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23rd September 2024

Dear parents/carers,

As I shared last year, we constantly revisit all health & safety procedures to ensure staff and pupils are familiar with all processes. This term we have already practised a fire drill and over the next few weeks we will be practising a lockdown drill. This is a standard practice across many schools. The purpose of practising such a drill is to help pupils and staff to act quickly and automatically to the requirements of a lockdown procedure. Please note, we have a lockdown policy/procedure, and this was reviewed and adopted by the Governing Body in spring 2024.

A lockdown procedure is a standard health and safety procedure, similar to a fire drill. Our lockdown procedure will be used when there is a threat to the safety of learners, staff, and others in the school, and when it is safer for everyone to remain in school buildings rather than evacuate. The purpose of this drill is to ensure pupils, staff and visitors are safe in the event of an incident requiring all personnel to remain inside the buildings such as an event in the community.

The aim of this procedure is to keep people safe by confining them to a secure place of safety. Situations where our lockdown procedure may be used include:

- A potentially dangerous person or animal on the school site;
- A disturbance or dangerous situation in the local community that could affect the school;
- A nearby chemical incident or other risk of air pollution; and
- An incident related to terrorism.

A lockdown drill is slightly different to a fire drill, in that the children are kept inside the school buildings and classrooms, when circumstances make it safer to remain secure in the classroom rather than leaving the building. Just as we prepare our pupils and staff to properly respond to a fire drill, they also need to be aware of the proper response to a lockdown drill. These drills and procedures should be treated with the same level of importance as fire drills.

During a lockdown drill, classroom doors are secured, and the children remain inside the room until instructed by the Headteacher and the Senior Leadership Team (response team) that the drill has ended. All exterior doors are locked on each building, and no one is permitted to enter or leave the school buildings.

Please be assured staff at Porthcawl Comprehensive School will spend time discussing the importance of this procedure with pupils prior to undertaking a drill. We will also take time after the drill to fully discuss any concerns and to remind pupils that this is a procedure used in very rare circumstances. Last year, we spoke to all year groups in assembly, and senior staff will do so again this week.

We aim to undertake a lockdown drill at least once per year and moving forward, you and your child will be notified in advance of any proposed lockdown drill. The importance of the practice will be fully explained to pupils and there will be opportunity to discuss any concerns they may have.

A lockdown drill will take place during this half term, and as previously stated, this week we will begin explaining and preparing our pupils and staff for this. We encourage all parents/carers to discuss the lockdown procedure with your child whilst reinforcing its importance in ensuring the health and safety of all. The lockdown drill will not take place until all pupils have been spoken to in assembly.

Please note that the school will be closed for a short time during this drill, including the main office/reception, so that staff, children, and any visitors can follow these safety procedures correctly. Telephones will not be answered during any period of lockdown. The lockdown drill will only take place for a short period of time.

Please contact us if you have any questions or concerns.

Thank you for your attention to this and for discussing the contents of the letter with your child.

Best wishes,

Mike Stephens

M Stephens
Headteacher