

Cambridge International School

Lockdown Policy and Procedures

NAME OF POLICY	Lockdown Policy and Procedure
APPROVED BY	Principal
DATE APPROVED	September 2025
DATE OF REVIEW	Updated 2025 Next projected review 2026
RELATED POLICIES	

Rationale:

Staff, students and visitors in Cambridge International School, Dubai (CIS), have the right to learn, work and be present in a safe and secure environment. However, the possibility of a major incident of violence is a reality which cannot be overlooked. Everyone who spends any amount of time in CIS on a regular basis, needs to know how to protect themselves and how to protect our children, in the event of a major incident or threat of school violence. This policy includes specific plans and procedures to keep students, staff members and others safe in the event of a violent incident or act of terrorism.

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1. Definition

- **Lockdown:** A lockdown is a response to an emergency situation such as the presence of an armed intruder or act of terrorism which prevents school occupants from exiting the building safely.
- A lockdown isolates, students, the staff and others from danger by requiring everyone to remain inside the building in secure locations.
- All staff members within the school are responsible for ensuring that no one leaves the safe area.

2. Performance Indicators

- Staff/community knowledge of the lockdown plan.
- Annual review of the lockdown plan.
- Effectiveness of the responses to serious incidents and lockdowns.
- Successful lockdown drill activated.

3. Mandatory Requirements

GEMS CIS will establish a lockdown policy to ensure the development and implementation of the school plans in relation to a lockdown incident. An annual lockdown drill will occur each school year.

- **Drills** – CIS is required to have *an Annual Lockdown Drill each school year*. The scheduling will be organised by the school Principal. GEMS CIS will keep a record of the date of the Lockdown Drill each year.
- **Training** - School administrators / MSO will review this plan with staff at least once during each school year.

4. Roles and Responsibilities

Principal - The Principal is accountable for over-all planning concerning the lockdown procedure. The Principal is entitled to delegate responsibility within the school to ensure the lockdown procedure is followed but it is important to note that the Principal maintains accountability when it comes to the delegate. The final content of the plan should include scheduling of drills, training of students and for the overall safety of staff and students. In an actual incident (not a drill), the police are responsible for the management of the threat and subsequent criminal investigation, however the Principal shall provide full cooperation with police.

Staff – School staff and, in particular, administrators, have the overall responsibility for the training, safety and wellbeing of students. During a violent incident, administrators have additional responsibilities in terms of working closely with the police.

Students – Students have a responsibility to be familiar with the plan and to respond quickly to the direction of staff during a crisis situation. Any student with information or prior knowledge of an individual or a potential situation which may result in a violent incident must come forward with that information as soon as possible. This is also the case during an incident.

Police – Police are responsible to respond to and investigating violent incidents. During a violent incident, police will assume command and control of the response and investigation but will liaise and work closely with school administration and other emergency services, throughout the process.

Parents/Guardians – Parents and guardians must be informed of the existence of this plan and should reinforce, with their children, that it is the student's responsibility to follow directions during a crisis and disclose any information they may have prior to or during a crisis situation.

5. Communicating with Parents

Parents and community members must understand that they are not to call the school during a lockdown procedure and that they will not be permitted access to the building or to students until it is determined that it is safe for them to do so.

Communication with parents, guardians and the community in general, is important so as to ensure a good understanding of lockdown procedures, without instilling fear.

- A letter / email (See Appendix A) will be sent to each home during the school year to inform parents of lockdown procedures and to encourage parents to reinforce with their children, the importance of understanding the procedures and following staff direction. Parents need to be informed of where they should proceed in the event of an actual incident involving a lockdown.
- Parents will be informed of what is expected should they arrive at school during a drill, or if they are present within the school when a lockdown is called.
- In all incidents of a lockdown which is not a drill, a communication to parents will be sent home at the conclusion of the school day or as soon as possible. Parents should ensure contact information is kept up to date so they can easily be reached by staff in the event of an emergency.

6. Confirmation of a Violent Incident

VIOLENT INCIDENT

- For the purposes of this plan, a violent incident is defined as a situation involving an armed individual posing immediate threat to life (i.e. has a gun, knife, explosives, etc.).

When a Violent Incident Occurs

- Although every effort is made to ensure a safe school environment, a violent incident can occur at any time or in any location within a school.
- If you observe a violent incident, DO NOT CONFRONT THE SUSPECT.

It is critical to notify the Main Reception immediately. As well, if it is safe to do so without danger to yourself or others, obtain the following details for your report to Reception:

- location and number of suspects.
- suspect moving or stationary.
- identity.
- Description of physical appearance (clothing, build, etc.).
- description of weapons.
- possible motive or threats made; and
- Any known injuries and location of casualties.

7. Procedure for LOCKDOWN:

- Based on lockdown procedures that have already been established in many GEMS schools, the following guidelines are provided to ensure lockdown plans meet basic requirements, and to ensure a degree of consistency and compliance.
- In the event of any emergency requiring lockdown:
 - The safety of students, staff and other persons on site, must be given the highest priority.
 - The safeguarding of property is considered of secondary importance.

a) When to Lockdown / Terminology to be used

- In the event of an intruder being located on the premises the following action should be taken.
 - If a staff member considers the person not to be dangerous, they should approach the person and ask the reason why they are on school premises. Preferably another staff member should be nearby. Guide the person(s) to reception for signing in.
- If a staff member has the slightest concern regarding a person on site, however they do not appear to be armed/possess a weapon, they should take the following action.
 - At the first indication of a major incident of school violence, notification must go to the Reception and the Lockdown commenced immediately.
 - **DO NOT APPROACH THE PERSON**
 - The person receiving the report of a violent incident initiates the Lockdown procedure as follows:
 - activate all public address (PA) systems (inside and outside); and
 - announce clearly and calmly on public address (PA) system:

‘SHARKS HAVE ENTERED THE SCHOOL’

(Critical Incident Response Protocol)

- When notified of a violent incident, activating Lockdown, the responding personnel must call 999, and notifying the Principal or MSO as soon as possible
- Responding personnel will have to use individual judgment as to what they can and should do first, keeping in mind that their primary role is taking care of students and staff at risk.
- If there is only one responding person available in the Reception, Lockdown shall be initiated before calling 999.
- If students are in the vicinity arrange for them to clear the area without attracting unnecessary attention and arrange for their own safety – see below.

b) LOCKDOWN Procedure in Classroom

Upon hearing the Lockdown announcement, staff will immediately initiate lockdown procedures.

- Staff members will direct students out of hallways to the closest secure classroom or other area which has been predetermined to be a safe location and remain with the students in this locked location.
- If the door does not lock, other systems may be used such as a bar/furniture to prevent entry. *If there is no system to prevent entry, the location would not be designated as a safe area.*
- Staff members will assess whether anyone is injured and the severity of the injuries and take appropriate measures to assist the injured without jeopardizing their own safety or that of others.
- Curtains or blinds will be pulled and the lights turned off.
- Students are to move away from doors and windows. In consideration of sight lines into the room, students are usually safest when sitting along the length of the inside wall of the classroom.
- Students must remain quiet and follow staff or police instructions.
- The classroom should look and sound empty. Staff members must prepare students for staying in a lockdown situation for an extensive period of time.
- If gunshots are heard, everyone should lie on the floor.
- Individuals are to contact the office ONLY with vital information regarding the incident; for example: “I see the intruder in the second floor hallway”.
- *Cell phones are NOT to be used by the staff or students unless communicating vital emergency information. A ringing cell phone may alert an intruder to a particular location. Also, excessive cell phone use in other violent incidents has shut down access to vital communication lines.*
- Teachers will take attendance in class and complete an attendance report, noting students who are in the room.

Students will not be allowed to use washrooms. No one will be released, except by direction of the Principal, the Principal's designate or police when a

'SHARKS HAVE RUN AWAY FROM THE SCHOOL. ALL CLEAR'

message is given.

- As washrooms do not have doors that lock, students should be directed to move to the closest designated safe location as soon as it is safe to.
- Teachers in safe locations near washrooms would need to be mindful of this. In elementary schools, the closest classroom teacher should be assigned to check the washroom when it is safe to do so.
- Teacher should NEVER open the door or leave the classroom until the clear signal has been given.

Laptops

- Unless staff are certain as to the nature of the reason for the LOCK DOWN, all students should be asked to close the lids of their laptops but NOT to close them down because of the noise factor.

c) Lockdown Procedures in Open Areas

- Staff members will direct students, in outdoor areas, to immediately take cover. Students are to lay flat on the ground behind objects or trees. Students should not run, but remain face down, flat on the ground
- Students **SHOULD TRY AND ENTER THE NEAREST CLASSROOM if it is safe to do so.** Staff members, who are with the students, whether conducting an outdoor class, conducting duties or the lunch break, shall endeavor to have students remain in the identified area and take attendance.
- A pre-determined location will be established for parents away from the school building.
- When it is safe to do so, students may be released to parents, and the staff will attempt to monitor student departures.

d) Administration Office Team/P.E. Teachers (if not with class)

- Assist by locking the many outside doors to your area.
- Sweep area quickly and secure all students who are in the hallway or general vicinity.
- Enter the nearest lockable office or classroom, lock the door from the inside and turn off all lights.
- Move any children to the far side of the room away from window view, if possible. Students should lay face down on the floor and instruct them to remain so quietly.
- Close all window blinds.
- Take attendance to ensure you know who is present. Note names of students you may have secured at the lockdown. Keeping record of who is present with YOU is critical in an emergency.
- Do not open the door for anyone regardless of what you hear going outside. If someone knocks at the door, do not respond. An administrator may be under duress and be forced to ask you to open the door. Do not.
- Do not use your phone unless you are instructed to use them. Your administrator may be trying to contact you by cell phone.
- Be prepared to follow further instructions from the Principal or Designee.
- NEVER open the door or leave the classroom until the all-clear announcement is given.
- If you are unable to get into the building, lay flat on the ground behind objects or trees.

e) Canteen Manager/ Staff

- Canteen aides need to move quickly to the canteen doors and help gather as many students as possible into the canteen prior to the lockdown. Take 15 seconds, then SHUT and LOCK doors. (You must secure the area quickly for the safety of all other children).

8. Fire Alarms – In the event that a fire alarm is pulled once a lockdown has been called, staff and students will not respond as they normally would to a fire alarm, but shall remain locked down, if it is safe to do so. Staff and students must always be aware of other dangers such as fire, and be prepared to respond accordingly to the most serious threat in order to ensure their own safety.

9. How Teacher should help Students Learn Emergency Procedures.

- a) Teachers should practice this in-class BEFORE any actual emergency:
- b) Practice all procedures exactly as they are written.
- c) Answer all questions and try to relieve as much anxiety as you can.
- d) Stress the importance of careful listening for directions.
- e) Tell students to never leave the school site on their own in any emergency situation. Discuss the safe and practical reasons for this.
- f) Talk about what students should do if you for some reason you are not there when a lockdown situation occurs.
- g) Stress the need for students to go with any teacher who can help them during a real emergency.
- h) Talk about what students should do if they are in the restroom, library, hallway, etc. if a real emergency should happen. Get to the nearest classroom to lockdown.
- i) Reassure students that parents and police will be notified immediately in any real crisis situation.
- j) Discuss why everyone needs to remain calm and quiet.
- k) Tell students that if they are not with their class teacher/learning manager during an emergency she/he will be notified about their location and join when safe.
- l) Discuss what to do if students are in the field, swimming pool or special class locations during a real emergency
- m) Admit to students that you may not have all the answers but reassure students that you will take charge of all situations to keep them safe.

10. The 999 Call

A call to 999 will initiate assistance from police services, as well as fire and ambulance services, if required.

The person calling 999 will provide the following information:

- a) the caller's name, the school's name and full address;
- b) a description of the situation.
- c) whether anyone is injured and the severity of the injuries; and
- d) a safe route to the building and a safe entrance for police, where police will be met by the Principal, if it is safe to do so.

The caller from the school will stay on the line and continue to provide information as requested by the emergency operator. It is essential to keep that line of communication open.

The person making the call will begin to document times and events relating to the incident. This information will greatly assist police services during and following the violent incident.

11. Controlled Evacuation

In the event of a pro-longed situation, or a situation where the threat has been contained (barricaded individual), a controlled evacuation of the areas of the school, not in the vicinity of the contained area will be considered.

- Police will make the decision as to whether a controlled evacuation of a school under lockdown, is a viable option, and will direct the evacuation process. This will normally be done on a room by room basis, with evacuees being escorted by police to the evacuation location.
- The Principal or designate will assign staff to supervise students and take attendance.
- Students may be released to parents/guardians. Student departures must be documented by staff. A police officer will be assigned to this area to communicate information to staff, students and families.

12. **Safe Haven Evacuation** (off-site evacuation directions)

There may be times when it is not possible or safe to evacuate to the agreed Assembly Points. The Crisis Management Team (Principal, Manager School Operations, SLT) will have met and be ready to commence with the school evacuation plan. ALL students will be notified to return to their regular classrooms. Teachers will be notified to prepare for evacuation.

- Announcement will be made via the PA system
- Students may take backpacks (but without school books). No building re-entry! Remain calm and in firm control. Children will need good adult guidance.
- Teachers move to the regular ASSEMBLY POINT with class. Take Emergency Procedures Folder.
- Take attendance on the field as done at any practice fire drill. Account for students.
- Remain quiet and listen for direction from your Principal or his designee.
- WAIT AT ASSEMBLY POINT until direction is given to move to the 'safe' location area.
- The Crisis Management Team will identify staff members who will be responsible for leading groups to the "Safe Haven" location area.
- Students and teachers in each group must follow the designated line leader's directions.
- Principal, MSO & Registrar will have a copy of the most recent master list of all staff & student names and their phone contacts.
- The school Principal or his/her designee will remain on the fire drill field until every student has left with a group leader to ensure no one is lost or left behind.
- The Health/Nurse Office will accompany the evacuation and remain ready for emergencies. Send no child to the Nurse without adult supervision.
- Be responsible for your group. Good judgment and mature discretion will be the best rule in any time of crisis.

13. **COMMAND POST**

A Command Post is the focal point for command and control of the situation. CIS had identified the following Command Posts:

- Main Reception, Security office on the ground floor next to the main gate and the MSO's office

9. **Medical Station**

Should there be a need for a medical station to be established outside of the main office area, the bus bay will be the first choice, and the football field will be the second choice. In the event of any type of evacuation, the school nurse(s) should take all student medications and medical emergency kit to the new medical station location.

14. **Crisis Reporting Procedures:**

Only the following personnel are authorised to report a crisis to local authorities:

- GEMS Corporate Management
- School Principal/Manager School Operations
- Vice Principal/Heads of Sections

15. Lockdown Checklist:

Principal/Designee will:

- 1) Determine if there is a need for a school lockdown and if so, make the Lockdown announcement or be informed of the lock down announcement
- 2) Alert office staff
- 3) Call local authorities.
- 4) Call Police / Fire Department
- 5) Notify the Corporate Office
- 6) Lock administration office doors, restrooms and conference rooms.
- 7) Alert the MSO, Security and employees outside the buildings.
- 8) Wait 1 minute. Begin cell phone contact check (Call Chain) with building SLT and health office.

16. Principal's Script for "Call Chain"

- ASK the person who answers:
 - Are all of your homeroom/section students accounted for?
 - Is there anyone in your room who is not on your class list? What are their names?
 - Do you have an adjoining room? Are all of the students in that room accounted for?
- Document all information given to you from the classrooms you have contacted
- Efforts to make attendance check will be done to ensure all students have been accounted for.

17. Follow-up procedures may include the following:

Actions taken following violent incidents can have a major impact on the well-being of the staff, students and the school community.

Follow-up procedures may include the following:

- a) Involving a GCO to provide counselling for the staff and students.
- b) Providing appropriate information to parents, the staff, students and the school community regarding the incident.
- c) Plan and making modifications as necessary.
- d) Identifying lessons learned and developing further preventative measures.
- e) Maintaining close contact with any injured victims and families.
- f) Maintaining close cooperation with police services to facilitate completion of investigations; and completing all necessary legal, insurance and administrative forms and documents as required.

Appendix A – Sample Letter to Parents for Lock Down Drill

Dear Parents,

We constantly revisit all safety procedures to ensure our staff and students are familiar with all processes. One of the procedures that CIS will be practising is a lockdown drill. This is a standard practice across many schools both in the UAE and beyond. The purpose of practising such a drill is to help students and staff to act quickly and automatically to the requirements of a lockdown drill.

A lockdown drill is slightly different to a fire drill in that the children are kept inside the school and classrooms when circumstances make it safer remain secure in the classroom rather than leaving the building. Just as we prepare our children to properly respond to a fire drill, they also need to be aware of the proper response to a lockdown drill. These drills 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 teacher to resume their activities. All exterior doors are locked, and no one is permitted to enter or leave the building.

Please be assured that staff at our school will spend time discussing the importance of this procedure with students prior to running a drill. We will also take time after the drill to remind them that it was only a practice and there was no danger.

Global educational accrediting bodies advise that drills are held termly. Going forward, you and the students will always be notified in advance of a lockdown drill. The importance of the practice will be explained to students, and they will be given a lot of opportunity to ask any questions they may have in advance.

The lockdown drill is scheduled to take place on [Insert date]

Please take the time to speak with your son/daughter about this procedure and reinforce its importance, at the same reassuring them that, like a fire drill, this is a practice that is designed to keep them safe.

****Please note that the school will be closed for a short time during this drill, including the main office, so that staff, students, and any visitors can practise these safety procedures. Phones will not be answered during this time, and this will take no more than 15-20 minutes of the school's time.**

Please contact any member of the senior leadership team if you have any questions about lockdown drills.

Thank you for your attention to this matter.

Kind Regards,

Principal

Appendix B – Script for Students for Lock Down Drill

Please ensure students under your supervision know what to do when the lockdown drill signal is heard!

Good Morning Students!

We all know how to practice a fire drill once a term. That is the time the loud fire alarm bell rings and we quickly file out of the building and move out to the correct assembly areas. Then everyone lines up by class and teachers take attendance

We do another kind of drill. This may be new to some of you. This drill will be called a LOCKDOWN DRILL. We will use this kind of drill when it is most safe to stay INSIDE the building and not go outside.

What will a LOCKDOWN DRILL alarm sound like? When you hear the loudspeaker verbal command “SHARKS are in the School” several times in a row that tells you we are going to do a LOCKDOWN DRILL.

What should you do if you hear this announcement? No matter where you are or what you are doing when you hear this announcement you must get inside a building to a classroom with an adult within ONE MINUTE. Quick, safe moving is really going to be important when we practice this drill. When you are safely inside a classroom, listen to the directions from teachers or adults in charge of that room.

Things the adult in charge needs you to do during this drill will include:

1. Remain silent in the classroom. Absolutely NO talking or even a whisper.
2. Watch your teacher lock the classroom door, close windows, and turn off the lights.
3. Lay face down on the floor; even the teacher must do this! You rest your head on your arms. (Some may choose to take a little nap if desired!)
4. Wait until the teacher or the adult in charge tells you it is time to get up.
5. Stay in the room until the drill is over. No one is permitted out of the classroom.
6. A long continuous bell ringing will notify you that the drill is over.

When a drill is over, we will want to talk about it as a class and share how we think we did and if there is any way we can do better next time.

I am counting on you to do your very best when we practice this drill! Let's take our practice seriously and do it right the first time. Thank you for listening.

Note: Document all information given to you from the classrooms you have contacted. When calling chains have been completed and reported to the central headquarters, attendance check will be done due to ensure all students have been accounted for.

Appendix C – Staff letter

Dear All

A school lock down is when students, teachers, admin staff, support staff, guests and faculty are confined to their rooms or a safe place due to a perceived or real threat. Throughout the school year, it is common for schools in the U.A.E and world over to repeat lock down drills so that students become habituated to a passive response in the face of life-threatening danger. Drills can be scary, and you might feel threatened, but if you behave properly, you will not get in trouble.

We have scheduled a lockdown drill on

Teachers are requested to elaborately explain the requirement and importance of learning how to follow Lock down procedure to safeguard ourselves in case of unauthorized entry of a person / group of people with weapons in our school.

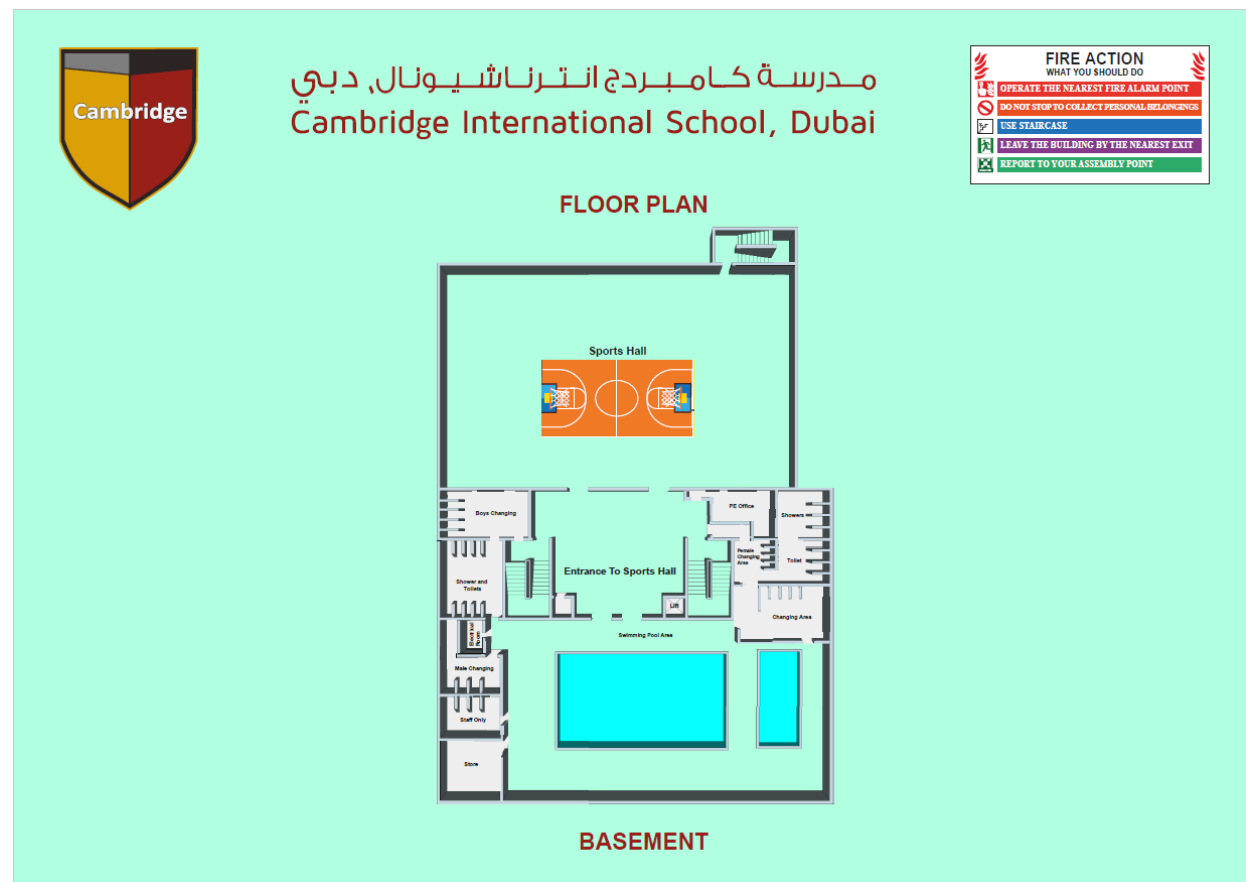
1	When a lock down is announced please go to the safe place and hide immediately and wait for further announcement. Lock down message – ‘SHARKS HAVE ENTERED THE SCHOOL ‘
2	Lock the door however you can. Whether it's putting a chair against the door or using a key. Make sure you can still escape quickly in case there is a fire or other dangerous situation in the area where you are locked down.
3	Close the windows and put the blinds down. Turn off lights.
4	Try to find a well-ventilated place where no one can see you.
5	Get into the nearest Class and don't waste time in wandering in the school corridors.
6	If you are in the toilet, pull your feet up and lock yourself.
7	Keep quite.
8	Stay where you are until further instructions.
9	Please keep your phone on silent mode and avoid talking to others.
10	In case of fire alarm sound, Please don't leave your place – it could be a false one.
11	Relax and come out after the All Clear message is announced by the Head of the school. All Clear message - ‘ SHARKS HAVE RUN AWAY FROM THE SCHOOL ALL CLEAR ‘

Appendix D – Emergency Contact Numbers

Department/Person	Number
Police	999
Fire (Civil Defense)	997 07 228 1212
Ambulance (Medical Emergency)	998
Stephen Brecken (Principal)	0589713495
Padmanabhan P (MSO)	050 6754386
Lourdina Franco (Vice Principal)	050 3600104

Department/Person	Number
Dr. Rehab Zaelnoon (School Doctor)	055 745 1629
School Security (Head Guard) Gurpreet	055 790 7245
Peter Hart (Head of Secondary)	055 4980061
Phil Yates (Head of Primary)	050 3828543
Lindsey Yarwood (Head of Early Years)	050 552 7667

APPENDIX E- Floor Plans





مدرسة كامبردج انترناشيونال، دبي Cambridge International School, Dubai

FIRE ACTION
WHAT YOU SHOULD DO

OPERATE THE NEAREST FIRE ALARM POINT

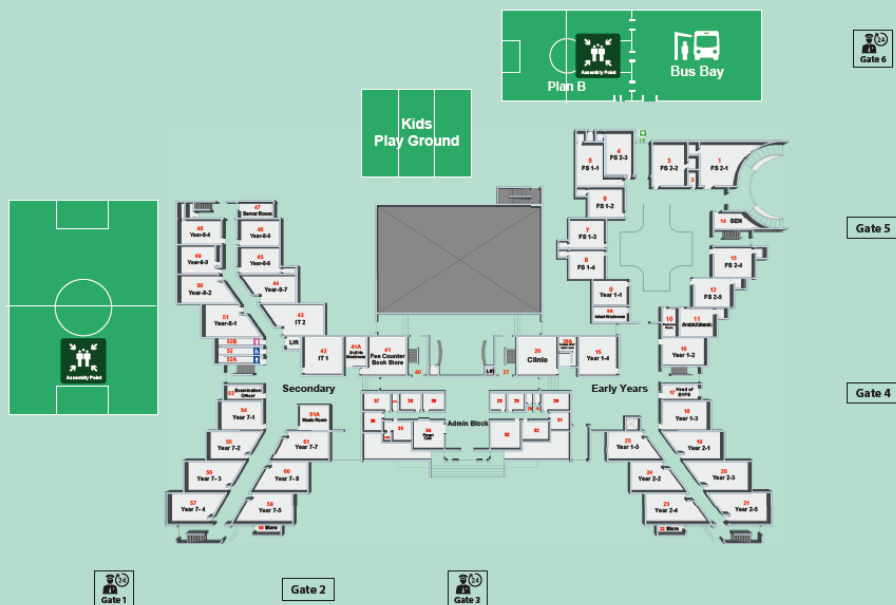
DO NOT STOP TO COLLECT PERSONAL BELONGINGS

USE STAIRCASE

LEAVE THE BUILDING BY THE NEAREST EXIT

REPORT TO YOUR ASSEMBLY POINT

FLOOR PLAN



GROUND FLOOR





مدرسة كامبردج انترناشيونال, دبي Cambridge International School, Dubai

FIRE ACTION
WHAT YOU SHOULD DO

OPERATE THE NEAREST FIRE ALARM POINT

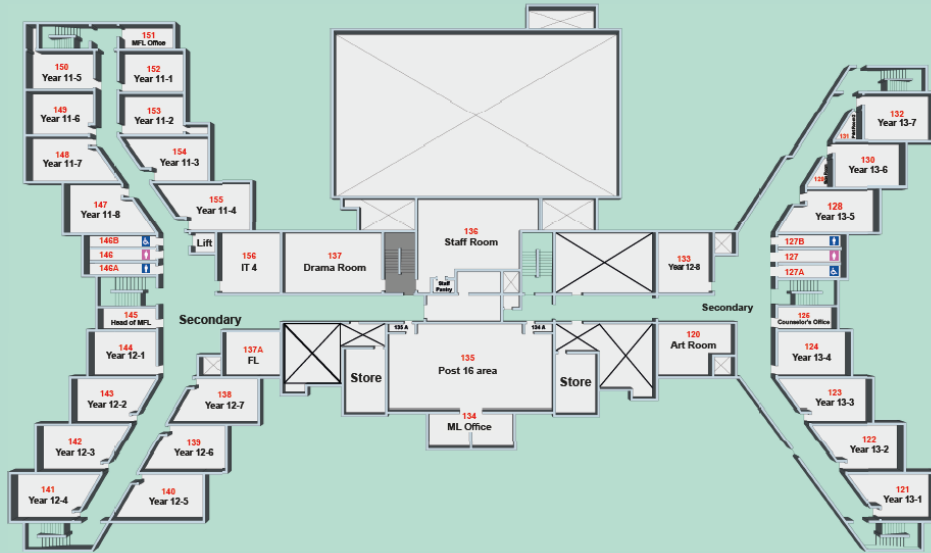
DO NOT STOP TO COLLECT PERSONAL BELONGINGS

USE STAIRCASE

LEAVE THE BUILDING BY THE NEAREST EXIT

REPORT TO YOUR ASSEMBLY POINT

FLOOR PLAN



SECOND FLOOR