Lockdown and Invacuation Policy

Approved by:	Lauren Meston	**Date:**	16/08/2026
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Introduction

Future Pathways CIC is committed to safeguarding and protecting every young person, member of staff and visitor. Although serious security incidents are rare, the setting must be able to respond quickly, calmly and proportionately where there is a threat or potential threat on or near the premises.

This policy sets out how Future Pathways will initiate and manage a lockdown or invacuation. It is part of the wider emergency, safeguarding, health and safety and business-continuity arrangements. It applies to the Future Pathways site at 7-9 Duke Street, Doncaster, and to staff who may be responsible for young people during activities away from the main site.

A lockdown is not the same as a fire evacuation. During a lockdown it may be safer to remain inside and secure the premises. Staff must therefore follow the instruction given for the specific incident and must not automatically evacuate unless directed to do so or there is an immediate life-threatening reason to leave.

Purpose and aims

- protect life and reduce the risk of harm during a security-related incident or other external threat;
- provide a clear, practiced and proportionate response for staff and young people;
- ensure responsibilities, communication routes and decision-making arrangements are understood;
- ensure vulnerable young people, including those with SEND, medical needs or known safeguarding risks, are considered in emergency planning;
- maintain effective communication with emergency services, parents/carers, commissioning schools and relevant agencies;
- ensure incidents and drills are reviewed so that lessons are identified and arrangements improved.

Legal and guidance framework

This policy has been developed with regard to current national guidance and legislation, including:

- Department for Education, School and college security guidance, updated July 2026;
- Department for Education, Protective security and preparedness for education settings;
- Department for Education, Emergency planning and response for education, childcare and children's social care settings;
- Keeping Children Safe in Education 2026, effective from 1 September 2026;
- Working Together to Safeguard Children and local multi-agency safeguarding arrangements;
- Health and Safety at Work etc. Act 1974 and relevant health and safety duties;
- Equality Act 2010 and the duty to make reasonable adjustments;
- Terrorism (Protection of Premises) Act 2025 (Martyn's Law) and related guidance, noting that the Act has not yet been commenced and legal duties will apply only when brought into force.

Department for Education emergency-planning guidance applies to alternative provision and expects settings to have emergency plans in place. Future Pathways will keep this policy and its site-specific procedures under review so that they remain proportionate to the setting, local risks and changes in national guidance.

Definitions

Lockdown

The process of securing the premises, or part of the premises, to prevent or control entry and exit because remaining inside is assessed as safer than leaving.

Invacuation

Moving people from an exposed area to a safer place within the premises or another secure internal area.

Evacuation

Moving people away from danger by leaving the premises or affected area. Fire procedures are normally an evacuation response, whereas a security incident may require lockdown, invacuation or evacuation depending on the threat.

Dynamic lockdown

A flexible lockdown response in which staff rapidly secure themselves and the young people with them in the safest available place, based on the location and nature of the threat and any instruction from emergency services.

Circumstances that may require lockdown or invacuation

A lockdown or invacuation may be considered where there is a credible or developing threat that makes remaining inside safer. Examples may include:

- an intruder or unauthorised person on or attempting to enter the premises;
- a person believed to have a weapon or presenting a serious threat of violence;
- a serious violent incident on or immediately outside the premises;
- police activity or a dangerous incident in the local area;
- a terrorist or security-related incident;
- a hazardous substance, smoke, chemical release or other external environmental danger where remaining indoors is safer;
- a dangerous animal or other unusual external threat;
- an emergency-services instruction to remain inside and secure the premises.

The response must be based on the circumstances. A bomb threat, fire, gas leak or other hazard may require evacuation rather than lockdown. Staff must follow the direction of the incident lead and emergency services and use professional judgement where there is an immediate danger to life.

Roles and responsibilities

Lauren Meston - Managing Director and Designated Safeguarding Lead (DSL)

Lauren Meston has overall responsibility for ensuring that Future Pathways has suitable emergency and lockdown arrangements, that those arrangements are reviewed and tested, and that safeguarding remains central to decisions before, during and after an incident.

- approve and review this policy and the site-specific lockdown plan;
- ensure staff understand their responsibilities and receive appropriate briefing or training;
- ensure lockdown arrangements take account of SEND, medical, communication and safeguarding needs;
- liaise with police, local authority, commissioning schools and other agencies where appropriate;
- ensure serious incidents are reviewed and any safeguarding follow-up is completed.

Incident lead

The Managing Director will normally act as incident lead. If unavailable, the most senior member of staff present will assume the role until responsibility is formally handed over. The incident lead will, as far as circumstances safely allow:

- assess the information available and decide whether to initiate lockdown, invacuation or another emergency response;
- ensure 999 is contacted where there is an immediate threat to life or serious crime;
- coordinate internal communication and accountability;
- liaise with emergency services and follow police direction;
- decide when the lockdown can end, normally only following confirmation from emergency services where they are involved;
- coordinate communication with parents/carers, commissioning schools and other agencies after immediate safety has been secured.

All staff

- know the agreed lockdown signal and immediate actions required;
- act calmly and promptly and take responsibility for young people in their care;
- follow the safest available route to a secure internal area without moving towards a known threat;
- secure doors and reduce visibility where this can be done safely;

- keep young people quiet, reassured and away from doors and windows as appropriate;
- keep mobile phones on silent and avoid unnecessary calls or messages;
- account for young people and adults as far as safely possible and report missing or additional persons using the agreed communication method;
- do not leave a secure area or release a young person until an authorised all-clear is given unless remaining there presents an immediate danger;
- follow safeguarding and medical procedures during the incident as far as circumstances allow.

Young people

Young people will receive age-appropriate information about lockdown procedures. During a lockdown they are expected to follow staff instructions promptly, remain with the supervising adult, keep quiet when asked, keep personal devices away, and not open doors or leave the secure area unless directed by staff or emergency services. Staff will explain that these procedures are about keeping everyone safe, not punishment.

Preventative security and access control

Lockdown is one element of protective security. Future Pathways will reduce the likelihood and impact of security incidents through proportionate day-to-day controls, including:

- controlled access to the premises and clear visitor-arrival arrangements;
- visitors signing in, being identified and supervised as appropriate;
- staff challenging unknown or unauthorised persons where it is safe to do so and seeking senior support where necessary;
- maintaining doors, locks, alarms, communication systems and other security measures;
- prompt reporting of threats, suspicious behaviour, weapons concerns or safeguarding intelligence to the DSL and police where appropriate;
- regular review of site security and emergency arrangements, including risks arising from the surrounding area.

Initiating a lockdown

Any member of staff who becomes aware of an immediate serious threat must act to protect life and contact 999 if safe to do so. They must alert the Managing Director/senior staff as quickly as circumstances allow. Staff do not need to wait for managerial permission to call emergency services where there is an immediate danger.

The exact lockdown signal and communication method will be recorded in the restricted site-specific appendix. Staff must be briefed on the signal. The signal should be distinctive from the fire alarm and should not rely on a single communication method where an alternative can reasonably be provided.

Immediate lockdown procedure

1. On hearing or receiving the lockdown instruction, stop normal activity and remain calm.
2. Move young people and any nearby visitors to the nearest appropriate secure area, provided doing so does not move them towards the threat.
3. Secure external and internal doors as appropriate. Close blinds or curtains and reduce visibility from outside where this can be done safely.
4. Move people away from doors, windows and obvious sightlines. Encourage quiet and switch devices to silent.
5. Account for the young people and adults present as far as safely possible. Do not delay securing the area in order to complete a register.
6. Report missing, additional or injured persons to the incident lead using the agreed safe communication route. Do not leave a secure area solely to locate someone.
7. Maintain supervision and reassurance. Attend to urgent medical needs if safe to do so.
8. Do not open doors in response to knocks, voices or messages unless identity and authority are confirmed through the agreed procedure or emergency services direct otherwise.
9. Remain in lockdown until an authorised all-clear or further instruction is received.

If a threat is inside the building

Staff must use dynamic judgement. If moving to a usual lockdown room would take people towards the threat, staff should move away from the danger and secure the safest immediately available space, or evacuate away from the threat if that is clearly safer. Staff should not confront an armed or violent person unless action is unavoidable to protect life.

Where police attend, their instructions take priority. Staff should keep hands visible, follow directions immediately and understand that officers may initially be unable to provide reassurance or information while dealing with the threat.

If young people or staff are outside

People outside at the time of a lockdown should not automatically return to the building. The supervising adult should assess the direction of danger and move the group to the safest available location, which may be a pre-identified alternative secure place away from the premises. They should contact the incident lead or emergency services when safe and follow police instruction.

Visitors, contractors and other adults

Visitors and contractors are expected to follow staff instructions. Staff should bring nearby visitors into the secure area where safe to do so. Reception/sign-in information should be used to help account for visitors, but staff must not expose themselves to danger simply to check a register or search the building.

SEND, disability, medical and communication needs

Future Pathways recognises that some young people may find lockdown particularly difficult because of SEND, sensory needs, trauma, communication differences, anxiety, mobility needs, medical conditions or previous experiences. Emergency planning will therefore consider reasonable adjustments, such as:

- simple, consistent language and visual prompts;
- pre-teaching or social stories where this will reduce anxiety;
- identifying a trusted adult who can support regulation;
- considering noise, lighting and sensory needs in potential secure areas;
- ensuring essential medication and emergency medical information remain accessible where practicable;
- planning for mobility or personal-care needs;
- considering how a young person who may abscond, panic or become dysregulated can be supported safely.

An emergency does not remove safeguarding duties. Staff must continue to act in the child's best interests and use the least restrictive and most proportionate response available in the circumstances.

Safeguarding during lockdown

Lauren Meston, as DSL, will oversee safeguarding implications arising from a lockdown. Where the incident is connected to a particular young person, family member, exploitation risk, domestic abuse concern, criminal threat or other safeguarding matter, information will be shared with police, children's social care, commissioning schools and other agencies on a lawful and need-to-know basis.

Staff must remain alert to individual vulnerabilities during and after the incident. A young person's behaviour during an emergency should not be treated as deliberate misconduct where it is a response to fear, trauma, SEND or dysregulation without first considering support needs and safeguarding context.

Communication during an incident

Effective communication is essential, but communication must not increase risk. During a live incident:

- 999 will be used for an immediate threat to life or serious crime;
- internal messages will be brief, factual and limited to essential operational information;
- staff and young people should not post about the incident on social media or share live information that could compromise safety or police activity;

- parents/carers should not be contacted individually by multiple staff while the incident is active unless required for a specific safeguarding reason;
- only the Managing Director or an authorised delegate will issue official updates to parents/carers, commissioning schools, media or external agencies, taking police advice where appropriate.

Parents and carers

Parents/carers will be informed about the existence of lockdown procedures and the importance of following official communication during an emergency. If a lockdown occurs, parents/carers will be advised, when safe and appropriate, not to attend the premises or telephone repeatedly because this may create additional risk or obstruct emergency communications.

Young people will only be released when it is safe to do so and in accordance with instructions from the emergency services and Future Pathways. Where a different collection or reunification location is used, this will be communicated directly through an authorised channel.

Commissioning schools and local authorities

Because Future Pathways is an alternative provision, serious incidents may require prompt communication with the young person's commissioning or home school, local authority and relevant professionals. Future Pathways will share information proportionately after immediate safety needs have been addressed and will coordinate safeguarding, attendance, welfare and return-to-education arrangements where necessary.

Ending a lockdown and the all-clear

A lockdown must not be ended simply because the situation appears quiet. Where emergency services are involved, the all-clear will normally be given only after police confirmation. The incident lead will use the agreed authentication process to communicate the all-clear or any move to evacuation/reunification.

After the all-clear, staff will keep young people supervised until further instructions are provided. Registers will be reconciled, first aid and welfare needs addressed, and arrangements made for collection, continuation of provision or temporary closure as appropriate.

Emergency services

When calling 999, the caller should provide whatever information is known and safe to share, including the exact address, nature and location of the threat, number and description of persons involved where known, injuries, whether weapons are seen or suspected, and the caller's safe contact details. Staff must not delay calling 999 while trying to obtain complete information.

Emergency services may require access to building plans, keys, access information or details of who may be inside. Site-specific emergency information will therefore be maintained securely and reviewed periodically.

Drills, testing and staff training

Future Pathways will test its lockdown arrangements periodically and after significant changes to the premises, staffing or risk profile. Drills will be planned, proportionate and sensitive to the needs of the young people attending. The purpose is to familiarise people with procedures, not to simulate frightening scenarios.

- staff will be briefed on the lockdown signal, secure areas, communication methods and their responsibilities;
- new staff, agency staff and regular volunteers will receive essential emergency information during induction or arrival briefing;
- young people will receive calm, age-appropriate explanations before planned drills;
- individual adjustments will be made where a drill could cause significant distress or where a learner needs a different method of preparation;
- each drill will be recorded and reviewed for learning points;
- where appropriate, Future Pathways will seek advice from local police, the local authority or other relevant partners.

After an incident

Following a real lockdown, the Managing Director/DSL will coordinate a proportionate post-incident response. This may include:

- confirming the safety and whereabouts of all young people, staff and visitors;
- ensuring parents/carers, commissioning schools and relevant agencies receive accurate information;
- making safeguarding referrals or notifications where necessary;
- offering emotional and wellbeing support to young people and staff;
- recording injuries, first aid, accidents or restrictive interventions under the relevant procedures;
- preserving relevant evidence and cooperating with police investigations;
- reviewing attendance and education arrangements where the site cannot reopen immediately;
- holding a structured debrief and lessons-learned review;
- updating risk assessments, the lockdown plan and staff training where improvements are identified.

No person will be pressured to give a detailed account immediately after a traumatic event where this is not necessary for safety or safeguarding. Welfare and investigative needs will be balanced carefully, taking advice from police or other agencies where appropriate.

Business continuity and temporary closure

A lockdown or security incident may result in partial or full closure of the premises. Future Pathways will use its business-continuity arrangements to restore safe education as soon as reasonably practicable. Decisions will consider the safety of the building, police advice, staffing, safeguarding needs, access to records and equipment, and the needs of vulnerable young people. Commissioning schools and local authorities will be involved where alternative arrangements are required.

Confidentiality and security-sensitive information

The public policy explains principles and responsibilities. Detailed information that could compromise site security - including exact lockdown signals, room locations, access codes, keys, routes, alarm controls or vulnerable access points - will be held separately in the restricted site-specific lockdown plan and shared only with those who need it.

Martyn's Law

The Terrorism (Protection of Premises) Act 2025, commonly known as Martyn's Law, received Royal Assent in April 2025. At the date of this policy its substantive duties have not yet been commenced. Future Pathways will monitor implementation guidance and assess whether the premises fall within scope when the legislation comes into force. Regardless of scope, the setting will continue proportionate protective-security and emergency planning as good practice.

Monitoring and review

This policy and the restricted site-specific lockdown plan will be reviewed at least annually and sooner following a real incident, a drill that identifies significant learning, changes to the premises or staffing, changes in local risk, or new national/local guidance. The review will consider feedback from staff and young people, safeguarding needs, accessibility, communication, equipment, site security and lessons from local or national incidents.

Related Future Pathways policies and documents

- Safeguarding and Child Protection Policy;
- Behaviour Policy;
- Absconding / Leaving Without Permission Policy;
- Online Safety and Mobile Phone Policy;
- Inclusion Policy;
- Health and Safety Policy;
- Fire Safety / Evacuation procedures;
- First Aid Policy;
- Educational Visits Policy;

- Critical Incident / Business Continuity arrangements;
- Visitor and Site Security procedures;
- individual risk assessments, healthcare plans and safeguarding plans.

Appendix 1 - Staff quick guide: lockdown

If you hear or receive the lockdown instruction:

1. Stop normal activity and remain calm.
2. Move away from the known or suspected threat. Take nearby young people and visitors with you if safe.
3. Use the nearest suitable secure internal space. Do not move towards danger to reach a preferred room.
4. Secure doors and reduce visibility where safe. Move people away from windows and doors.
5. Keep everyone quiet and mobile devices silent.
6. Account for those with you as far as safely possible. Report missing/additional/injured persons by the agreed method.
7. Do not leave the secure area to search for someone.
8. Do not open the door unless authority is verified or emergency services direct you.
9. Call 999 yourself if you have direct knowledge of an immediate threat and it is safe to do so.
10. Remain in place until the authenticated all-clear or another emergency instruction is given.

REMEMBER: Fire alarm normally means evacuate. Lockdown instruction means secure/invacuate unless the immediate circumstances make remaining there unsafe. If police are present, follow police instructions.

Appendix 2 - Restricted site-specific lockdown plan

This appendix should be completed and held as a restricted operational document. Do not publish detailed security information on the public website.

Primary lockdown signal / wording:

_____

Secondary / backup communication method:

_____

Authenticated all-clear method:

_____

Primary incident lead:

_____

Deputy incident lead(s):

_____

Method for accounting for young people / staff / visitors:

_____

Primary secure areas by zone / activity:

_____

_____

Alternative secure area / off-site refuge:

_____

_____

Reception / visitor procedure during lockdown:

_____

_____

_____

Location of emergency grab information / plans / keys:

_____

_____

_____

Arrangements for SEND / medical / mobility needs:

_____

_____

_____

Internal emergency contact method:

_____

_____

_____

Police / local authority liaison arrangements:

_____

_____

_____

Reunification / collection arrangements:

_____

_____

_____

Date site plan last tested / reviewed:

_____

Reviewed by: _____

Appendix 3 - Lockdown drill / incident record

Date and time: _____

Drill or real incident:

_____

Reason / scenario used (if a drill):

_____

_____

_____

Who initiated the lockdown:

_____

Time lockdown signal given:

_____

Time all areas secured / accounted for:

_____

Time all-clear given:

_____

Number of young people / staff / visitors involved:

_____

Any person not immediately accounted for:

_____

_____

Any SEND / medical / safeguarding issues identified:

_____

_____

Communication issues:

_____

_____

What worked well: _____

_____

What needs improvement:

_____

_____

Actions required, responsible person and deadline:

_____

_____

_____

Reviewed by Lauren Meston / senior lead:

_____

Date review completed:

_____

Appendix 4 - Post-incident welfare and safeguarding checklist

- All young people, staff and visitors accounted for.
- First aid / emergency medical needs addressed and recorded.
- Parents/carers informed through an authorised route.
- Commissioning schools / local authority informed where appropriate.
- DSL safeguarding review completed.
- Children's social care / police / LADO or other referrals considered where relevant.
- Young people requiring enhanced emotional or pastoral support identified.
- Staff welfare and debrief arrangements considered.
- Attendance and education continuity arrangements confirmed.
- Incident records and evidence secured.
- Risk assessments and individual plans reviewed.
- Policy / site-specific plan changes recorded and communicated.
- Date for follow-up review agreed.

Approval

Signed: _____

Lauren Meston - Managing Director and Designated Safeguarding Lead, Future Pathways

Date: _____

Next review due: 15/08/2027