# What Is a School Lockdown Drill? You Can Help Your Child Know What to Expect

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Back in the 1950s and 1960s, students went through "duck and cover" drills in anticipation of a nuclear bomb blast. Today, students in K-12 classrooms and some universities go through regular school lockdown drills. Lockdown drills, required in most states, are a response to school shooting events that have occurred over the past few decades.

### What Is the Purpose of a School Lockdown Drill?

The purpose of a school lockdown drill is to protect the children and adults in the building from a potential emergency such as the presence of a school shooter.As with fire drills and other safety programs, the hope is to acclimate students and teachers to a procedure that they will be able to follow quickly, effectively, and safely.

### How Are Lockdown Drills Designed and Implemented?

Lockdown drills are different from evacuation drills. Evacuation drills are designed to prepare students, teachers, administrators, and other people in the school to leave the building quickly and in a pre-planned and organized fashion in the event of danger such as a bomb threat, when conditions outside the building are safer than the conditions inside the building. In a lockdown drill, students are to clear the halls and report to the nearest available classroom where they are to hide and stay as silent as possible.

These drills are usually designed and implemented with input and assistance from local law enforcement officials. Ideally, these drills should be conducted several times a year at different times of the day and without pre-announcement (during lunchtime or recess, during classes, or during drop-off or dismissal, for example), to give students and staff the opportunity to practice what to do in different scenarios.

### What Kinds of Procedures Are Followed During a Lockdown Drill?

Most schools follow similar procedures for lockdown drills:

* Doors to classrooms are closed and locked.
* Students are moved to the safest part of the room, away from windows and doors, to the interior walls.
* Everyone drops to the floor or out of the line of vision from the door.
* Window shades are pulled down.
* Any windows in doors are covered (to prevent an intruder from seeing into the room).
* Classroom lights are turned off.

You can find more information about your school’s safety procedures and drills on your state’s Department of Education Website.

### How Do Students React to Lockdown Drills?

Most students react to lockdowns as part of the usual school routine, much as they would react to a fire drill. While they may find the change in routine confusing or difficult, few children are likely to respond with real fear or anxiety.

That said, however, there are children for whom lockdown drills can be quite frightening. These may be children who have watched news programs about school shootings, or have personal experience or knowledge of gun violence.

If your child is likely to have such concerns (or expresses concerns to you), it's a very good idea to take action. You may want to meet with your child's school staff to talk about the best way to present and discuss lockdowns and be sure your message and the school's message are the same. Often, children are comforted by the message that lockdowns, like fire drills, are just one more way that adults make sure their children are safe.

*Reference:*

*Lee, K. (2018, February 28). What is a School Lockdown. Retrieved from www.verywellfamily.com/what-is-a-school-lockdown-drill-620548*