

# Emergency Preparedness for Educational Settings

## FAQs from the event

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### **Q&A with Kathleen McGillicuddy**

**Q** – What advice would Kathleen McGillicuddy, the head teacher from Tewkesbury Academy, give following the incident?

**A** – Rehearse a lockdown policy, and support all colleagues to understand what sits behind the policy and decision making surrounding your lockdown procedure. Make sure they are aware of what can and can't be shared, and why this is important.

**Q** – How has the knock-on impact on the children been felt?

**A** – As shown on the videos during the event, one child was okay, but the other was terrified. This shows the depth and breath of feelings. Following the incident, this is still the same sentiment now across the student body and schooling community. It will take some longer than others to unpick the trauma experienced.

**Q** – How many people are required in a central point / control room?

**A** – Two from an educational setting would be beneficial

**Q** – How did Tewkesbury Academy manage the communications from schools once text messages from students were sent?

**A** - Parents received basic communication from the school, this was then followed with more detailed texts and letters. There were links in to the local garden centre, which acted as a central base, or rendezvous point, for people to wait. This was good practice, and something that would be beneficial for all schools to identify near to them in the case of an emergency.

### **Other FAQs**

**Q** – Most schools have a PREVENT risk assessment, which outlines the national and local risks. How can schools access the information required to complete that assessment?

**A** – Keep an eye out for Martyn's Law – there will be detailed guidance once published

**Q** – How do police make schools aware of a local incident?

**A** – The police will make establishments aware of a threat and advise you of some following actions. However, if your plan appropriates the necessity of a lockdown, or you feel this is an appropriate action, then it is the establishment's decision.

**Q** – Who decides which schools/ establishments should go into lockdown?

**A** – The decision of lockdown to your establishment. The police control room would advise you to follow your policy and contingency plan.

**Q** – In the event of an emergency, how do we get in contact with Victim Support?

**A** – Schools wouldn't need to contact Victim Support, they will be alerted and then can support

**Q** – What good practice can be shared in the event of a lockdown situation?

**A** :

- Fieldcourt Infant Academy, Gloucester – They have an alarm that has a different tone to the usual
- Archway School, Stroud – The senior leadership team, and their IT team can activate all screens across the school to go orange with a message, even if they are turned off. This enables emergency messages to show.
- Tirlbrook Primary School, Tewkesbury – They were a neighbouring school to Tewkesbury incident, and had never carried out a formal drill prior to the event. The dynamic risk assessment process and consistent communications with senior team and teachers were most important
- Other schools use joint WhatsApp groups, or message on Microsoft Teams – others have separate emergency chats on Teams that they can post in if and when required

**Q** – How can schools best assist the emergency service response?

**A** – Make sure the designated key contact for the school is joined into the emergency services huddle, and pass information to them using the METHANE principle

**Q** – How are police dogs transported?

**A** – In the back of marked cars, in specially-made crates. Occasionally they may be in unmarked cars, but this is unusual.

**Q** – How do schools manage the communication once messages start to land with parents and carers?

**A** – One school mentioned their Communications Manager, who would put information across social media platforms and via email for the Trust. It was identified however, that it may be worth exploring the possibility of having something always on their internet page to direct parents and carers to in the event of an emergency

**Q** – How can we co-ordinate the end of a lockdown?

**A** – Alongside your lockdown policy you will need to consider a policy for easing off the lockdown. The recommendation for this would be a phased approach.

**Q** – If a staff member is the specific target of a threat, should you tell them?

**A** – According to article 2 of the Human Rights Act, there is a legal duty to notify someone of a genuine threat to life. The management of this notification would be down to your establishment, this would be a decision that you would need to log your rationale for.

**Q** – What would happen if no one internally could initiate the lockdown, or safely join the JESIP huddle?

**A** – The recommendation for this is to invest in a Gerda box (more information on this can be found in the Department for Education presentation). The premise of this box is to store all emergency plans, and site maps so that emergency services can access all the necessary information to complete a dynamic risk assessment. The fire service have the keys which can access this box.