Secure Schools Policy Directive

(Lockdown, Hold and Secure, Shelter in Place)

This policy directive supports the Safe Schools Pillar Policy (Policy No. 11.0 – Safe Schools) by providing direction for response requirements intended to reduce risk of harm in the event of serious violent threat or violent incident that would endanger the lives of staff or students (Lockdown). The policy directive also provides response requirements in the event of an external threat not related to schools (Hold and Secure) and environmental threats outside of the school (Shelter in Place).

Schools will incorporate the following procedures/guidelines into their School Lockdown Plans.

1.0 RATIONALE

The Hamilton Wentworth District School Board believes that every student has the right to learn, work and be present in a safe and secure environment. However, the possibility of a major incident of violence is a reality that cannot be overlooked. Everyone needs to know how to protect him/herself and how to protect our children, in the event of a major incident or threat of school violence.

School administrators, staff, students, parents, and police all have roles and responsibilities to support and implement the secure schools policy directive and procedures to help reduce the risk of harm to staff, students, visitors, and facility users should a violent or serious incident occur.

2.0 SECURE SCHOOLS TERMINOLOGY

The **terminology is mandatory** to describe the type of situation occurring at or near a school. The terms are to be used consistently in all Ontario publicly funded schools to allow for consistency of response by staff, students, and emergency services.

2.1 **"Shelter in Place":** (May be recommended by Police, Fire Dept. Emergency Response Services (EMS)

- is used for an environmental, or weather related situation, where it is necessary to keep all occupants within the school to protect them (e.g.. may include chemical spills, blackouts, explosions or extreme weather conditions that may affect student/staff safety such as downed wires during ice storms);
- People enter and remain in a building with the doors and windows closed;
- Fans, including heating and air conditioning units, should be turned off to prevent outside air from entering the building, if it is determined that the air intake could pose a health or safety risk for occupants;
- Normal operations may continue within the building.

2.2 "**Hold and Secure":** (School most likely to be notified by Hamilton Police Services)

- is used when the school is secured due to an ongoing situation outside and not related to the school that requires all persons to remain in the building(e.g. bank robbery near a school);
- the school continues to function normally, with the exterior doors locked until the situation is resolved;
- staff member posted near each entrance to ensure no one leaves the building;
- all movement in and out of the school is restricted;
- exterior facing windows should be covered or blinds drawn, lights dimmed, where possible.

2.3 **"Lockdown**": (usually initiated by Principal or school personnel)

****A lockdown is defined by police as the restriction of movement during the time of a potentially serious violent threat or violent incident that would endanger the lives of students and staff.**

- used when there is a violent incident or threat of serious violence within the school, or in relation to the school;
- the threat is inside the school, or is on school property, and poses an immediate threat to the students and staff;
- follow current lockdown procedures;
- all movement within the school and into and out of the school is restricted;
- doors remain open to permit police immediate entry.

Terminology is very important. Plans should clearly identify when "Lockdown" versus other terminology is to be utilized. Terminology used to order a lockdown, should be plain language, clear and leave no misunderstanding as to what is expected. No secret passwords should to be used. Announcement notices using standard language to identify each of the terminology categories will be sent to school offices to post beside the PA system or to pre-record for use in an emergency.

This information applies to the school buildings, portables, facility users such as Daycares, Recreation Centers, Early Years Centers, etc.

The above terminology is to ensure consistency across the province. Common language across the province allows for easy integration when staff, students and other emergency service personnel are transferred from one jurisdiction to another.

3.0 MANDATORY REQUIREMENTS FOR SECURE SCHOOLS DRILLS

3.1 One "Hold and Secure" drill must occur once each year—record date and time;
3.2 One "Shelter in Place" drill must occur once each year—record date and time;
3.3 A minimum of two "Lockdown" drills must occur each school year—record date and time;
3.4 For all drills, Principals shall set the date of drills and oversee the drill; however, police support/assistance should be utilized whenever possible during drills;
3.5 Staff, students, and parents should be given prior notice of impending drills;
3.6 Notify Police, EMS, and Fire Department of impending drills, where appropriate;
3.7 Area supervisors of caretaking should be involved in drills.

The school may invite Fire and EMS to a drill to test all of the systems enabling them to become familiar with school lockdown plans.

4.0 STAFF, STUDENT, PARENT REPONSIBILITIES

All members of the school community have responsibility for supporting and implementing the secure schools policy directive and school level plans.

4.1 **Principal**: The Principal is responsible for overall school planning, the final content of the school plan, scheduling of drills, inviting Police, Fire Department and Emergency Response Services to participate in, and be aware of planning and drills, training of students and overall safety of staff and students. Principals must ensure that all facility users during the school day, including before and after school child care, are aware of the policy directive and that they participate in the required drills. Administrators have an additional responsibility to work closely with police and other emergency personnel in all situations.

In an actual incident, the police are responsible for management of the threat and subsequent criminal investigation; however, the principal shall provide full cooperation with police.

4.2 **Staff**: School staff, particularly administrators, have the overall responsibility for the training, safety and well being of students. Administrators, during a violent incident, have additional responsibilities in terms of working closely with police.

4.3 **Students**: Students have a responsibility to be familiar with the plan and to quickly respond to staff directions during a crisis situation. Any student with prior information or knowledge of an individual or a potential situation which may result in a violent incident must come forward with that information as soon as possible.

4.4 **Police**: Police are responsible to respond to and investigate violent incidents. During a violent incident police will assume command and control of the response and investigation and will liaise closely with school administration and other emergency services throughout the process.

4.5 **Parents/Guardians:** Parents and guardians must be informed of the existence of the lockdown plans in the school and should reinforce with their children, student responsibilities to follow directions during a crisis and disclose any information they may have prior to or during a crisis situation.

5.0 COMMUNICATION TO PARENTS REGARDING SECURE SCHOOLS PROCEDURES

- A Secure Schools brochure for parents and families will be provided to schools to be sent out at the beginning of the school year.
- Brochures should be given to new registrants as they enter the school;
- School newsletters should include regular reminders for parents as to the emergency off-site location for staff and students should the need arise to re-locate students in an emergency. This location should also be posted on the school website.

6.0 LOCKDOWNS

MANDATORY REQUIREMENTS:

6.1 **School Level**

- Schools must establish a secure schools plan that aligns with the secure schools policy directive;
- Identify areas for: Command Post (blue) and areas that cannot be locked down (red) on the Strategic Police Emergency Action Response (SPEAR) data sheets;
- Identify all classroom and all portable numbers on the SPEAR data sheets;
- Identify off site locations where students report to, if outside when a threat is in school or on school property;

- Identify responsibilities of staff, administrators, students, and parents;
- Completed floor plans, including room and portable numbers, are to be updated annually and sent to police using SPEAR data sheets by November 1 of each school year.

6.2 Board Level

- Facilities Management to send electronic copies of all school floor plans to police, and update as new schools are built;
- Board to consider, over the long term, installing mechanisms to notify persons who are outside and in high noise level areas when lockdown is initiated (eg. outdoor speakers, strobe lights);
- Facilities Management will co-ordinate the numbering of all classrooms in all schools as budget permits;
- Facilities Management will co-ordinate the numbering of all portables in the system.

7.0 INITIATING A LOCKDOWN

- Any adult who receives information requiring a lockdown should initiate it immediately using the PA system;
- The Board will provide standard announcements to be posted beside PA systems to ensure correct terminology is used when a lockdown in place is announced.

8.0 STAFF AND STUDENT RESPONSE TO A LOCKDOWN

If in the classroom, including portables:

- All students remain in classroom or portable;
- Students in halls and washrooms report to the nearest classroom immediately;
- Teachers close classroom or portable doors, shut lights off, direct students to area away from doors, down on the floor, remain quiet.

If in the washroom:

- Students in the washroom should go immediately to the closest classroom;
- In the event that there is a disturbance outside the washroom door, students should lock the stall door and sit on the toilet with their legs lifted out of sight.

If in 'open' areas inside the school: (eg hallway)

- Students go to the closest classroom or 'safe' location (eg. library);
- If near an exit and unable to go to a classroom, leave the building and go to the emergency off-site 'safe location';
- If unable to enter a classroom, find shelter with furniture, hall closets, etc.

If outside of school building:

- Continuous ringing of outside bell will indicate 'lockdown' is initiated;
- All staff and students proceed to the emergency off-site location as identified by the school emergency response plan;
- Upon arrival at off-site location, attendance is to be taken and staff and students remain there until further notification from police or Principal.

9.0 FIRE ALARM DURING LOCKDOWN

- Once a lockdown has been initiated, and in the event a fire alarm is activated, staff and students shall remain in the classrooms until given direction by police or fire department;
- Police and EMS will respond to lockdowns immediately and will respond to other visible dangers, such as fire.

10.0 PROCEDURES TO END A LOCKDOWN

- Police will make the decision to end a lockdown.
- If possible, the principal should make the announcement to end a lockdown after direction from police.
- Staff and students remain in the classroom until the police and/or principal arrive at the classroom or portable;
- School plans should include a procedure for notification of end of lockdown at emergency off-site location.
- Notification to parents that a lockdown has ended will be done by synervoice and on the school website by Corporate Communications.

11.0 SCHOOL RECOVERY FOLLOWING A LOCKDOWN

- Principals are to refer to this specific section in the Crisis Management Manual.

12.0 PROCEDURES FOR 'HOLD AND SECURE'

(Hold and Secure plan is to be included in the safe school plan for the school)

- If students and staff are outdoors, ring bell for everyone to re-enter the building
- Announce 'Hold and Secure';
- The Board will provide standard announcements to be posted beside PA systems to ensure correct terminology is used when Hold and Secure is announced.
- Lock exterior doors;
- Dim lights and draw blinds, where possible;
- All movement into and out of school is restricted;
- Assign staff member near each entrance to ensure no one leaves the building;
- The school continues to function normally;
- An announcement is made to end 'Hold and Secure'.

13.0 PROCEDURES FOR SHELTER IN PLACE

(Shelter in Place plan is to be included in the safe school plan for the school)

- Administrators, or designates, receiving information requiring 'Shelter in Place' should initiate it immediately using the PA system;
- The Board will provide standard announcements to be posted beside PA systems to ensure correct terminology is used when a Shelter in Place is announced.
- If students and staff are outdoors, ring bell for everyone to re-enter the building;
- Close doors and windows;
- Fans, including heating and air conditioning units, should be turned off to prevent outside air from entering the building if it is determined that the air intake could pose a health or safety risk for occupants,
- Normal operations continue within the building;
- An announcement is made to end 'Shelter in Place'.

14.0 CONTROLLED EVACUATION

- In the event of a prolonged situation, or a situation where the threat has been contained (e.g. barricaded individual), school plans should state that Police may initiate a controlled evacuation of the school.
- Controlled evacuation will normally be done on a room by room basis, with evacuees being escorted by police to the evacuation location.

15.0 FACILITY USERS: (To be included in planning, training and drills)

- Facility users are those persons/organizations who share school space during the regular hours of the school day (eg. Daycares, Best Start, Parenting Centres, etc.), including before and after school child care;
- Facility users and school administrators must have each others' cell phone numbers;
- Facility users locations and cell phone numbers must be on the SPEAR data sheets;
- Facility users must be aware of, and practice, drills as indicated in the mandatory requirements.

16.0 MEDIA MESSAGES DURING LOCKDOWN, HOLD & SECURE, SHELTER IN PLACE

- Corporate Communications will facilitate all communication during lockdowns, hold and secure, and shelter in place situations, in consultation with Hamilton Police Services;
- Corporate Communications will provide synervoice, board website announcements, and media outlets, with information when a secure schools situation is occurring;
- Regular updates and precise requests for parents information will be provided as the situation continues;
- A Hotline Number for parent use during secure school situations will be available: 905-521-2535

17.0 TRAINING

At the beginning of each school year, Principals shall:

- review the school lockdown policy directive with staff; including facility users, volunteers, etc.
- update the SPEAR data sheet with Police by November 1 annually;
- ensure that students, parents, and staff understand the rationale and expectations of the secure schools drills;
- inform parents of the school's secure schools plan through newsletters or as part of student agenda information.

18.0 MONITOR AND REVIEW

- Feedback from all stakeholders will be gathered annually.

19.0 **Alignment to Other Board Policies and Provincial legislation** includes but is not limited to:

- Safe Schools Pillar Policy
- Part XIII of the Education Act
- Emergency Response Protocol
- Police/School Board Protocol
- Personal Electronic Devices Policy
- Access to School Premises – Ontario Regulation 474/00