



February 17<sup>th</sup>, 2022

Dear Argyle Parents and Guardians,

Subject: Emergency “Lockdown” Procedure and Practice Drill – Thursday, Feb. 24<sup>th</sup>, 2:15pm

The North Vancouver School District, in partnership with the North Vancouver R.C.M.P. has recently undertaken an annual review of our emergency lockdown procedures. Between February 14 and March 12, all schools in the NVSD will be conducting a practice lockdown drill, which will include the participation of all students and staff. At Argyle Secondary, we will be conducting our lockdown drill on Thursday, February 24<sup>th</sup> at 2:15pm.

In preparing this communication, I realize that even the mention of the word “lockdown” can introduce unwelcome thoughts, and raises questions and concerns. On page 2 of this letter, please find a series of Questions & Answers to further explain what a “lockdown” means and our procedures for addressing this scenario, however unlikely, in our schools.

We realize that an actual lockdown scenario is intensely stressful for everyone involved. One of the most common reactions in parents is to be able to reach their child by cell phone. However, as is explained in the Q & A, cell phone communication can put individuals who find themselves in a lockdown situation at greater risk. For this reason, we ask all parents for their cooperation in respecting the law enforcement directive prohibiting the use of cell phones by staff and students during a lockdown.

Both the North Vancouver School District, and our school, recognize our collective responsibility for the safety of students and staff on our premises, at all times. While the incidence of threatening behaviours/incidents in our schools is very, very low, we hope you will find this knowledge of our procedures to be reassuring. Please don't hesitate to discuss this information with myself here at the school. Questions or concerns can also be communicated to Jeremy Church, District Principal for Healthy Schools, via his email at [jchurch@sd44.ca](mailto:jchurch@sd44.ca).

Sincerely,

A handwritten signature in black ink that reads 'Kim Jonat'.

Kim Jonat  
Principal

## "Lockdown" Procedure and Practice Drills - Questions & Answers

### What is a "school lockdown"?

A lockdown is an emergency procedure designed to protect occupants from an external harm, or contain the movement of occupants when a danger is present in, or around, the building. In a school lockdown, only emergency response teams from law enforcement will enter the school. A "lockdown" means that people must stay where they are and cannot leave until escorted outside by response personnel.

### Are there different procedures depending upon the situation?

Yes. There are three different distinctions of "lockdown" that direct how a situation will be addressed:

Level 1 "LOCKDOWN" – The danger is present inside the school.

Level 2 "HOLD AND SECURE" – The danger is close to, but not inside the building

Level 3 "SHELTER IN PLACE" – A risk is in the surrounding area.

### How are school staff prepared to handle a lockdown situation?

School-based staff are trained in how to recognize and respond to all three lockdown scenarios.

### Why do children have to practice a lockdown drill? Isn't that creating a stressful situation?

Particularly in emergency situations, we are all more confident, less anxious, and better able to cope when we know there is a plan in place. An essential part of the lockdown drill in our schools is for staff to lead conversations about the experience afterwards to reassure students and help them develop new coping and self-calming techniques for the future.

### May I communicate with my child during a lockdown?

It's expected that many parents will feel an urgent need to contact their child in a lockdown situation. However, any sound from a cell phone can alert the danger/intruder to the presence of an individual or group, placing them, and everyone in their vicinity, at greater risk. For this reason, students and staff are not permitted to use cell phones during a lockdown situation.

Communications both in and out of a school under lockdown are restricted to law enforcement personnel and their designates—including school principals and school district senior administrators.

### During a school lockdown, where can I learn more information?

Recognizing that telephone reception could quickly become overwhelmed by a high volume of calls in a lockdown situation, the School District will update its website as information is released to us through the R.C.M.P..