Willow Vale
School

# Lockdown Policy

**Policy date:** October 2026

**Approved by:** Management Committee

**Review date:** October 2027

**Be Safe – Be Kind - Belong**

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## 1. Policy Statement and Purpose

Willow Vale School is committed to providing a safe, calm, and secure environment for all pupils, staff, visitors, and volunteers. Lockdown procedures form a vital part of the school's safeguarding and emergency response arrangements and provide a sensible, proportionate response to situations that may pose a risk to safety either on or near the school site.

Lockdown procedures may be implemented in response to a range of internal or external incidents, including but not limited to: a reported incident or civil disturbance in the local community, the presence of an intruder on site, a warning relating to local air pollution (such as a smoke plume or gas cloud), a major fire in the vicinity of the school, or other immediate hazards such as a dangerous animal roaming nearby. In all cases, procedures are designed to protect life, reduce harm, and support effective and timely decision-making during high-risk situations.

The procedures outlined in this policy are intended to minimise disruption to the learning environment wherever possible, while ensuring the safety and wellbeing of pupils and staff remains the absolute priority. Clear, calm, and proportionate actions help reduce uncertainty and anxiety during high-stress situations and support effective working with the Emergency Services and other relevant agencies.

The purpose of this policy is to:

- Protect life and minimise harm
- Provide clear, calm, and proportionate responses to risk
- Reduce confusion during high-stress situations
- Support effective communication and cooperation with Emergency Services
- Meet national expectations for protective security and emergency preparedness

This policy should be read in conjunction with the schools:

- Critical Incident Plan
- Safeguarding Policy
- Health & Safety Policy

## 2. National Guidance and Legal Context

This policy aligns with national guidance and expectations, including:

- **Department for Education (DfE)**
  *Protective Security and Preparedness for Education Settings* (2024, updated 2025)

- **ACT for Education / National Counter Terrorism Security Office (NaCTSO)** - controversial
- **Terrorism (Protection of Premises) Act 2025 (Martyn's Law)** – proportionate preparedness and response
- **JESIP – Joint Emergency Services Interoperability Principles** *(Working together to save lives)*

Lockdown procedures are designed to be **proportionate, age-appropriate, SEND-aware, and reassuring**, without creating unnecessary fear or anxiety for pupils.

**Martyn's Law Readiness**

The school recognises that the Terrorism (Protection of Premises) Act 2025 (Martyn's Law) introduces a statutory requirement for education settings to have clear and proportionate protective security procedures in place. In preparation for implementation (expected from 2027), the school will:
• Maintain documented public protection procedures (lockdown, evacuation, invacuation and communication)
• Undertake a regular protective security and vulnerability self-assessment
• Ensure staff are appropriately trained and aware of procedures
• Consider risks associated with both day-to-day operation and higher footfall events
These arrangements will be reviewed annually and updated in line with national guidance and statutory requirements.

## 3. What is Lockdown?

A lockdown is a protective response used when it is safer for pupils, staff, and others on site to remain inside and in secured areas rather than to evacuate the school. It is implemented in situations where there is a potential risk to safety either on or near the school site and where containment is judged to be the safest course of action.

Lockdown may be required in a range of circumstances, including but not limited to:

- An intruder on the school site or in the immediate vicinity
- A serious incident or disturbance in the local community
- A counter-terrorism concern
- A major fire, explosion, or hazardous smoke or gas plume nearby
- Any situation where the Emergency Services advise containment rather than evacuation

Lockdown is a dynamic and flexible process. It may escalate, de-escalate, or change as the situation develops, based on ongoing risk assessment and guidance from the Emergency Services. Decisions are made with the primary

aim of protecting life, minimising harm, and maintaining calm and clarity during high-risk situations.

### 3a. Bomb Threat Procedures (Protect Duty Alignment)

This section outlines the school's response to a bomb threat or suspected explosive device, in line with DfE protective security guidance and the Terrorism (Protection of Premises) Act 2025 (Martyn's Law).

All bomb threats must be treated as genuine until confirmed otherwise by the police. Staff are not expected to assess credibility and must follow procedures immediately (See **Appendix A** - Lockdown procedures: Staff quick guide and **Appendix D** – Bomb Threat procedure).

**Key Principles**
- Safety of pupils, staff, and visitors is the priority
- All threats are treated seriously and responded to proportionately
- Staff act quickly, calmly, and follow clear procedures
- Decisions are led by the Incident Lead, supported by Emergency Services

The school may respond using:
- **Evacuation** – where risk is believed to be inside
- **Invacuation** – where internal areas are safer
- **Lockdown (Red/Amber Alert)** – where containment is safest

Decisions are made through **dynamic risk assessment** by the Incident Lead in consultation with the police.

### 3b. Protective Security Framework

The school adopts a structured approach to protective security based on four key principles:

**Prevent** – Reduce the likelihood of an incident through appropriate site security, visitor management and staff vigilance
**Prepare** – Ensure staff understand procedures, roles, communication systems and emergency responses
**Respond** – Take immediate, proportionate and decisive action to protect life
**Recover** – Support pupils, staff and families following an incident and review practice to strengthen future response

This framework supports a balanced approach that prioritises both safety and wellbeing.

## 3c. Site Security, Risk Assessment and Vulnerability Review

The school promotes a proactive security culture where all staff understand their role in identifying and reporting concerns.

The school will maintain a proportionate and regularly reviewed understanding of site risks and vulnerabilities. This will include consideration of:

• Access and exit points, including security of entrances and perimeter boundaries
• Visitor and contractor management procedures
• Suitability of rooms for lockdown and safe areas
• Communication systems including phones, radios and alert systems
• Events involving increased visitor numbers or public access
• Pupil-specific needs, including SEND and medical requirements

A protective security self-assessment will be reviewed at least annually by senior leaders and used to inform improvements to practice.

Security arrangements will remain proportionate and maintain the school's welcoming and inclusive ethos.

Particular consideration will be given to events, performances, open days and lettings where increased numbers of visitors may be present.

## 4. Types of Lockdowns

### 4.1 Partial Lockdown – "Amber Alert" - Invacuation

**Partial Lockdown Procedures**

A **Partial Lockdown** is implemented when there is a **potential external risk** to the school, but **no immediate threat inside the building**. It is a precautionary measure that places the school in a state of readiness while retaining as much normality as possible should the situation escalate.

A Partial Lockdown will be communicated to staff using the agreed script via 3CX: **"Amber Alert."**

This may be introduced in response to:

- A reported incident or civil disturbance in the local community with the potential to pose a risk to pupils or staff
- A warning regarding air pollution, such as a smoke plume or gas cloud
- Any external issue where containment is advised as a precaution

**Immediate Actions**

On activation of a Partial Lockdown, the following actions will take place immediately:

- All outdoor activities will cease
- Pupils and staff will return to the building immediately
- All pupils and staff will remain inside the building
- External doors and windows will be closed and secured
- Air circulation systems will be turned off where instructed or appropriate
- Internal movement within the building may continue where it is safe to do so and appropriate to the circumstances

Where an air pollution risk has been identified, air vents may also be closed (where possible) as an additional precaution, in line with advice from the Emergency Services.

**Ongoing Management**

All situations are different. Once all pupils and staff are safely inside, senior leaders will carry out a **dynamic and ongoing risk assessment**, informed by advice from the school's Health & Safety lead and/or the Emergency Services. Any changes to procedures, including escalation or de-escalation of the response, will be clearly communicated to staff and pupils as appropriate.

A Partial Lockdown is intended to:

- Protect pupils and staff from potential external risk
- Reduce uncertainty and confusion
- Maintain calm and reassurance
- Enable swift and proportionate escalation if required

**4.2 Full Lockdown – *"Red Alert"***

A Full Lockdown is implemented when there is an immediate or serious threat to the safety of pupils, staff, or others on site. This may occur as a direct incident or as an escalation from a Partial Lockdown where risk levels have increased.
A Full Lockdown will be communicated to staff using the agreed script via 3CX: "Red Alert."
This signifies that there is an immediate threat and that strict protective actions are required to safeguard life.

**Immediate Actions**

On activation of a Full Lockdown, the following actions will take place immediately:

- All pupils and staff will return to their base room (classroom, or other agreed safe location)
- External doors will be locked
- Classroom/internal doors will be locked where possible (where a member of staff with a key is present)
- Windows will be closed and locked, and blinds drawn where it is safe to do so
- Lights will be turned off where appropriate
- Pupils will be moved away from doors and windows and positioned out of sight (for example, under desks or around corners)
- Air circulation systems will be turned off as instructed
- Quiet will be maintained as far as possible to reduce risk and detection

A register will be taken once pupils are secure. Staff will use 3CX to communicate with the Admin on site and to confirm the pupils that are in the room.

**During a Full Lockdown**

- Staff and pupils must remain in lockdown until it is formally lifted by the Incident Lead or the Emergency Services
- Staff will keep agreed lines of communication open but should not make unnecessary calls to the office, as this may delay critical communication
- Ongoing decisions will be informed by dynamic risk assessment and advice from the Emergency Services,
- Staff and pupils remain in lock down until it has been lifted by a senior member of staff / emergency services.

If the fire alarm sounds during a lockdown, staff should **not automatically evacuate**.
Evacuation should only take place if:
• There is clear evidence of fire or immediate danger within the room/area, or
• The Incident Lead or Emergency Services direct evacuation
This ensures that evacuation does not place pupils or staff at greater risk.

**Lifting the Lockdown**
A Full Lockdown will only be lifted following confirmation from a senior member of staff acting as Incident Lead and/or the Emergency Services. Clear communication will be provided to staff and pupils at the appropriate time.

## 5. The First 90 Seconds of a Lockdown

All staff must report suspicious behaviour, activity or items immediately to the school office or senior leader, in line with safeguarding and security procedures.

The first 90 seconds of a lockdown are critical.
National learning from serious incidents shows that early, decisive action saves lives, even when information is incomplete.

- Staff priorities in the first 90 seconds:
- Act immediately on the alert (Amber or Red)
- Get pupils to safety
- Secure the environment
- Remain calm, confident, and reassuring
- Do not search for further information

The priority is protective action, not explanation.
Leadership will coordinate information, liaise with Emergency Services, and provide updates.

This approach reflects DfE and counter-terrorism guidance: speed, simplicity, and clarity.

### 5a. Evacuation, Invacuation and Lockdown Decision-Making

Lockdown is one of several protective responses available to the school. Depending on the nature of the threat, the safest option may be:

- **Invacuation** – bringing pupils inside to avoid external risk
- **Lockdown** – securing pupils inside rooms
- **Evacuation** – leaving the building where remaining would be unsafe

Decisions will be based on dynamic risk assessment, available information and advice from Emergency Services.

**This approach reflects national guidance such as "Run, Hide, Tell".**

Staff should not delay immediate protective action while waiting for further detail.

## 6. Communication with Parents and Carers

The school recognises the importance of clear, timely, and accurate communication with parents and carers, particularly during incidents that may cause concern. Information about the school's lockdown procedures, including how communication will be managed, will be shared with parents

and carers in advance through appropriate channels such as newsletters, emails, or the school website.

**During a Lockdown Incident**
In the event of an actual lockdown, the school will communicate with parents and carers **as soon as it is reasonably practicable**, taking into account the nature of the incident and advice from the Emergency Services. While parents and carers may understandably feel anxious, the provision of regular, accurate information where possible helps to reduce unnecessary distress and supports the safe management of the situation.

Parents and carers will be provided with sufficient information to ensure they:

- Are reassured that the school understands their concern for their child's welfare and is doing everything possible to keep pupils and staff safe
- Do not contact the school directly during the incident, as this may tie up communication systems needed for Emergency Services and critical internal coordination
- Do not come to the school site, as this could interfere with Emergency Services' access and potentially place themselves or others at risk
- Wait for clear instructions from the school about when it is safe to collect children and where this will take place

Where appropriate, communications will reinforce messages such as:
*The school is currently in a lockdown situation. During this period, entrances may be unstaffed, external doors secured, and movement in and out of the site restricted. Please do not attend the school until you are advised that it is safe to do so.*

**Ongoing Updates**
Senior leaders will manage communication throughout the incident, informed by dynamic risk assessment and guidance from the Emergency Services. Updates will be shared when it is safe and appropriate to do so, with the priority remaining the protection of pupils, staff, and responders.

## 7. Roles and Responsibilities

During a lockdown, clear roles reduce confusion and delay.
A one-page summary of responsibilities is provided at Appendix A and must be displayed in staff areas.

- Incident Lead - The designated Security Lead for Willow Vale School is the Headteacher, however each Site Lead may be in liaison with the Headteacher who may not be on site
- Takes overall command of the incident
- Initiates Amber or Red Alert
- Liaises with Emergency Services

- Authorises communication with parents/carers
- Decides escalation, evacuation, or stand-down
- All Staff
- Take immediate responsibility for pupils in their care
- Follow lockdown procedures without delay
- Maintain calm, consistent reassurance
- Use familiar routines and SEND-appropriate support

**Management Committee**
Provides oversight and assurance that appropriate procedures, training and risk assessments are in place

**Security Lead (or designated senior leader for each site)**
Maintains the school's protective security arrangements, training records and risk assessments in liaison with the Headteacher

**Site Team**
Supports securing of buildings, access points and site safety measures during an incident

**Visitors and Contractors**
Must follow staff instructions immediately and remain in designated safe areas

## 8. SEND, Vulnerable Pupils and Inclusion

Lockdown responses must give due regard to:

- Individual regulation and sensory needs (Appendix B)
- Personal Emergency Evacuation Plans (PEEPs), where relevant
- Use of familiar adults and established communication systems
- Reasonable adjustments to support distress or anxiety

Lockdown drills and real incidents should be managed sensitively to avoid unnecessary trauma while ensuring safety.

## 9. Communication

Internal Communication:

- Communication should be minimal, clear, and purposeful
- The office and Incident Lead will coordinate information
- Unnecessary calls must be avoided
- The school will maintain alternative communication methods where possible in the event primary systems are unavailable.
- Communication with Parents/Carers

During a lockdown:

- Parents/carers should not contact or attend the school
- Information will be shared as soon as it is safe and appropriate
- Pupils will not be released until advised by Emergency Services

Clear, timely communication reduces panic and misinformation.

## 10. Emergency Services and JESIP

Lines of communication will be kept open with the Emergency Services at all times during a lockdown incident, as they are best placed to assess risk and provide professional advice as the situation develops. The school will follow all guidance and instructions provided by the Emergency Services and will support their operational response.

Depending on the nature and severity of the incident, the school site **may be cordoned off** by the Emergency Services. Decisions relating to access, movement, and evacuation will be made by the Emergency Services in conjunction with the school's Incident Lead.

Emergency Services will also support and advise the Headteacher/Incident Lead regarding the **timing and content of communication with parents and carers**, ensuring that information shared is accurate, appropriate, and does not compromise safety or ongoing operations.

In the event of a **prolonged lockdown or more serious incident**, the Local Authority has the capacity to provide humanitarian support, including the establishment of a **Reception Centre** away from the cordoned area, to support parents, carers, and family members if required.

Emergency Services operate using **JESIP (Joint Emergency Services Interoperability Principles)**. This policy supports those principles by ensuring:

- Clear leadership and command within the school
- Accurate and timely information sharing
- Use of simple, common language
- Joint decision-making once Emergency Services are present on site

School staff **do not manage or resolve the emergency itself**. Their role is to:

- Keep pupil's safe and calm
- Follow lockdown procedures
- Act on instructions from senior leaders and Emergency Services
- Support accurate information gathering where requested

This approach ensures a coordinated, proportionate, and safe response that prioritises the protection of life and effective multi-agency working.

## Training, Drills and Review

The school recognises that lockdown procedures are an important part of safeguarding and emergency preparedness, while also acknowledging that such procedures can feel unsettling for some children and young people. All training and drills are therefore planned and carried out thoughtfully, with the least possible impact on pupils, and with a strong emphasis on calm, reassurance, and emotional safety.

### Training and Drills

- Lockdown procedures are practised at least annually to ensure staff are familiar with expectations and processes
- All lockdown drills are planned in advance and communicated to staff accordingly
- Drills are designed primarily as staff training exercises, ensuring colleagues understand their roles and responsibilities should a real incident occur
- Procedures are carried out in a way that minimises disruption and distress for pupils, with adaptations made where necessary to meet individual needs

Alongside drills, lockdown procedures form part of ongoing staff training, ensuring that staff are confident, prepared, and able to respond calmly, promptly, and proportionately in the event that a lockdown is required.

### Learning and Improvement

Learning from lockdown drills, practice scenarios, or real incidents is:

- Reviewed by senior leaders
- Used to inform improvements to procedures, training, or communication
- Shared with staff where appropriate to support collective learning and confidence

This reflective approach helps ensure that responses remain effective, proportionate, and child-centred.

### Training and Assurance

The school will ensure that:
• All staff receive induction and annual refresher training on lockdown procedures
• Key roles receive enhanced training as appropriate
• Training, drills and learning outcomes are recorded
• Actions identified through drills or incidents are tracked and completed

This ensures that the school can demonstrate preparedness and continuous improvement.

## 11.Post-Incident Welfare and Recovery

Following any lockdown or major incident, the school will:

- Account for all pupils, staff and visitors
- Provide appropriate pastoral and emotional support
- Communicate clearly with parents and carers
- Conduct a structured debrief to identify learning
- Update procedures and training where necessary

Consideration will be given to the emotional wellbeing and regulation needs of pupils, especially within a SEND context.

## 12. Policy Review

This policy will be reviewed annually until the full implementation of Martyn's Law, and at least every two years thereafter.
The Management Committee will receive regular assurance that:

- **Procedures are in place and up to date**
- **Staff training has been completed**
- **Lockdown drills have taken place and been reviewed**
- **Site risks and vulnerabilities have been assessed**

Reviews will also take place following significant incidents, changes in guidance or lessons learned from drills.

Through regular review, training, and reflection, the school aims to ensure that all staff are clear about their roles and can respond safely and effectively, while maintaining a calm, supportive environment for pupils at all times.

**APPENDIX A Lockdown procedures – Staff quick guide**

# LOCKDOWN PROCEDURES STAFF QUICK GUIDE

**THREAT IDENTIFIED**

**INCIDENT LEAD/ SENIOR LEADER TO PHONE 999**

| | | |
|---|---|---|
| INCIDENT LEADS | | TAKES OVERALL CONTROL - LIAISES WITH EMERGENCY SERVICES - STAND-DOWN AUTHORITIES - AUTHORISES PARENT/CARER COMMUNICATION |
| OFFICR LEADS | | MANAGES COMMUNICATION SYSTEMS - KEEP LINES OPEN FOR EMERGENCY SERVICES - SUPPORT PUPIL ACCOUNTABILITY CHECKS - SHARE AGREED MESSAGES ONLY -RECORD KEY TIMES AND DECISIONS. |
| SITE LEADS | | SECURE GATES, DOORS, AND ACCESS POINTS IF SAFE - ACT UNDER DIRECTION OF INCIDENT LEAD |
| TEACHING STAFF | | ACT IMMEDIATELY ON THE ALERT - COMMUNICATE WITH OFFICE /SLT/SUPPORT STAFF - LOCK DOORS / CLOSE WINDOWS / BLINDS WHERE SAFE |
| SUPPORT STAFF | | SUPERVISE AND REASSURE PUPILS - USE FAMILIAR ROUTINES AND SEND-APPROPRIATE SUPPORT |

## SUMMARY OF RESPONSIBILITIES

### ⚠ PARTIAL LOCKDOWN

**AMBER ALERT - EXTERNAL RISK – PRECAUTIONARY RESPONSE**

Orange screen with ⚠ displayed

**IMMEDIATE ACTIONS**

FIRE WARDENS TO CONGREGATE AT MAIN DOOR - ALLOCATED PHASE

STAFF TO BRING ALL PUPILS AND STAFF INSIDE IMMEDIATELY

SITE TEAM TO CLOSE AND SECURE ALL EXTERNAL DOORS AND WINDOWS

STOP OUTDOOR ACTIVITIES
TURN OFF AIR SYSTEMS IF INSTRUCTED

CONTINUE CALM ROUTINES WHERE SAFE

### ⚠ FULL LOCKDOWN

**RED ALERT - IMMEDIATE THREAT – TAKE PROTECTIVE ACTION NOW**

Red screen with ⚠ displayed

**IMMEDIATE ACTIONS**

LEADERS TO COMMUNICATE USE PHONES, RADIOS & SCREENS SYSTEMS

STAFF TO MOVE PUPILS TO NEAREST SAFE ROOM / BASE ROOM

LOCK DOORS (WHERE POSSIBLE)

CLOSE WINDOWS, DRAW BLINDS

MOVE PUPILS OUT OF SIGHT

TURN OFF LIGHTS (IF APPROPRIATE)

MAINTAIN QUIET

TAKE A REGISTER WHEN SAFE

⚠ **REMEMBER - SPEED MATTERS MORE THAN CERTAINTY**
**CALM ADULTS = CALMER PUPILS**
**SILENCE CAN BE A SAFETY TOOL**
**WAIT FOR INSTRUCTIONS BEFORE MOVING** ⚠

**Appendix B – Lockdown Symbols**

| | | | | |
|---|---|---|---|---|
| I | try | improve | practice | again |
| learn | think | group work | | |
| | | | | |
| good | | | same | different |

## APPENDIX C – Alert Visuals for Screens

**Amber Alert**

**Red Alert**

**If there is a perceived risk to the school, an alert screen will automatically appear on all staff devices and screens. It is essential that all staff respond immediately when this appears.**

**Amber Alert** – Immediate Precautionary Action If you see an *Amber Alert*:

Bring all pupils and staff inside immediately

Fire Wardens to congregate at the main entrance

Site Team to close and secure all external doors and windows

Stop all outdoor activities

Turn off air systems if instructed

Continue calm routines where it is safe to do so

**Red Alert** – Lockdown Procedures If a *Red Alert* is issued, leaders will communicate via phones, radios, and screen systems. Staff must:

Move pupils to the nearest safe or base room

Lock doors where possible

Close windows and draw blinds

Move pupils out of sight

Turn off lights if appropriate

Maintain silence and calm

Take a register as soon as it is safe

**Please ensure you are familiar with these actions so we can respond quickly and effectively to keep everyone safe.**

**Appendix D – Alert Visuals for Screens**

**APPENDIX E – Management Committee Assurance Summary**

**Policy Status: Martyn's Law-ready (pre-implementation phase)**

Key Strengths:

- Clear Amber/Red procedures
- Strong SEND adaptations
- Alignment with JESIP and DfE guidance
- Effective communication protocols

Key Evidence Required:

- Protective security self-assessment
- Training records
- Drill records and evaluations
- Communication templates

Key Questions for Management Committee members:

- How do we know staff understand lockdown procedures?
- How are SEND needs addressed within lockdown?
- How do we assess site vulnerabilities?
- How are improvements tracked following drills?

## Appendix F – Compliance Checklist

| **Requirement** | **Evidence in this policy** |
|---|---|
| DfE Protective Security Guidance | Roles, response procedures, risk awareness |
| Emergency Planning | Communication, welfare, leadership structure |
| School Security Guidance | Lockdown, bomb threats, site awareness |
| Martyn's Law | Preparedness procedures and training approach |
| SEND Duties | Adapted procedures and reasonable adjustments |

## Appendix G – Contacting the Police

OFFICIAL

# CONTACTING THE POLICE

## REPORTING A TERRORIST ATTACK

### CALL 999 IMMEDIATELY

- **Ask for the police. They will transfer information to fire and rescue and the ambulance services.**
- The police will pass information about any casualties and fire to the other emergency services.
- This initial call may take several minutes to make.

### THE CALL IS CRUCIAL

- Tell police this is a priority call. Information passed will determine the police response.
- Use plain English. If in doubt seek clarification.
- Confirm key information is received.
- Provide information until the police deploy to the SCR.

**My venue is under attack NOW.**

**I am** _____

**I am calling from** _____

**My Tel No. is** _____

**I have critical information about:-**

- Numbers and descriptions of attackers
- Type and number of weapons seen – *knives, firearms, IEDs, suicide vests or petrol bombs*
- The last known location of the attackers and if you have the ability to track them
- The number of casualties

### I have important Information about the venue

- Video monitoring with playback capability.
- Locking down and securing the venue.
- The location of safe rooms.
- How the Public Address Voice Announcement system can communicate to the building occupants.

### Provide updates as the attack progresses

- The attackers changing location.
- More detail on descriptions and the weapons seen.
- The location and numbers of people injured.
- The status of the routes in and out of the location.

EDITION 2, MARCH 2023

OFFICIAL