

## Emergency Lockdown Policy

Updated: 23<sup>rd</sup> January 2026

### Contents

Intention.....	2
Legislative context .....	2
Legal guidelines and frameworks .....	2
Legal duties.....	2
Acronyms used in this policy .....	2
Definition of terms used in this policy .....	2
Communication tool.....	2
Designated safe area .....	2
Emergency lockdown.....	2
Lone working.....	3
Guiding principles.....	3
Roles and responsibilities .....	3
Updates to this policy.....	4
What can trigger an emergency lockdown?.....	4
Emergency codewords .....	4
Becoming aware of a potential threat.....	5
Lockdown procedures .....	5
Room specific lockdown procedures.....	7
Lone workers during a lockdown .....	7
Special arrangements for individual vulnerabilities and/or additional needs .....	7
Supporting children emotionally during lockdown procedures .....	7
Lockdown Learning Box.....	7
Evacuation Bags and Emergency Medications .....	8
Headcounts during an emergency lockdown .....	8
Communication during an Emergency Lockdown .....	8
Communication following an Emergency Lockdown .....	9
Lockdown drills.....	10
Bomb threats .....	10
Documenting Emergency Lockdowns .....	10
Essential knowledge for staff from this policy .....	11
Training requirements.....	12
Monitoring and review .....	12

## ***Intention***

This policy sets out how our nursery will respond if there is a serious risk to the safety of children, staff, or visitors. Its main intention is to protect everyone on site during situations such as an intruder, local disturbances, environmental hazards, or other emergencies. The policy explains who is responsible for leading and supporting lockdown procedures, what actions must be taken, and how communication will be managed. It ensures that all staff know their roles, children are kept safe and reassured, and parents are informed at the right time.

## ***Legislative context***

### Legal guidelines and frameworks

- Early Years Foundation Stage Statutory Framework, 2025 (EYFS)
- Working Together to Safeguard Children, 2025
- Keeping Children Safe in Education, 2025 (KCSiE)
- Health and Safety at Work etc. Act 1974
- Management of Health and Safety at Work Regulations 1999

### Legal duties

The nursery has a legal duty to safeguard the health, safety, and welfare of all children, staff, and visitors. This includes assessing risks and implementing measures to prevent harm during emergencies, maintaining safe and functional emergency systems and equipment, ensuring staff are trained and competent to follow procedures, keeping accurate records of drills and incidents, and providing a safe environment that meets the needs of all children, including those with additional vulnerabilities.

## ***Acronyms used in this policy***

SEND: Special Educational Needs and Disabilities

## ***Definition of terms used in this policy***

### Communication tool

For the purpose of this policy a communication tool refers to a nursery's method of communication between rooms during an emergency lockdown. This may include the use of walkie-talkies or telephones.

### Designated safe area

This refers to pre-determined secure locations within the building where individuals should aim to gather in the event of a lockdown. These areas are typically situated in the centre of a room away from doors and windows or along a shielded wall space.

### Emergency lockdown

An emergency lockdown is a security measure implemented in response to a threat or potential danger within or near the nursery premises. It involves securing the building, accounting for all individuals present, and taking necessary actions to protect everyone's safety until the situation is resolved.

## Lone working

Working without close or direct supervision, where there is no immediate access to support from colleagues, whether working alone or as the only adult responsible for others.

### **Guiding principles**

The following guiding principles underpin the nursery's lockdown approach, aiming to ensure that the response taken in emergencies remains consistent, safe, and professional - ultimately protecting the wellbeing of the whole nursery community:

- **Safety First:** Prioritise the protection of children, staff, and visitors above all else
- **Preparedness:** Ensure clear procedures, regular drills, and staff training so everyone knows how to respond
- **Inclusivity:** Account for the needs of all children, including those with additional vulnerabilities or SEND
- **Clarity and Communication:** Provide clear guidance and information to staff, children, and visitors during an incident
- **Professional Responsibility:** Staff act responsibly, follow procedures, and do not place themselves or others at risk
- **Continuous Improvement:** Review and update procedures regularly to reflect lessons learned, changing risks, or best practice

### **Roles and responsibilities**

<b>Role</b>	<b>Responsibility</b>
All staff	<ul style="list-style-type: none"><li>• Respond calmly and follow lockdown procedures immediately</li><li>• Ensure the safety and wellbeing of children, colleagues, and visitors, communicating clear instructions and reassurance</li><li>• Account for all children in their care using regular headcounts and supervise them appropriately</li><li>• Report any hazards, breaches, or incidents promptly using the settings emergency lockdown procedures</li><li>• Support colleagues if someone is unable to complete their assigned role</li><li>• Participate in training and regular drills</li></ul>
Emergency Safety Officer (ESO)	<ul style="list-style-type: none"><li>• Maintain overall responsibility for lockdown procedures and emergency preparedness</li><li>• Lead the lockdown, ensuring all children, staff, and visitors are accounted for</li><li>• Develop, review, and update lockdown plans and risk assessments where appropriate</li><li>• Organise training, drills, and staff briefings following any incident requiring a lockdown response</li><li>• Conduct post-incident reviews, and document findings using the Emergency Lockdown Jotform</li><li>• Monitor the effectiveness of procedures and act on lessons learned</li><li>• Coordinate communication with external authorities if required</li></ul>

Deputy Emergency Safety Officer (DESO)	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Assist the ESO in coordinating the lockdown process and ensuring all safety measures are followed</li> <li>• Take over leadership in the ESO's absence, ensuring emergency procedures run smoothly</li> </ul>
Management	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Ensure policies and procedures comply with legal and regulatory requirements</li> <li>• Allocate resources, staffing, and training to support effective lockdown arrangements</li> <li>• Oversee risk assessments and ensure reasonable adjustments for children with additional needs</li> <li>• Review incidents and drills to improve practice and maintain safety standards</li> <li>• Ensure sufficient wellness checks and follow up support is offered to all individuals involved in an Emergency Lockdown, including children, staff and parents/carers</li> <li>• Organise parental briefings, guidance, and support opportunities to discuss lockdown procedures and incidents</li> </ul>
Visitors	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Follow instructions from staff during a lockdown</li> <li>• Remain calm and cooperate fully with evacuation or lockdown procedures</li> <li>• Sign in and out of the premises so staff can account for everyone in an emergency</li> <li>• Avoid taking independent action that could put themselves or others at risk</li> </ul>

### ***Updates to this policy***

This policy may be unilaterally updated at any time with immediate effect to ensure clarity, reflect the nursery's current operational practices, and maintain compliance with the latest government legislation and guidance. Please refer to the 'More Information' section on the website.

### ***What can trigger an emergency lockdown?***

The procedure will be activated in response to various threats to the safety of children, staff and visitors within the nursery or its vicinity. Typical scenarios include:

- Reports of incidents or disturbances in the local community posing a potential risk to those within the setting e.g., reports of an individual carrying a weapon in the nearby area
- An individual on the nursery site posing a potential risk
- Warnings regarding local air pollution hazards like smoke plumes or gas clouds
- Major fires or explosions nearby, where remaining indoors is safer than evacuating
- Extreme environmental hazards such as flash floods and high winds

### ***Emergency codewords***

Using codewords offers a discreet and efficient way to communicate the nature of the emergency without causing alarm or creating panic amongst the children; this allows staff to quickly initiate targeted actions tailored to the specific threat, minimising confusion and ensuring a swift, coordinated response. Using codewords may also prevent an intruder from overhearing and understanding that a lockdown is being initiated, which could exacerbate the situation. The codewords we use at the setting are:

Risk	Codeword
Bomb threat	Bravo
Intruder & lockdown	Indigo

### ***Becoming aware of a potential threat***

In a nursery setting, awareness of potential threats may come from:

- Notifications from the authorities: the police or other local authorities may directly contact the nursery in cases of immediate danger, such as a crime in progress or a suspect in the vicinity
- Local news and alerts: local news outlets, radio and official government channels may provide updates on emergencies like severe weather, fires, or public safety incidents
- Community alerts: we may receive information from staff, parents, neighbours, or other community members regarding suspicious activity, potential threats, or concerns about the safety of the nursery environment
- On site identification: A person on the premises may become aware of a developing risk or threat, either through direct observation or being informed by another individual

### ***Lockdown procedures***

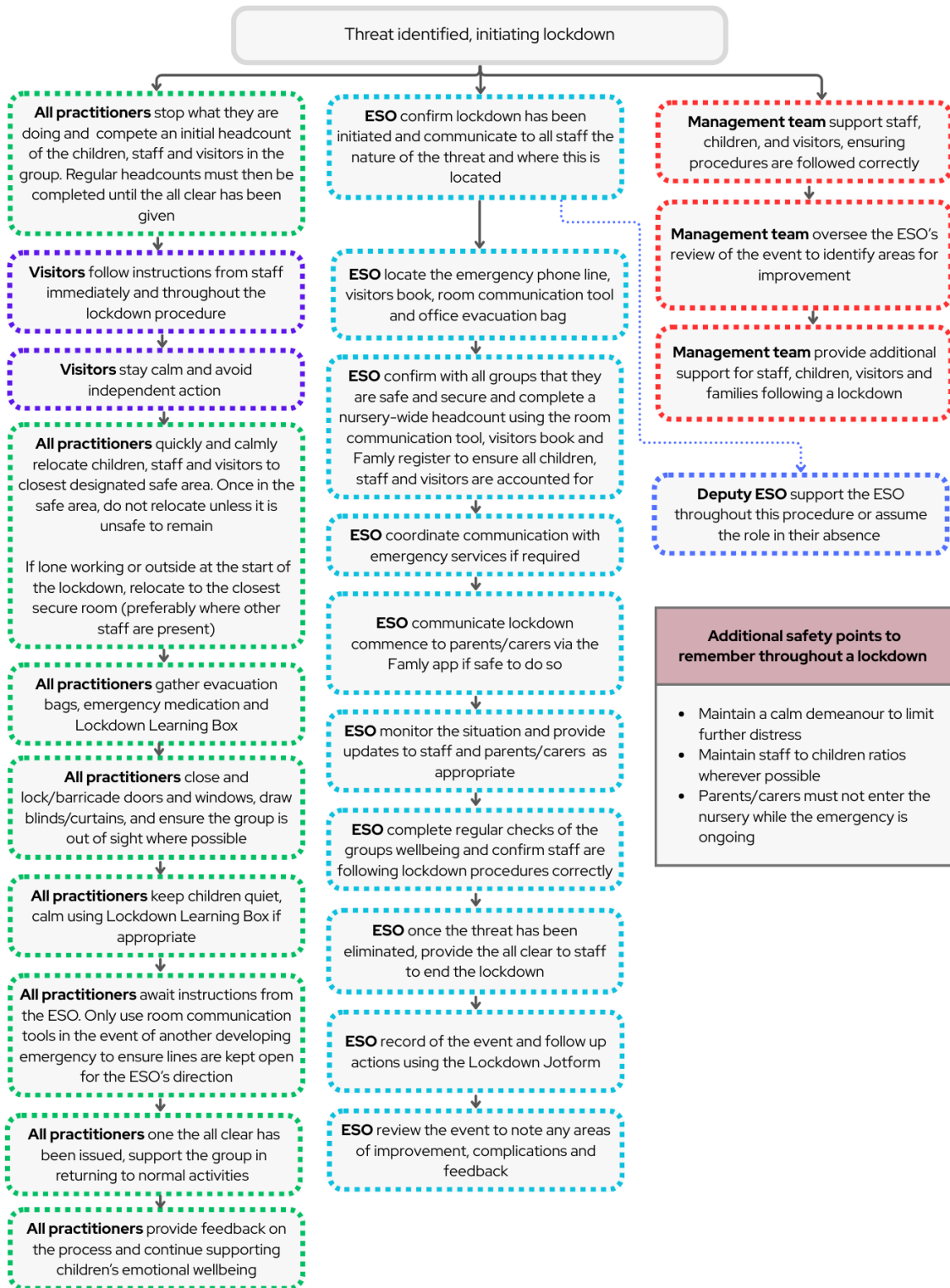
During a lockdown, the primary focus must be protecting the safety and wellbeing of all children, staff, and visitors in the nursery's care. Clear roles and responsibilities ensure that everyone knows what to do, allowing the nursery to respond quickly, calmly, and effectively.

While specific staff hold designated responsibilities to coordinate and oversee procedures, all staff, visitors, and management have a shared duty to follow guidance, support children, and maintain a secure environment.

Please see below for guidance on the immediate Emergency Lockdown response procedure.

## Lockdown procedure

Procedure: To be followed when there is an immediate or potential threat to safety that requires securing the premises and restricting movement.



### Room specific lockdown procedures

Each room must have a tailored lockdown plan, detailing specific procedures based on the room's layout, occupancy, and potential scenarios. These plans should be clearly and prominently displayed in each room and must include:

- Instructions on how to lock doors, secure windows or reinforce entry points if needed
- A floorplan of the room highlighting the designated safe area where individuals should gather to remain out of sight. Typically, this will be a location in the centre of the room, away from windows and doors.
- Information on how to communicate with management, emergency services, and other staff while maintaining discretion

### Lone workers during a lockdown

If staff are lone working, either with a group of children or individually, when a lockdown is initiated, they must proceed immediately to a room where other staff are present and follow the group's lockdown procedures. If it is not possible to join other staff safely, lone workers must implement the lockdown procedures within their current location, prioritising their own safety and the safety of any children in their care.

### ***Special arrangements for individual vulnerabilities and/or additional needs***

The nursery recognises that some individuals may require additional support during a lockdown due to vulnerabilities, disabilities, medical conditions, or other identified needs. To ensure their safety, risk assessments will be conducted to identify any necessary adjustments to the standard lockdown plan for these individuals. These assessments help address specific needs and potential challenges that may arise during an emergency, such as sensory sensitivities, medical conditions or mobility limitations.

If adjustments are required to the standard lockdown procedure, an accompanying Personal Emergency Evacuation Plan (PEEP) will be completed. For more information on these plans, please see the Fire Safety Policy.

### ***Supporting children emotionally during lockdown procedures***

Lockdowns can be a stressful and potentially frightening experience for children. As such, practitioners are responsible for providing reassurance, maintaining a calm environment, and supporting children's emotional wellbeing throughout the event. Staff are trained to recognise signs of distress and respond promptly, offering comfort and reassurance without compromising safety.

### ***Lockdown Learning Box***

A key safety element of lockdowns is for children and staff to remain as quiet as possible during the procedure to refrain from drawing attention to their location and numbers.

To support staff in achieving this, rooms are equipped with a Lockdown Learning Box. The box contains quiet, engaging resources and activities designed to help children remain calm and occupied while following lockdown procedures. Materials may include age-appropriate books, puzzles, sensory items, drawing or writing activities, and visual supports.

Lockdown learning resources should be regularly reviewed and adapted to meet the needs of current cohort of children, including those with additional vulnerabilities or SEND.

### ***Evacuation Bags and Emergency Medications***

Evacuation bags must be readily accessible in all nursery rooms to ensure that essential items are available during an emergency evacuation.<sup>1</sup>

In instances where a group of children have split from their main room and do not have immediate access to the evacuation bag, staff must ensure that they take all essential items with them, including emergency medication for children in their care, in the event that they need to lockdown in an alternate location.

### ***Headcounts during an emergency lockdown***

Headcounts should be done at key transition points to ensure all children, staff and visitors are accounted for. These include:

- As soon as the lockdown is initiated- conduct a headcount to establish a baseline
- If the group is required to transition between spaces to get to a place of safety, count before leaving the current area, at any secondary transition markers e.g., if required to go through a second doorway before reaching the end destination, and upon arrival to final location
- If the lockdown is prolonged, conduct periodic headcounts to ensure all individuals remain accounted for
- Throughout the lockdown procedure the ESO should use their communication tool to conduct regular whole setting headcounts confirming that all individuals are safe and accounted for
- Once the situation is deemed safe, do a final headcount to ensure no one is missing before resuming normal operations

To determine initial numbers of all individuals within the building, staff may use their Fire Registers, Family sign-in register and the visitors book.

### ***Communication during an Emergency Lockdown***

Continual and clear communication is fundamental to ensuring that those within the nursery understand the progress or developments within a Lockdown drill and respond appropriately.

The table below highlights how different individuals are communicated to during a lockdown drill.

Individual	Communication method
Staff	<ul style="list-style-type: none"><li>• Staff must not use the phone lines or post anything on Family or another personal communication platform during an emergency</li><li>• Where possible, face-to-face guidance is provided to staff by the setting ESO, management team or Room Seniors</li></ul>

---

<sup>1</sup> For more information regarding where Evacuation Bags are stored and what must be included within them, please see the Fire Safety Policy.

Individual	Communication method
	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Alternate room communication methods are highlighted on the room specific lockdown plans</li> <li>• Staff must refrain from using internal communication tools e.g., phones or walkie talkies during an emergency unless this is to highlight an additional or developing high-risk situation. This helps ensure that an open line of communication is available for the ESO or management team to outline further safety instructions to the wider team</li> </ul>
Parents/carers	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Parents/carers are informed about the situation as soon as it is safe to do so via Famly</li> <li>• Updates will be provided through Famly as information changes, provided that doing so does not compromise safety or contradict advice provided by emergency services</li> <li>• Parents/carers must not attempt to enter the building during an emergency lockdown</li> </ul>
Visitors	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Visitors are directed to follow staff guidance and provide updates though the rooms set communication methods as these develop</li> </ul>
Emergency services	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• During a lockdown the nursery will use a designated emergency phone line (see the Policy Directory) as the primary point of contact for emergency services<sup>2</sup></li> <li>• The ESO will take lead in communicating updates to emergency services and relaying their advice back to the wider team</li> </ul>
Children	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Staff will use age-appropriate language, visual aids, and consistent routines to help children understand what is happening and why, reducing anxiety and confusion</li> <li>• Children with additional needs or vulnerabilities may require extra reassurance, personalised support, or alternative communication methods</li> </ul>

### ***Communication following an Emergency Lockdown***

When providing information following an emergency lockdown the nursery will always follow guidance as provided by emergency services and the Senior Management team. This aims to ensure that communications align with ethical and legal obligations and do not create any additional risks to the safety of the nursery or those who attend.

Individual	Communication method
Staff	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Following a lockdown, a whole staff debrief session will take place, either face-to-face or via Famly. The event will be discussed, further actions will be reviewed, and updates to procedural changes or follow-ups will be provided</li> </ul>

<sup>2</sup> For more information on the nurseries emergency phone line, please see the Fire Safety Policy.

Individual	Communication method
	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Wellbeing check-ins will be had with all staff members involved, offering a private opportunity to discuss the event, any emotional or psychological impact this may have had and signposting to further supports if appropriate</li> </ul>
Parents/carers	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>As soon as it is safe to do so, once a lockdown has ended parents will be informed and given an update on how their child is</li> <li>Management will organise a support session following an emergency lockdown where parents are able to discuss the event, offer feedback and review drafted actions points</li> </ul>
Visitors	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Visitors are informed that the lockdown is over once this has been confirmed by staff</li> <li>Managers will offer an opportunity to discuss the event and offer wellbeing support as required</li> </ul>
Emergency services	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>If emergency services were involved, copies of any required reports, statements or further information gathered will be passed on as necessary</li> </ul>
Children	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>After the lockdown, practitioners should provide opportunities to discuss the experience in an age-appropriate manner, answer questions, and restore a sense of security and normality</li> <li>Ongoing wellbeing support should be offered to children who were distressed by the situation and reassurance provided to promote a renewed sense of safety and calm</li> </ul>

### **Lockdown drills**

Lockdown drills are conducted a minimum of once per term, ensuring that all children and staff are familiar with the procedures. To ensure preparedness for various scenarios, drills are scheduled at different times of the day and on different days of the week. Furthermore, different scenarios are used in each drill, such as varying the type of lockdown, to familiarise everyone with as many scenarios as possible.

Parents/carers are informed whenever a lockdown drill takes place via the Family Newsfeed to promote open discussions, reassurance, and opportunities for feedback regarding the use of lockdown drills within the nursery.

### **Bomb threats**

In the case of a bomb threat the primary focus is evacuating the building as quickly and safely as possible, unless directed otherwise by emergency services. The standard evacuation procedure will be followed as outlined in the Fire Safety Policy, and the manager should inform staff which evacuation route should be used based on their assessment of the situation. No individual should re-enter the building until emergency services have declared it safe.

### **Documenting Emergency Lockdowns**

In the event of a real or drill lockdown, a thorough documentation of the incident is recorded on the nursery's Lockdown Jotform, recording the following:

- The date and time of the event
- Whether this was a planned or real lockdown
- The number of children, staff and visitors present at the time of the lockdown
- Details on how the risk was identified, its nature, and the actions that were taken to initiate the lockdown
- Whether emergency services were called and if so, what instructions they gave
- Whether the procedures were followed correctly including if evacuation bags and headcounts were taken, communication tools were effective and designated safe areas were used
- Witness statements from staff (if applicable)
- Whether any challenges occurred which need to be addressed

These documented records are reviewed by the nursery ESO and management team to identify areas for improvement and make any necessary adjustments to the lockdown procedures if required.

In the event of a real Lockdown, Ofsted will also be informed within 14 days of the incident and provided with a detailed account of the event and any findings and follow up actions taken.

***Essential knowledge for staff from this policy***

Key learning	Level
Explain what a lockdown is and how these are triggered, include how the nursery may be notified and what threats would require a lockdown	L1
Explain what code word would be used to trigger a lockdown or bomb scare	L1
Explain why lockdown drills are completed and how these are initiated	L1
Explain the nursery's lockdown procedure alongside the roles and responsibilities of staff, management and the ESO during these events	L1
Explain where staff can locate the room specific lockdown procedures and what information can be found on these documents	L1
Explain the purpose of the Lockdown Learning Box and where these can be located	L1
Explain the importance of debriefing after a lockdown and the emotional supports available	L1
Explain how resources, staffing, and training can be allocated to support effective lockdown arrangements	L2

Key learning	Level
Explain how incidents and drills are documented and reviewed to improve practice and maintain safety standards	L2
Explain how staff, parent and child wellness checks are conducted following a lockdown	L2
Explain how parents are informed of a lockdown and how follow up briefings may be organised to discuss these events	L2

### ***Training requirements***

There is no mandatory training required as part of the induction process to accompany this policy. However, training is required where staff need additional knowledge or skills to support a child with a PEEP which requires complex adaptations to practice.

### ***Monitoring and review***

<b>Review</b>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Check the PEEPs to ensure they are up to date and available on Family</li> <li>• Review room specific lockdown plans, ensuring these are available, relevant and actioned accordingly</li> <li>• Review recent lockdown drills and ensure these have been conducted effectively and actions have been taken where required</li> <li>• Review the three lowest-performing staff members from the Lockdown Slido quiz, along with any others you feel may need additional support, and re-test them on the questions they answered incorrectly</li> </ul>
<b>Confirm</b>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Confirm the Specific Room Lockdown Procedures are on display in all required locations</li> <li>• Confirm room communication tools are in place and working effectively</li> <li>• Confirm emergency phone is present in the office evacuation bag and in working order</li> <li>• Confirm Lockdown Learning Box's are available in rooms and relevant to the current cohort</li> </ul>
<b>Observe</b>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Observe a lockdown drill to ensure all roles are being conducted correctly and effectively</li> </ul>
<b>Ask</b>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Ask a staff member what the intruder code word is</li> <li>• Ask a staff member what the bomb threat code word is</li> <li>• Ask a staff member where they can find staff and child PEEPs</li> <li>• Ask a staff member where the designated safe area is within their room</li> </ul>