooperate fully with police and emergency responders.

8. **Emergency Communication**

Schools shall have reliable methods for communicating emergency directions throughout the school and, where reasonably possible, on school grounds. Emergency communication systems and procedures shall take accessibility needs into consideration.

9. **School Facilities and Emergency Information**

Schools shall maintain accurate and current information required by emergency responders, including school floor plans, building and room identification, exterior door identification, emergency access information, command locations, and designated off-site evacuation locations.

10. **Shared School Facilities**

Emergency planning shall take into consideration licensed child care programs, community use groups, tenants, before- and after-school programs, and other organizations or individuals regularly occupying Board facilities.

11. **Parent/Guardian and Community Communication**

Parents/guardians shall be provided with appropriate information regarding school emergency procedures and expectations. Following an actual lockdown or significant emergency event, the Board and school shall communicate with families as soon as reasonably possible, taking into consideration the circumstances of the event and direction from police or emergency responders.

12. **Recovery and Debriefing**

Following an actual lockdown or significant emergency event, the Board shall support an appropriate debrief and recovery process. Where circumstances warrant, mental health, trauma response, pastoral care, employee supports, and other appropriate resources shall be made available.

13. **Annual Review**

Each school's Emergency and Crisis Response Plan shall be reviewed at least annually

and whenever circumstances, facilities, legislation, Ministry direction, or lessons learned from drills or actual incidents indicate that revisions are required.

14. Board Oversight

The Chief Executive Officer or designate shall establish mechanisms to monitor compliance with required lockdown drills, annual plan reviews, staff training, and other requirements established through Board Administrative Procedures.

DEFINITIONS (New):

Lockdown

A Lockdown is an emergency response used when there is a major incident or threat of school violence within the school or directly related to the school that requires students, staff, and others to take immediate protective action.

A lockdown is reserved for situations involving a serious and potentially immediate threat. The term shall not be used for routine security concerns or situations more appropriately addressed through another emergency response.

Hold and Secure

A Hold and Secure is used when it is necessary to secure the school because of an ongoing situation outside the school that is not directly related to the school.

During a Hold and Secure, exterior doors are secured and access to and from the building is restricted. Normal activities within the school may continue unless otherwise directed.

Shelter in Place

A Shelter in Place is used when an environmental, weather-related, or other external hazard makes it safer for students, staff, and visitors to remain inside the school.

Examples may include a hazardous materials incident, chemical spill, explosion, severe weather, or other external environmental hazard.

Emergency and Crisis Response Plan

The school-specific plan outlining the procedures, responsibilities, communication processes, emergency contacts, evacuation locations, facility information, and other measures necessary to respond effectively to emergencies affecting the school.

Emergency Services

Police, fire, emergency medical services, and other agencies that may respond to or assist with an emergency affecting a school or Board facility.

Off-Site Evacuation Location

A predetermined location away from the school property where students, staff, and others may assemble, be accounted for, receive further direction, and, where appropriate, be reunited with parents/guardians following an emergency.

REFERENCES:

- *Education Act*, R.S.O. 1990, c. E.2
- Ministry of Education and Ministry of the Solicitor General, *Provincial Model for a Local Police/School Board Protocol*
- Appendix B – *Provincial Policy for Developing and Maintaining Lockdown Procedures for Elementary and Secondary Schools in Ontario*

- Applicable Ontario Regulations and Ministry of Education Policy/Program Memoranda relating to safe and accepting schools
- Huron-Perth Catholic District School Board/Police Services Protocol

RESOURCES, APPENDICES AND FORMS:

- N/A