

Answers to General Safety and Lockdown Questions:

These responses to your questions are made in general terms. As you know, ALL cases involving crises are unscripted and require each and every one of us to use our best judgment in the situation as we understand it. We will ask you to rise up and serve as a leader to others.

Lockdown Procedures:

Should interior, exterior, and door windows be covered or uncovered?

All windows should be **uncovered**. At one time, it was expected to hide the people in a classroom by covering windows. Now it is deemed safer to have all windows clear of coverings to allow police and other safety personnel clearer view to the happenings within any area of the school.

My room doors do not have windows. How would this affect the lockdown procedure?

It does not change the lockdown procedure. It simply means that there is greater protection from outside for you and your students. It also requires greater precautions for police and safety personnel when entering your classroom.

What do we do when in connecting classrooms with NO locks or ways to barricade doors? What about when our classrooms connect with another classroom?

Common sense prevails. An up-ended table can often serve as a deterrent. Stacking other classroom materials behind the door can also slow entry from another area.

It may also be feasible to get both classrooms together and find a way to block the interior door, in any fashion available.

Do we huddle together against the wall or spread out in the classroom?

Our current procedure asks that everyone remain calm and be seated out of view. Spreading out around the room provides a greater protection for more individuals within any classroom.

What is the Off-site—safe area for my building?

Current designated areas are as follows:

New London High School – Stadium or New London Middle/Intermediate School

New London Middle/Intermediate School – Parkview Elementary or New London High School

Lincoln Elementary School – Franklin Park (weather permitting) or Most Precious Blood (Inclement weather)

Parkview Elementary School – Hatten Park or Intermediate/Middle School gym

Readfield Elementary School – Caledonia Town Hall

Sugar Bush Elementary School – Sugar Bush Grace Lutheran Church

Please know that even safe areas may change in an emergency, based upon where things are occurring in your building or a nearby site. In those situations, you will be notified where to relocate to as a new safe area.

What is school's policy on opened and/or timeframe school doors are locked?

We do not have a policy on the time that doors should be locked. Best practice would be to lock the school doors shortly after the official school day begins. It would also be prudent to monitor doors throughout the school day and make certain they are closed and locked. When a door is unlocked and you are unable to lock it, notify the office so we can all assist in maintaining safety.

In an actual active shooter situation, do we call to report attendance? Would someone call us and/or would it be checked via Skyward?

IF possible, report CURRENT attendance of your classroom to the office. While it may be checked in Skyward, there is regular movement of students during the course of the class period, so we may need to account for others who were in your room when attendance was initially taken and now in a different location.

What is the best way to verify (allow) re-entry into a classroom during lockdown?

Do not open the door for anyone for re-entry. The police will enter your room with a building administrator or building leader with a KEY to regain entry for evacuation.

After the initial search of a room by police, would it be best to barricade the classroom as a further precaution before formal evacuation?

When in this stage of a lockdown, we will follow police directives. Depending upon their knowledge of the situation, they may direct you to quietly remain in place and barricade yourselves in. They may also direct you to continue to remain in place, hidden out of sight.

Special Circumstance Lockdown Procedures:

What is the after-school protocol?

Review emergency procedures for appropriate follow-through and have emergency numbers available to provide assistance.

What happens with a lockdown in an assembly? During lunchtime in the commons? During an outside activity? What is our protocol if the shooter is on the playground?

If possible, in each of these scenarios, lockdown procedures should be followed. If unable to follow lockdown, due to proximity of a shooter, instruct those individuals with you to scatter to areas out of harms way.

What if office has shooter in and cannot let everyone know that there should be a lock down?

In a situation where the school office is the target, notification will come from another staff member who encounters – or discovers – the situation and notifies the building staff. They too would reach out to the district administrative office to notify others outside the building of what has occurred.

How would we handle a parent that is a shooter? Parents often walk in at the end of the day when the front doors are open.

Who the shooter is won't matter; we would still follow our protocol. If we needed to lockdown at the end of a school day, we would follow protocol and encourage those in the halls to quickly find shelter in the nearest classroom and lockdown.

Chain of command:

If a principal is not at our school, who is in charge? Who makes the decisions?

A hierarchy of leadership will need to be established for each building of core administrators and building leaders. Please remember that emergencies are not scripted, so we ask that all teachers are leaders naturally in their role and will need to jump into action as appropriate to maintain appropriate safety. Contacting the police and district office, while maintaining calm, will be a priority.

Teacher's Role in an Emergency:

If we have outside windows and shooter is not in our room, should we flee with the class or stay put?

As directed by the police during our presentation, it is better to shelter in place (stay put) so as not to cause additional confusing for those safety personnel coming to assist us in school. It will slow their assistance, as they will need to check those fleeing before they could even begin to enter our building.

What if a student is scared or hysterical or attempts to leave school? What about diabetic students or with emotional concerns? How do you deal with severe behaviors of specific special education students?

This is an opportunity for every teacher to turn on their nurturing nature. We cannot have students leaving school, or the classroom, but if they do, you need to maintain the safety of others within your classroom. When someone is upset or frightened, provide a calm tone of reassurance. In an emergency situation, other students, besides those identified as special education children, may act out. You can reduce this behavior by remaining calm and supporting them by providing them with directions to keep them calm and informed. Sharing what will happen when law enforcement arrives can also help their anticipation and help them to stay quiet and focused on what they can do to help the whole class stay safe.

When we have students with medical needs in the classroom with us, we need to again keep them as comfortable as possible and reassure them that help will be there soon, and then they can also get the medical attention they need. For diabetic students, we should have some hard candies stocked in appropriate classrooms to help keep blood sugar levels within an appropriate range.

It is better to maintain a secure setting than to put a classroom full of students in peril by opening a door to seek out assistance.

I could hide possibly 20 students in my room. What should I do with the other 10?

The important thing is to reduce open view of everyone in your classroom. Scatter students around the room and encourage them to remain quiet and out of sight. If necessary, it is okay to use up-ended furniture to assist in hiding students and protecting them from view.

What about evacuations of students with special needs?

When doing an evacuation, we follow the directives of law enforcement officers at the classroom door. It will be okay to evacuate special needs students in their wheelchairs or kid karts. We would shelter in place and await directives to assist them safely out of the building.

Supporting the Substitute Teacher in an Emergency:

What does a substitute teacher do in an emergency? Do they take any training for the buildings they work in?

We need to share the emergency procedures which are on every classroom wall. Placing a smaller version into the sub folder, with classroom specific information, will also be appropriate. We are working to revise the emergency procedures posters for the classrooms.

Information for Students:

What steps will we take to heighten safety policies in regard to: hallway and traffic during class; holding students accountable for being in class on time; cell phone use?

There are procedures in place in our buildings to ensure safety – the wearing of name badges, requiring students to use an agenda for passing in the halls, visitor badges, and procedures for student/staff cell phone use, as well as, backpacks and coats in the classrooms.

We can all assist in making each school a safer place by consistently enforcing the procedures and expectations in place in our buildings.

- * Wear your staff Identification badge daily.
- * Use the agendas for passes and check students without passes/agendas.
- * Check with unknown visitors without a badge and escort them back to the office.
- * Reinforce backpacks and coats need to remain in lockers.
- * Finally share why the rules in the school and/or classroom provide safe environments for learning with your students.

Is it appropriate to share information with students about our reasons for no cell phones, backpacks, and coats? Or just state their safety? Some think these rules are pointless.

This is a common sense approach. Based upon the age of the students you are speaking with, it is wise to share a rationale that is understandable. It helps students understand the purposefulness of why we do what we do in schools so students can safely learn in their school settings.

Practicing with Students:

Will there be a time in the near future when students will be informed of guidelines or who is responsible for sharing this information? Will we practice with student?

We will not inform students of the guidelines in advance – to maintain safety protocols. Too much well intentioned sharing can put more at risk in an emergency. Students are taught to follow the teacher's directions, and will be asked to do so in an emergency.

While we do complete drug lockdowns in the higher grades, we will not practice these with students in an effort to maintain our safety protocols and procedures.

Other questions regarding Police Action:

What will the police do with displays of non-compliance, or not following directions or their first order? How would law enforcement handle an “out-of-control” or special needs student with severe behaviors?

Police operate under a different set of rules than school employees. As shared in the presentation, they would take the non-compliant or “out-of-control” individual to the floor and restrain to protect themselves and protect you. They do need to justify their use of force.

Changing our Practices to Improve Safety:

Should we be locking our classroom doors during the regular school day?

Best practice would make it natural in the event of an emergency to simply pull your door shut, knowing that it is always locked. It would save a great deal of time in an emergency. Many staff members already have this practice in place, to be prepared.

Will we be having students take photos of all the rooms to keep on file?

It may occur in some buildings, but it also would require a constant revision for our procedures. It is good practice to move classroom furniture around for different instructional formats. Having a safe classroom environment is more important than knowing how each chair, table, or desk is arranged in the room. In an emergency, everything could change to create barriers from danger.

Do we have a central location of building maps/evacuation plans at District Office? Do we need a hard copy or electronic access to all the building maps at the District Office?

Emergency Procedures and Safe Area forms are updated by each building administrator and located in emergency binders in each office for the building. Full sets of every building's Emergency documents and Safe Area forms are housed at the District Office, Pupil Services Office, New London Police Department and New London Fire Department offices.

Since our training, new maps are being developed with all doors AND windows identified. Both paper copies and computer copies will be available in each building. The New London Police Department will have a log in to access the computer versions of the map information at the school sites.

In the event of this situation, do we have an alerting system in place to contact families? Should we be looking at the "Alert Now" system in order to contact all families through e-mail, cell phone, texting, etc.?

This is on the "to do" list with Skyward; we do not have any instant messaging yet, for such situations.

Do all administrators have access to student lists? If they do, should any other support staff have access at the District Office in case administrator needs to attend to other things in these situations?

Office support staff and building principals are well aware of how to access student lists from Skyward.

Do we need to do a cell phone list of key personnel?

Lists are being updated and in process of being shared with those who need the information.

Communicating with the Community:

Will there be a press release and/or parent note informing public about what we did in our inservice?

Information was shared with the community PRIOR to our training in December. It was shared at the December School Board meeting which was televised. It was also featured in an article in the local paper, as a result of the school board discussion.