

ASHTABULA AREA CITY SCHOOLS

For parents: What happens during a lockdown?

Occasionally, some of our school buildings have to go under a lockdown due to a situation in the community or because of a threat involving the school.

We wanted to share our lockdown procedures with parents so you will know what is going on during a lockdown, and why we take the precautions we do.

What is a lockdown?

A lockdown is a precautionary measure in response to a threat directly to the school or in the surrounding community. In a lockdown:

- All school activities are moved indoors.
- Depending on the type of lockdown, interior and exterior doors on campus are locked. No one is allowed to enter or exit the building.
- Parents may not come to the school during a lockdown.
- Parents are also discouraged from calling the school directly. Additional calls hinder the ability of staff to respond to the primary task: keeping everyone safe.

There are two lockdown protocols at AACCS:

- **Preventive Lockdown Protocol:** This protocol is only used when there is no apparent indication that weapons are involved. For example, a Preventive Lockdown may be implemented for an intruder, a suspicious person, a person who is clearly intoxicated, emotionally unstable, or who is out of control but does not appear to be armed or present an immediate threat. A Preventive Lockdown is a means to rapidly enhance the level of security in the facility while allowing limited educational and work functions to continue. By locking exterior doors and main interior doors, staff can make it more difficult for an intruder in the building or a dangerous person in the vicinity of the facility to gain access to staff and students. This type of lockdown does, however, allow staff and students to continue with productive activities in a limited fashion.
- **Emergency Lockdown Protocol:** This protocol should be initiated for any situation involving a potentially dangerous person who is believed to have any form of weapon or who presents an immediate danger. A firearm, knife, hammer, crowbar, baseball bat or other potentially dangerous object may be considered a weapon depending on the context of the situation. An Emergency Lockdown is used to dramatically and rapidly enhance the level of security in the facility. By locking exterior and main interior doors, staff can make it more difficult for dangerous person(s) in the vicinity of the facility to gain access to staff and students. This type of lockdown further requires that all staff and students seek as much physical safety from physical assault as possible by using barriers to sight as well as physical barriers.

Emergency Training: Staff and students throughout the district are trained in emergency response protocol(s). The district utilizes A.L.I.C.E. (Alert, Lockdown Inform, Counter, Evacuate) to educate, plan and prepare for certain threats and incidents.

How will I know if my child's school is on lockdown?

Once a lockdown is put into place, police and school administrators work together to first ensure the safety of everyone on the school campus. Once the situation has been stabilized, a phone message, email *and/ or* paper letter will be sent to parents to inform them that the school was placed on a lockdown, the nature of the incident, and about how long the lockdown was in place.

In larger emergencies, such as an Emergency Lockdown or lockdowns that affect numerous schools, AACCS will take the following steps to notify you:

- dispatch an emergency phone message
- notify and update the local media as the situation develops

Emergency phone messages are sent to phone numbers that parents have provided to the school. Letters are usually sent home with students at the end of the day, or the following day if the lockdown happened close to dismissal.

Why didn't I receive a phone message?

Each situation differs in the level of severity and how it impacts the school day and families. For instance, if a Preventive or Emergency Lockdown is put into place but is lifted after just a few minutes with minimal impact to the school day, your principal may decide he or she will send a letter home for information purposes. In other cases, principals will decide to send both an emergency phone message *and* a paper letter home.

In a more severe Emergency Lockdown, parents will receive multiple forms of communication. This could include multiple phone messages, as well as written letters after the fact. During an Emergency Lockdown, parents are also encouraged to watch or listen to local media for updates.

Parents: please ensure your school has your most up-to-date emergency contact information on hand. In the event of a lockdown or other emergency, school staff will use that contact information to contact you. If you have not received a recorded phone message from your school during a lockdown, please check your contact information with the school.

Can I come to the school and take my child home?

During a lockdown, your child's school is a secure area. School officials and law enforcement are working together to keep everyone safe, and no one is allowed to enter or exit the school. To ensure everyone's safety we ask that parents please refrain from coming to school campuses during a lockdown. Once the all-clear is given, students and staff will be permitted to enter or exit the school again.