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TEACH Trust Poole

Trust Excellence Aspiration Collaboration Honesty

Article 28: Children have a right to a primary education.

19th February 2024

Dear Parents and Carers,

Since March 2020, we have all become used to the term 'Lockdown' being related to Covid. However, before it took on this meaning, the word 'Lockdown' referred to the legal terminology introduced to schools referring to when a school has to practise being ready for a threat of some kind at school. Although extremely unlikely, it became a legal requirement to practise for emergency events, which we need to ensure we have done. As such, we need to teach all children in school about our Lockdown procedures. The details of which are outlined in this letter.

Keeping Children Safe – Lockdown Procedures

As you are aware, our number one priority is always your children's safety. From September 2019, the Department for Education required all schools to have additional safety procedures in place, which must be practised with all children. This procedure is called 'Lockdown', not to be confused with the National Covid lockdowns.

In the same way that schools have to practise fire evacuations each term, we are also expected to practise Lockdown drills at least once a year, as well.

We have planned lessons and resources to help prepare our children for these drills, so that they can be undertaken effectively but without scaring the children. We hope that, in no time at all, they will see the Lockdown drills in the same way that they see the fire drills, and learn that they are nothing to be afraid of.

What is a Lockdown and when would we carry it out?

A Lockdown procedure is a standard health and safety procedure, not unlike fire safety procedures, however, we stay inside whereas with fire drills, we go outside and line-up



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in the playground. Our Lockdown procedure would be used when there is a threat to the safety of pupils, staff and others in school and it is safer for everyone to remain inside, rather than evacuating the building. The aim is simply to keep everyone safe by keeping them inside, as a place of safety.

Situations where our Lockdown procedure may be used include the following:

- Local air pollution, perhaps due to a chemical release from a nearby factory and either we have decided to do so, or the Fire and Rescue Services have advised us to remain indoors and close windows.
- An animal in the grounds.
- There is an incident or civil disturbance in the area that might affect school and either we have decided to do so, or the Police have advised us to remain indoors.
- There is an aggrieved, disturbed or intoxicated person trying to gain access (this could be a person known to school or a stranger) and either we have decided to do so, or the Police have advised us to remain indoors.
- There is an intruder on site or other external threat and the Police are informed and either we have decided to do so, or the Police have advised us to remain indoors.

TEACH Lockdown procedures

In the week of our Lockdown drill, week beginning Monday 26th February, all our **staff will carefully and sensitively explain the procedure** to our children. We have planned a brief lesson to help prepare our children for these drills, so that they can be undertaken effectively but without scaring the children.

Staff will reassure children during and after the drill and will emphasise that this is similar to a fire drill but for Lockdown, we don't leave the school buildings. We hope that, in no time at all, they will see the Lockdown drills in the same way that they see the Fire drills, and learn that they are nothing to be afraid of.

During Lockdown, we close windows, external doors, blinds and hide under desks and tables, so we will make it more like a game for our younger children.

I would invite parents and carers to discuss the process and reasons for Lockdown procedures in an open, supportive manner with their children. I must also emphasise that we are required, by law, to practise Lockdown, so that in the very unlikely event of such a situation occurring, our children and staff are fully prepared. There will be no mention of weapons, terrorists or similar language with children in our preparations for Lockdown, unless of course, a child directly asks us questions using this vocabulary.



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If you or your child/children have any further concerns or questions, please do not hesitate to contact the school office. A copy of the new Lockdown Policy and Procedures is available on our school website.

Thank you for your support with this matter, and please rest assured that we will do everything we can to handle this activity with sensitivity and care.

Yours faithfully,

Mrs Clare Tantrum
Headteacher



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