Empowering all to achieve

Severn Vale School
An Academy

# CRITICAL INCIDENT POLICY

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| **Date of Policy** | September 2026 |
| **Date of Next Review** | September 2027 |
| **Staff Responsible** | Assistant Headteacher |
| **Reference** | Staff shared area/policies |
| **School/Governor policy** | Governor |

**SUMMARY**

The policy is part of the School's Health and Safety Policy and has been written to clarify responsibilities and, as far as possible, procedures if a disaster or emergency situation should occur in school. The policy has been cross-referenced against GCC's guidance on "Managing Crises in Schools" and also against DfE guidance carried on www.teachernet.gov.uk/emergencies. The following information is general in nature only as any emergency situation will have different features. Risk assessments are put in place for events which take place in school outside of the usual nature of the school day.

**RESPONSIBILITIES**

In the event of a whole school emergency the Headteacher will be in overall charge. If the headteacher is absent the deputy headteachers will jointly assume control. In the absence of both the head and deputy head then the assistant headteachers assume joint control. One of the first actions is to follow the protocols as set out in the Emergency Preparedness Response (EPR) plan, a copy of which each Senior Leader has. There is also a copy of the file in the Main Office.

**DECISIONS AND PLANNING**

The person in overall charge will inform staff of any decisions made when appropriate. The Leadership Team will follow the guidance and advice from Emergency Services should they become involved in any incident.

**Emergencies affecting a small number of people** e.g. serious injury to an individual or small group of people.

If staff **encounter** such an emergency they should send for a senior member of staff immediately. They should also:

- Ensure that all other students are supervised away from the situation as soon as possible
- Ensure the health and safety of the individual(s) by isolation, clearing an area or room
- Seek help from one of the school's registered first aiders

If staff **are informed** of such an emergency they should:

- Check that it is being dealt with by a member of staff (ask the informant who is there).

**If not** go there and instigate the procedures.

**If someone is dealing** with the situation:

- Ensure that all other students are supervised away from the situation as soon as possible
- Proceed with normal lessons unless told otherwise by the signals set out below or the senior leadership team.

If parents arrive at the school the senior member of staff in charge will have delegated someone to meet with them and discuss the situation. Please direct them to the reception.

**LIFE THREATENING SITUATIONS**

- If it does not add to the danger to the students the fire alarm will be sounded to evacuate students and staff to the Fire Assembly Point. Staff should then carry out the usual fire procedures.
- In the event of an imminent threat to life, a school wide lockdown can be initiated by activating one of the designated Lockdown Alarms across the school site. This will involve pushing a yellow break glass or use of a turn key, initiating pulses of the bell for the duration of the threat.
- All staff, students and visitors should then follow EPR protocols (see below)
- In line with government advice (Preparing for Emergencies. What you need to know.) In the event of a major emergency and the decision having been made to keep students in school, parents will be advised by the school (in liaison with Emergency services) of where and when they are able to collect their children. Parents will be reminded not to approach the school whilst an incident is occurring.
- Office staff either discovering a threatening situation or feeling threatened should summon help in an emergency, however any member of staff can initiate a Lockdown by using a Lockdown alarm if they deem that a threat is imminent.

  **Examples:**
  - Person(s) carrying a weapon either on OR in close proximity to site
  - Person(s) on site physically 'attacking' staff or students
  - Vehicle type 'attack' on building or facilities
  - Bomb Threat received

The school acknowledges it cannot predict every possible scenario of risk.

The school undertakes an annual EPR drill with all staff and students present to ensure ALL are aware of the protocols.

**Emergency Preparedness Response (EPR)**

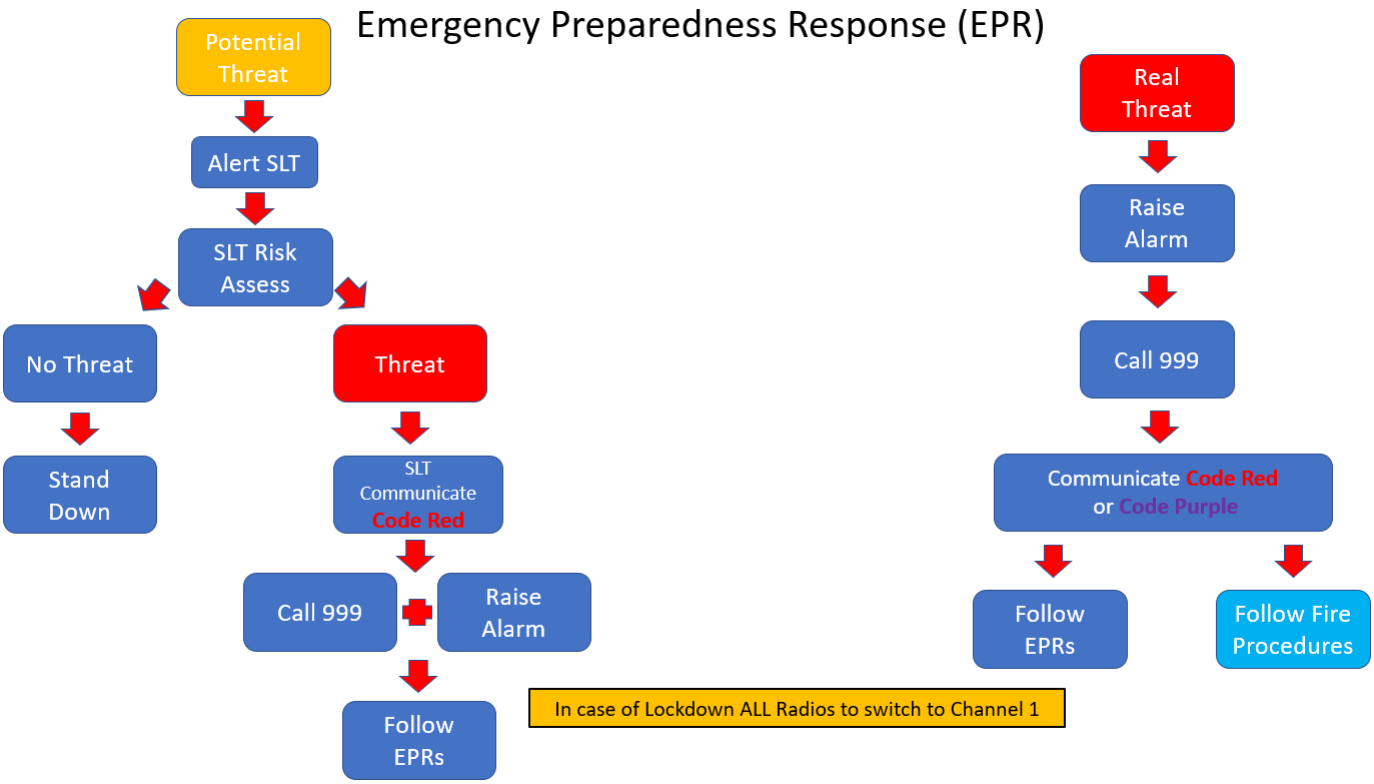
The school has a clear set of EPR protocols to risk assess, raise the alarm and initiate contact with the police as soon as possible.

There are a key set of **EPR principles** that ALL staff are briefed on;

- Staff must ALL be aware of the EPR process
- Any member of staff can raise the alarm and trigger a Lockdown
- All staff recognise our response in the first 15 minutes of an incident is critical
- All our protocols are aimed at delaying a threat to students & staff until Emergency Services arrive
- Clear SLT & Site Team communications are critical to the process
- SLT access to radios and mobile phones are critical to the school's response
- The location of the threat will always affect the school's risk assessment
- We are aware we are a large site with multiple access points.
- Any Lockdown ending will be followed up with a sweep of the school by SLT and Site Staff to ensure all Staff and students are aware
- We accept that often no fixed plan survives 'first contact' and we may have to adjust and adapt in the moment to best protect students and staff

**Risk Assessment Guidance**

Staff are guided to risk assess using the following instructions;




All staff are provided with guidance on assessing ***potential*** threats;

## How do we risk assess?




Assessing ***actual*** threats

## How do we risk assess?




How to initiate a Lockdown

## Initiating a Lockdown and Triggering Alarm

***Confirmed Physical Threat and Clear and Present Risk posed to safety***

1. *Activate Lockdown Alarm **OR** request that the Lockdown Alarm be activated immediately*
2. *Dial 999 from nearest available phone (or ensure 999 call is made)*

***Lockdown Master Switches are located and clearly marked in the following areas***

| | | | | |
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| **Main Reception Office** | **Safeguarding Office** | **Operations Manager Office** | **MFL Office** | **Inclusion Office** |
| **B-Block - English Office** | **Sports - PE Dept Office** | **DT Block - Head of Key Stage Office** | **Science Prep Room** | **History Office** |

*Once alarm activated you should now follow* EPR protocols.
*All Radios Switch to Channel 1*

Responding to a Lockdown (Guidance for Staff)

# Emergency Preparedness Response (EPR) - Staff

In case of **Code Red** please adhere to the following **Safety measures**:

1. Move to nearest place of safety (classroom, office, changing rooms etc)
2. Lock all doors and windows where possible
3. Turned off lights and draw blinds
4. Take cover out of sight
5. Staff monitor email and their mobile phone if safe to do so
6. Tell students to await further instructions about mobile phone use
7. Await updates via Text / Email or Emergency Services

**Code Red**
Confirmed Physical Threat and Clear and Present Risk posed to safety
School bell will **pulse** continually
Lockdown Safety measures in place

**Code Blue**
Immediate Threat or Concern assessed as resolved
School Bell will be silenced
Lockdown safety measures remain in place
Await further instructions from SLT or Emergency Services

**Code White**
Lockdown process now ENDED - Situation assessed to now be safe.
Follow instructions from SLT or Emergency Services regards movement around school site
All safety measures can be lifted

Responding to a Lockdown (Guidance for SLT)

# Emergency Preparedness Response (EPR) – SLT

In case of **Code Red** please adhere to the following Safety measures:

**If teaching** follow standard safety measures

- All windows to be closed
- All lights turned off and blinds drawn
- Staff and Students sit quietly and out of sight of uncovered windows
- Switch on radio to **channel 1** if possible and alert SLT of your location.
    - Switch on mobile phone if possible. Mute Office Phones.
    - Send location via email or SLT WhatsApp Group if no access to radio or email
    - Monitor emails if safe to do so.

**If Not teaching**

- Secure a radio (if safe to do so) and switch to **Channel 1**
- Via radio establish reason for Lockdown
- Make way to nearest Command Point (Site Manager's office or Safeguarding Office) if safe to do so.
- On route check staff/students on route are following EPRs
- Once at Command Point;
    - Confirm via radio your location
    - Confirm who is sending Lockdown text/email to staff and Parent App Notification
    - Await further instructions from Headteacher / Emergency Services in the Command Point.

***Important:** A Code Amber may not be widely communicated outside of the SLT. It is the responsibility of the SLT and staff involved to risk assess and make a judgement as to whether to upgrade to a Code Red.

**Code Amber**

*Potential Physical Threat or High Risk concern to safety imminent*

SLT and key staff to monitor and risk assess*

**Code Red**

*Confirmed Physical Threat and Clear and Present Risk posed to safety*

School bell will pulse continually

Full Lockdown safety measures in place - Emergency Services contacted

Lockdown Confirmation text/email sent to ALL staff

**Code Blue**

*Immediate Threat or Concern assessed as resolved*

School Bell will be silenced

Lockdown safety measures remain in place

Await further instructions from SLT or Emergency Services

**Code White**

*Lockdown process ENDING - Situation assessed to now be safe.*

All Safety measures can be lifted

Follow instructions from SLT or Emergency Services regards movement around school site

Responding to a Bomb Threat incident (Guidance for SLT)

# Emergency Preparedness Response (EPR) - Code Purple **(SLT ONLY)**

## ***Bomb Threat***

1. *Threat communicated to SLT member immediately*
2. *Threat risk assessed as meeting threshold for **Code Purple***
3. ***Declare a Code PURPLE to SLT via radio on Channel 2***
4. *Give brief description of potential threat (e.g. 'bomb threat received via phone call') over radio to **SLT on Channel 2***
5. *Repeat Code Purple and request SLT with radios respond to confirm*
6. *Decision made to **contact 999** and report threat – advice requested from Emergency Services*
7. *Identify if members of SLT need to deploy to specific areas and if threat affects certain areas of the school (consider if cohort/classes need diverting to alternative safe space. **If Evacuating CONSIDER if Astro or Field to be used.***
8. *Decision made to EVACUATE and follow Fire Safety Protocols **OR** follow EPRs and Lockdown*

**No Threat: Stand Down**

**Threat Assessment High: EVACUATE Initiate Fire Drill**

**Threat Assessment High: Initiate Code Red Lockdown** → **SLT and Site Team can remain mobile and continue to risk assess**

***If** Lock Down alarm is activated during the process you should now follow* EPR protocols.

***DO NOT WAIT FOR HEADTEACHER or DSL CONFIRMATION***

A copy of the above guidance can be located in the Staff SharePoint area.

**Mobile Phones**

The school operates a no phones policy with students expected to place their phones into lockable magnetic pouches on arrival each day. In the event of a critical incident, once the decision has been made that it is safe to do so the Leadership Team will decide if students will have access to their phones to make contact with parents.

Parents will be reminded in any communications that are sent out during or after an incident that their child will not be able to make phone contact with them, until it is deemed safe and reasonable to do so.

**BRIEFING STAFF AND STUDENTS**

For any incident the senior staff will be guided by Emergency Services to decide if students are to be briefed on the incident and by whom.
A senior member of staff may carry out the briefing. Where possible the first briefing will be given on the day of the incident to prevent rumours and misinformation being circulated and reported home. Governors to be informed as well as Gloucestershire County Council, as early as possible.

For traumatic incidents all staff should be issued with brief written notes. The briefing may contain any of the following:

- A factual account of the incident or problem
- Details of any arrangements necessary as a result
- Details of any help which is available

**AFTER THE INCIDENT**

Staff will be informed what information to give to whom, who to contact for further information and that they should refer media approaches to the Headteacher.

If a situation or query arises that has not been given an agreed response or contact person, the member of staff receiving the call must refer to the person in charge or other member of the senior team for guidance.

**VISITING PARENTS**

The senior team will decide if visiting the homes of students seriously affected by the incident is appropriate. The visit should be made by a member of the senior staff or by staff known to student and parent. Staff **must consult** with the Headteacher if wishing to visit homes.

**TALKING ABOUT TRAUMATIC INCIDENTS**

The senior team will decide whether the incident is to be discussed in school in a controlled way. When the decision is reached all staff, parents and students will be informed of the decision. If it is agreed to have such discussions the lessons should have clear aims and objectives and guidance will be given to the staff conducting them.

**THE MEDIA**

The Headteacher (or the Senior Leader post of joint control) should be the only person who speaks formally to the media.

Coping with the media:

- Governors and staff should not discuss any incident with the media unless requested to do so by a member of the senior team, using prepared notes
- Students and parents will also be given appropriate advice on dealing with the media
- Students should be advised not to talk to the media unless arrangements have been made for them to do so by a member of the senior team. Even then they should be accompanied by a member of the senior leadership team.
- If necessary subsequent daily briefings may be issued with a staff briefing daily at 8.45am
- Assemblies may be held for students or written briefing notes read out to them
- Staff are reminded of the need for confidentiality and discretion

(See GCC's guidance "Crisis? What Crisis? A guide to handling the media" for more details.)

**STAFF TRAINING**

Staff should be made fully aware of the procedures described in this policy. This should form part of the induction programme for all staff joining Severn Vale. Top up training and awareness raising will be built into the integrated Professional Development Programme for both teaching and support staff.

Appendix A - EPR Lockdown procedure posters have been circulated to all staff and should be on display in all classrooms

Appendix B - The Evacuation and Lock Down Procedure training delivered to staff

**MONITORING AND EVALUATING THE POLICY**

This policy will be updated annually by the Headteacher and monitored by the Governors' Resources Committee.

Appendix A – EPR Poster (Located on all internal doors)

# Severn Vale School
# Emergency Preparedness Response



## *Lockdown: Code Red*

School bell will **PULSE** continually



In case of **Code Red** please adhere to the following **Safety measures**:

1. Move to nearest place of safety
2. Lock all doors and close windows where possible
3. Turned off lights and draw blinds
4. Take cover out of sight
5. Staff monitor email and mobile phones if safe to do so
6. Staff direct students to await instructions about mobile phone use
7. Await updates via Text / Email / SLT or Emergency Services
8. Staff with radios switch to **Channel 1**

**Safety Measures remain in place even if alarm bell is silenced**

**Please await All Clear notification from SLT or Emergency Services**

Appendix B – Emergency Poster

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# IN AN EMERGENCY..... KNOW WHAT TO DO



**CONSTANT BELL**

**EVACUATE**

**TO THE FIRE ASSEMBLY POINT**



**CONSTANT PULSING BELL**

**LOCKDOWN**

**TAKE COVER INSIDE THE NEAREST BUILDING**

Appendix C – Evacuation and Lock Down Procedures for Severn Vale School

## Evacuation & Lock down procedures for Severn Vale School

SV
Severn Vale School

## IN THE EVENT OF AN EMERGENCY.....KNOW WHAT TO DO



EVACUATE SHELTER LOCKDOWN

## Evacuate

In the event of fire or any event that will put occupants of the building in danger by remaining in inside



- **In the event of an evacuation there will be a constant ringing bell**
- If you hear this you must evacuate the building **immediately** and head for the muster point on the astro pitch at the rear of the school.
- DO NOT re-enter the building until the all clear has been given by the HEAD TEACHER / SLT or FIRE OFFICER



## LOCKDOWN

This signifies an immediate threat to the school and may be an escalation of a partial lockdown



- **'Full lockdown' (Continuous pulsing of the school bell)**
- All pupils move inside(classroom, tutor room or other location eg sports/assembly/dining hall)
- External doors locked. (where a member of staff with key is present) Classroom doors locked (where a member of staff with key is present)
- Windows closed, blinds drawn, pupils sit quietly out of sight (eg under desk or around a corner);
- Staff and pupils remain in lock down until it has been lifted by a senior member of staff / emergency services. At any point during the lockdown, the fire alarm may sound which is a cue to evacuate the building.
- An email will be sent to all staff detailing the reason for the lock down if it is safe to do so.
- During the lockdown, staff will keep agreed lines of communication open but not make unnecessary calls as this could delay more important communication.
- **A Full Lock down will be lifted by the end of the constant pulsing of the bell**