Emerson Park Academy

LOCKDOWN

POLICY

Date: November 2026
Review Due: October 2027

1. Purpose & Legal Framework

Emerson Park Academy recognises its statutory duty under the Health and Safety at Work Act 1974 and the Terrorism (Protection of Premises) Act (Martyn's Law) to ensure the safety and security of all staff, students, and visitors.

A robust, well-rehearsed lockdown and invacuation procedure is a sensible, proportionate response to mitigate threats ranging from localised civil disruptions to active malicious threats.

This policy aims to maximise physical protection and minimise confusion, while maintaining emotional reassurance for students.

1.1 Typical Activation Scenarios

Lockdown procedures will be activated instantly by the Head teacher - Lockdown Manager (Deputy Headteacher in his absence) in response to scenarios such as:

- An intruder on or near the school site posing an immediate risk to life.
- A severe civil disturbance or reported violent crime in the local Hornchurch/Romford community.
- A major industrial accident or warning regarding local air pollution (e.g., hazardous smoke plume, gas cloud).
- A major fire in the immediate vicinity of the school premises.
- The close proximity of a dangerous animal roaming loose on or near school boundaries.

2. Dynamic Threat Responses: Partial vs. Full Lockdown

2.1 Partial Lockdown (Invacuation)

Trigger Signal: An intermittent, pulsing sequence of the school bells.
Context: Used when there is an external hazard near the school environment (e.g., air pollution, localized crime, loose animal) but no immediate threat inside the buildings.

Immediate Actions:

- **Cease Outdoor Activity:** All outdoor lessons, break times, and sports must stop immediately. Staff must guide students safely into their respective classrooms, main halls, or the nearest permanent building.
- **Secure the Perimeter:** Site staff and designated teachers must immediately lock all external perimeter doors and ground-floor windows.
- **Environmental Sealing (Air Pollution/CBRN):** If activated due to atmospheric hazards, staff must immediately switch off all air conditioning units, fans, heating systems, and air vents. Use any available materials to temporarily seal gaps around doors or vents to prevent toxic ingress.
- **Maintain Continuity:** Core teaching, learning, and administrative work may continue as usual inside the locked buildings, provided movement between buildings are restricted.

- **Await Instructions:** Staff must log on to their school email and check internal communication software for live risk assessments and updates from the Senior Leadership Team (SLT).

2.2 Full Lockdown

Trigger Signal: A continuous, unbroken sounding of the school bells (distinct from the intermittent fire alarm).
Context: Signifies an immediate, high-level threat to life on or inside the school site (e.g., armed intruder).

Immediate Actions:

- **Secure Rooms Immediately:** All students and staff must enter the nearest lockable room or classroom. Office staff must remain inside and secure their immediate workspace.
- **Lock and Obscure:** Site team will lock external access control points where safe to do so. Classrooms must be locked from the inside immediately. Close windows, draw all blinds, and cover view-panels on internal doors so rooms appear entirely dark and empty.
- **Concealment & Silence:** Staff and students must sit silently out of sight, preferably under desks or behind solid internal barriers that offer protection from potential gunfire. Individuals with mobility issues or SEND must be pre-mapped to secure, accessible corners out of the line of sight from windows.
- **Device Blackout:** Turn off all overhead lights, interactive whiteboards, computer monitors, and projectors. All personal mobile phones must be switched to completely silent mode (vibration off) or turned off entirely.
- **Silent Electronic Registration:** Staff must take an immediate silent head count/register. Report missing pupils or unexpected additions directly via the school's digital portal (e.g., Group Call / internal email), keeping the network clear of non-urgent inquiries.

3. Operational Lockdown Plan & Command Structure

3.1 Incident Command Roles

- **Lockdown Manager:** The Headteacher (or Deputy Headteacher in their absence) has sole authority to initiate, manage, and officially conclude a lockdown. They will serve as the primary liaison with the Metropolitan Police and Emergency Services.
- **Site Management Team:** Responsible for securing external gates, verifying external door integrity where safe to do so, and checking the fire alarm panel during ambiguous triggers.
- **Teaching and Support Staff:** Responsible for securing their immediate learning space, maintaining absolute calm, ensuring compliance with concealment protocols, and supervising students under their care.

3.2 Dynamic Fire Alarm Protocol During Lockdown

A major risk vector during a hostile intruder incident is the malicious or accidental triggering of a fire alarm. Emerson Park Academy operates under strict DfE guidelines regarding conflicting alarms.

1. If the school is in an active Full Lockdown and the Fire Alarm sounds, staff and students must NOT automatically evacuate. They must remain concealed until a direct, verified instruction is received from the SLT or Emergency Services.
2. A radio-equipped member of the Site Team will safely check the fire panel to identify the activated zone.
3. The Site Team will silence the alarm panel while investigating the zone with extreme caution.
4. **If actual fire/smoke is verified:** The information will be relayed to the command room, the fire alarm will be permanently re-sounded, and staff will immediately initiate an emergency evacuation away from the threat vector, communicating live with 999.

4. Communication Framework

4.1 Internal Communication Rules

- Staff must keep a dedicated computer logged in with their staff email open throughout all teaching sessions.
- Incoming communication must be reviewed discretely on-screen out of sight of students to prevent panic.
- Staff must utilize text-based platforms (Group Call/Email) to message the main office. Internal phone lines must be kept entirely free for emergency service coordination.

4.2 Parent and Community Coordination

The school recognises that parents will experience intense anxiety during an emergency. However, safety requires strict adherence to the following rules, which are published transparently on the academy website:

- **Do Not Travel to the School:** Parents are strictly instructed not to drive or walk to the academy site. Presenting at the gates, blocks emergency access routes, hinders police operations, and exposes parents to direct danger.
- **Do Not Call the Switchboard:** Telephone lines must remain clear for emergency services. The switchboard will be unmanned during a full lockdown.
- **No Release of Pupils:** Under no circumstances will any student be released to a parent during an active lockdown.
- **Out of Hours Protocols:** If a lockdown extends beyond normal school hours, the school will coordinate with the Local Authority and Emergency Services to establish an off-site Humanitarian Assistance and Family Reception Centre to support waiting relatives.

5. Compliance, Drills & Training (Martyn's Law Integration)

In accordance with statutory security obligations, Emerson Park Academy enforces the following preparedness schedule:

- **Staff Training:** All teaching and non-teaching staff will receive formal protective security briefings annually, covering the Run, Hide, Tell framework, basic situational awareness, and dynamic threat response.
- **Mandatory Drills:** The academy will conduct at least one full-scale lockdown drill per academic year.
- **Debriefing and Review:** Every drill will be comprehensively debriefed by the health and safety committee to identify blind spots, test acoustic coverage of alarms, and adjust procedures to maintain maximum operational effectiveness.