



Frequently Asked Questions About Lockdown Drills

General

Does LCPS utilize active shooter drills or scenarios during a lockdown drill with students?

A: No, our lockdown drills consist of simple verbal and written instructions. We do **NOT** use an “active shooter” drill approach (training weapons, role players, first aid, etc.).

How are lockdowns called?

A: A lockdown may be announced by any means possible; such as the public address system (PA), handheld radios, telephones, verbally, classroom emergency call buttons, emergency management apps, etc. A PA announcement is the method primarily used.

Who can call a lockdown?

A: Any LCPS employee or SRO can call for a lockdown.

What preparation/training do the students get prior to the first drill of the school year?

A: Lockdown drill preparations are conducted prior to the first drill of the school year.

- Teachers have age-appropriate conversations with their classes. An age-appropriate video may be shown at the elementary level.

Should there be a code word used to lockdown?

A: No. Plain language is the public safety standard of communication in critical incidents to avoid confusion in stressful situations.

Can a parent observe/participate in a lockdown drill at their child's school?

A: Lockdown drills are best learned without parents present. Parents volunteering at the school during times of drills are included in conducting the drill.

What if there are visitors in the school during a lockdown drill? What should they do?

A: Visitors are expected to follow the instructions of the teacher or administrator who they are with at the time of the drill.

Attendance

Are lockdown drills required?

A: Yes, lockdown drills are required by Virginia law, Virginia Code 22.1-137.2. LCPS requires 4 lockdown drills each school year.

Can a student "opt out" of doing lockdown drills?

A: Generally, no. All LCPS staff and students are required by law, and LCPS policies and regulations to participate in all drills when on LCPS property.

What if a student is absent? Do they have to make up a missed drill?

A: No, they will participate the next time a drill is conducted at their school.

Are schools required to announce/advertise when they are going to conduct a lockdown drill?

A: All LCPS drills are announced in the annual Student Rights & Responsibilities document that all students and parents acknowledge.

Are drills announced at the time they are conducted?

A: Yes, public address (PA) system announcements are made and repeated at the time the drill is executed to make sure people understand they are participating in a drill and not the real incident.

Building Protocols

What should people do if they are outside of a classroom, in hallways, bathroom, etc. during a lockdown?

A: Anyone unable to get into a locked classroom should.

1. Run from the threat including leaving the building.
2. Keep running until totally safe.
3. Call a parent or 911 and tell them where you are.

What if staff/students are in a gymnasium?

A: Depending on where the threat is in the building, time permitting, and gym configuration, locking down inside the gymnasium is desired. If time does not permit or the threat is imminent, these steps should be followed:

1. Run from the threat including leaving the building.
2. Keep running until totally safe.
3. Call a parent or 911 and tell them where you are.

How do students/staff lockdown in the cafeteria?

A: Locking down inside the cafeteria depends on the number of students in the cafeteria and the availability of space where they can safely secure in a lockable space. If lockable space is not available, these steps should be followed:

1. Run from the threat including leaving the building.
2. Keep running until totally safe.
3. Call a parent or 911 and tell them where you are.

How do students/staff lockdown in the library?

A: Locking down inside the library depends on the number of students in the library and the availability of space where they can safely secure in a lockable space. If lockable space is not available, these steps should be followed:

1. Run from the threat including leaving the building.
2. Keep running until totally safe.
3. Call a parent or 911 and tell them where you are.

How do students/staff lockdown in an auditorium?

A: Depending on where the threat is in the building and time permitting, locking down inside the auditorium is desired. If time does not permit or the threat is eminent, these steps should be followed:

1. Run from the threat including leaving the building.
2. Keep running until totally safe.
3. Call a parent or 911 and tell them where you are.

How do we conduct a lockdown drill with students simulating exiting the building?

A: We recommend students, who cannot lockdown, move to the closest exit and stage inside the exit door to simulate they would exit the building and move far enough away until they feel safe. At the conclusion of the drill, students are instructed as to the actions they would take if it were an actual lockdown.

What should people in a classroom do if the violent intruder gets inside the room?

A: Teachers are trained to fight and or attempt to disorient the intruder. Students should avoid the threat and seek to create distance by evacuating the room and building if possible.

Prevention

What can I do to help reduce the chances of an armed assailant in or at my school?

A: Prevention through early intervention is key to mitigating the potential for armed assailants in your school. Immediately report any threats you become aware of whether they are direct or indirect. Immediately report suspicious or concerning persons or activity, "See something, Say something." Additionally, following the rules and obeying safety and security measures in place at your school will contribute towards a safer learning environment.

What if I have a concern or fear but don't feel comfortable coming forward?

A: Students and parents can report information anonymously through the Safe2Talk app. This app can be downloaded to any mobile device and is also located on every student's laptop.

Are practices in place to prevent potential assailants from seeing inside the classrooms during lockdowns?

A: Yes, standard classroom door window coverings are used in every classroom. Other coverings are used to cover windows adjacent to the classroom door.

Impact

Are lockdowns effective?

A: Yes. Research shows that the safest place to be in an armed assailant type situation is inside a locked classroom. As with any active assailant strategy, lockdowns are an important component of an options-based plan.

I hear that lockdown drills can have a negative emotional impact to some children who participate in them, is that true?

A: The information circulating as to the emotional impact of lockdown drills is abundant on both sides of the debate. While no system is perfect, we do believe the current climate dictates preparedness for many types of emergencies. We all hope to never employ these practices in a real situation, but practice and preparedness are the first steps in the safe mitigation of any emergency.

LCPS currently conducts lockdown drills based on the latest best practices and guidelines as published by the Virginia Department of Criminal Justice Services. These drills reinforce the ability of teachers to quickly execute procedures of the physical lockdown, to include ensuring the door is locked, students are moved away from the portal and that all remain calm.

Parents should have conversations with their children about the importance of safety drills. If a parent feels their child experiences any challenges with drills know that all LCPS students have access to school-based mental health services to support social and emotional wellness. These services are provided by school

counselors, school psychologists and school social workers, who deliver both preventative and responsive services.