



Banff Elementary School
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October 12, 2021

Dear Parents/Guardians,

RE: BES Emergency “Lockdown” Procedure and Practice Drill

The health and safety of all children at Banff Elementary School is paramount. It is part of our responsibilities to run one lockdown drill per year. As part of our focus on safety this month, we have scheduled a lockdown drill for:

Monday, October 25 at 2:00 pm

The purpose of the drill is to practice response behaviours to protect occupants from harm when a danger is present inside the school. Students will review what to do, including “Safe, Silent & Serious”, with their teachers in advance.

In preparing this communication, we realize even the mention of the word “lockdown” raises questions and concerns. Please find below a series of Q&A’s to further explain what a “lockdown” means and our procedures for addressing this scenario, however unlikely, in our school. Note that due to COVID protocols this year, we will not be asking students to cluster together and as a result, they will be visible from their classroom windows. We will reinforce that should a real lockdown occur, then regular procedures would take effect and students would be out of sight from anyone roaming in the school.

At BES, we recognize our responsibility towards the safety of students and staff on our premises at all times. While incidents requiring an emergency response in our school are very low, “lockdown” drills are a part of our emergency response practices, similar to fire drills. With practice we hope everyone will feel more confident, less anxious and better able to cope knowing there is a plan and procedures for a situation of this kind.

If you have any questions, please feel free to contact us.

Sincerely,

Nadine Trottier, Principal
Jody Keon, Assistant Principal
Banff Elementary School

Q&A: Emergency Lockdown Drill and Procedures

A lockdown is an emergency procedure designed to protect occupants from harm or contain the movement of occupants when an intruder, or a restricted weapon, is present in the building. In a school lockdown, only emergency response teams from law enforcement will enter the school.

Are there different procedures depending upon the situation?

Yes. There are 2 distinctions between **Hold & Secure** in a building and **Lockdown**.

Hold & Secure - Procedure for a possible external threat or danger (eg. bear on the playground, police incident near school, etc.). Students and staff come into the school, remain in the school and external doors are locked. It will be “business as usual” in classrooms, however access in and out of the building will be in control of school administration and/or the RCMP.

Lockdown - People must stay where they are and cannot leave until response personnel give the ‘all clear’.

How are school staff prepared to handle a lockdown situation?

School-based staff have performed drills in the past and procedures are reviewed annually. Staff are able to recognize and respond to both scenarios.

Why do children have to practice a lockdown drill? Isn't that creating a stressful situation?

Particularly in emergency situations, we are all more confident, less anxious, and better able to cope when we know there is a plan in place. An essential part of the lockdown drill in our school is for staff to lead conversations about the experience afterwards to reassure students and help them develop new coping and self-calming techniques for the future.

May I communicate with my child during a lockdown?

It's expected that many parents will feel an urgent need to contact their child in a lockdown situation. Parents are asked to not try and reach their child via cell phone as this could be problematic, but rather wait for information from the Police and/or School Board. Communications both in and out of a school under lockdown are restricted to law enforcement personnel and their designates—including school principals and school district senior staff.

During a school lockdown, where can I go for more information?

Recognizing that telephone reception could quickly become overwhelmed by a high volume of calls in a lockdown situation, CRPS will communicate through various means available (twitter, website, email etc.) as information is released to CRPS through the RCMP.