

PACE Northwest - Emergency Lockdown Procedures

Alternative Education Provider · Liverpool, England

Approved by: Board of Directors

Policy owner: Health, Safety & Safeguarding Manager

Effective date: 29 August 2025

Reviewed: 16 September 2026

Next review due: 16 September 2027 (or sooner if guidance, law, premises or risk profile changes)

1. Purpose

This procedure sets out how PACE Northwest will respond to a serious or immediate threat to the safety of learners, staff or visitors at or near its premises, including an intruder or violent incident, weapons-related threat, terrorist incident, civil disturbance, suspicious activity or an external environmental hazard.

It supports PACE Northwest's wider safeguarding, health and safety, security, emergency-planning and business-continuity arrangements and reflects current Department for Education school and college security guidance.

2. Legal and guidance framework

- Health and Safety at Work etc. Act 1974.
- Management of Health and Safety at Work Regulations 1999.
- Counter-Terrorism and Security Act 2015 and the Prevent duty.
- Keeping Children Safe in Education (KCSIE) 2026 where applicable to the setting and activity.
- Department for Education School and College Security guidance, updated July 2026, including current lockdown, risk-assessment and preventative-measures resources.
- Relevant local-authority emergency-planning and police/emergency-service guidance.

3. Scope

This procedure applies to all staff, learners, apprentices, contractors and visitors on PACE Northwest sites. Relevant principles also apply to off-site learning, visits and employer premises, where the local venue's emergency arrangements should be followed.

4. Lockdown definition

Lockdown is the controlled containment of people in a secure location to reduce exposure to an immediate or developing threat inside, outside or near the premises. Depending on the nature and location of the threat, senior staff or emergency services may direct a full or partial lockdown, evacuation or other protective action.

5. Responsibilities

- **Directors & Senior Leadership:** ensure suitable security risk assessment, procedures, training, resources and review arrangements are in place.
- **Health, Safety & Safeguarding Manager:** owns the procedure; coordinates planning and exercises; liaises with police/emergency services and relevant partners; ensures lessons from drills or incidents are acted upon.
- **Incident Controller:** the senior manager on site coordinates the response unless and until emergency services take control.
- **Staff:** know the procedure, participate in training/exercises, follow instructions, protect and reassure learners and report security concerns promptly.
- **Learners and visitors:** follow staff and emergency-service instructions immediately.

6. Activation and signals

The exact method used to activate lockdown must be clear, distinctive, known to staff and appropriate to the site. PACE Northwest's current site arrangements use:

- **Lockdown activation:** continuous ringing of the fire bell alternating with a spoken/PA message: 'LOCKDOWN, LOCKDOWN, LOCKDOWN'.
- **All clear:** confirmation by the Incident Controller or emergency services through the agreed communication method. A fire alarm alone must not be treated as an all-clear.

Where circumstances make the normal signal unsuitable or unavailable, staff should follow direct instructions from senior staff or emergency services.

7. Immediate actions

On receiving a lockdown instruction, staff should use professional judgement and follow any instructions from police/emergency services. Where safe and appropriate:

1. **Move to safety** - people outside should enter the nearest suitable secure building/area unless doing so would move them towards the threat.
2. **Secure the area** - close and lock doors and windows where possible; use available measures to restrict access where necessary and safe.
3. **Reduce visibility and exposure** - move away from doors and windows, remain quiet and use blinds/curtains where appropriate.
4. **Silence devices** - silence mobile phones and other devices; switch off lights where this is appropriate and does not create additional risk.
5. **Account for people** - take or check registers where safe and practicable and report missing or additional persons through the agreed internal route when instructed.
6. **Do not leave the secure area** until instructed by the Incident Controller or emergency services, unless remaining there presents a greater immediate danger.
7. **Follow emergency-service instructions** - these take precedence over the normal procedure.

8. Communication

- The Incident Controller coordinates internal communications and contact with emergency services.
- Staff should avoid unnecessary calls, messages or social-media posts during an incident where these could compromise safety, create misinformation or overload communications.
- Essential communication with emergency services or senior staff should be made when safe to do so.
- Parents/carers and commissioning organisations will be informed through agreed channels when it is safe and appropriate.
- Media enquiries must be directed to the CEO or appointed spokesperson.

9. Contacting emergency services

Call 999 where there is an immediate threat or danger. Provide the site/location, nature and location of the threat, known injuries or hazards and any other information requested. Follow police/emergency-service instructions.

Internal emergency lead: becs@pace-com.org

10. Special considerations

- **SEND, medical or mobility needs:** individual needs, communication methods, Personal Emergency Evacuation Plans or other relevant support arrangements should be considered in advance.
- **Workshops/practical areas:** machinery, gas or electrical equipment should only be made safe where this can be done without delaying movement to safety or increasing risk.
- **Visitors/contractors:** staff should direct them to the appropriate safe area and provide clear instructions.
- **Off-site training/visits:** follow the host venue's emergency procedures and notify PACE Northwest as soon as practicable.
- **Conflicting hazards:** if fire, smoke or another immediate danger makes the lockdown location unsafe, staff should move away from that danger and follow emergency-service instructions.

11. Security risk assessment and prevention

PACE Northwest will maintain proportionate security arrangements based on site-specific risk assessment. This should consider access control, visitors, perimeter/site security, communication methods, emergency contacts, vulnerable areas, local risks and arrangements for staff, learners and visitors.

Security arrangements will be reviewed following significant changes to premises, provision, local risks, incidents or relevant government guidance.

12. Training, exercises and testing

Staff will receive information and training on lockdown procedures at induction and appropriate refresher intervals. Lockdown arrangements will be tested through proportionate exercises or drills at intervals determined by the site's security risk assessment and operational needs.

Exercises must be planned so that they do not unnecessarily alarm or distress learners. Adjustments should be made for learners with SEND, trauma or other vulnerabilities. Records of exercises, issues identified and corrective actions will be maintained by the Health, Safety & Safeguarding Manager.

13. Post-incident actions

Following an actual incident or significant exercise, PACE Northwest will:

- confirm the safety and welfare of learners, staff and visitors and arrange appropriate support;
- preserve relevant information or evidence where required;
- communicate appropriately with parents/carers, commissioning schools and other partners;
- make any required notifications to the Department for Education, Ofsted, HSE, local authority, police or other relevant bodies according to the circumstances;
- debrief appropriately, recognising that immediate detailed debriefing may not be suitable for everyone after a traumatic event; and
- review the security risk assessment, procedure, communications and any lessons learned.

14. Related policies and plans

- Safeguarding & Prevent Policy.
- Health & Safety Policy.
- Business Continuity & Critical Incident Plan.
- Fire Evacuation Procedures.
- Visitor / site-security arrangements.
- SEND and relevant individual emergency/support plans.

15. Emergency contact

Internal: becs@pace-com.org

Emergency services: 999 where there is immediate danger.

Version control

v1.1 - reviewed 16 September 2026.