# Locks, coded locks, and door handles

Principals are responsible for the upkeep and maintenance of schools, particularly its safety features. These are known as essential safety measures (ESM). This includes responsibility for ensuring all locks, coded locks and door handles comply with the Building Regulations 2018 (Vic) and that an annual essential safety measures report is prepared by a suitably qualified person.

Principals are responsible for ensuring that a door in a required exit, forming part of a required exit or in the path of travel to a required exit, must be readily openable without a key from the side that faces a person seeking egress by a single hand downward action or pushing action on a single device which is located between 900 mm and 1.2 m from the floor.

## Seclusion

[Seclusion](https://www2.education.vic.gov.au/pal/restraint-seclusion/policy) is when a single student is left alone in a room or area, and they are prevented from leaving it by a barrier or another person. Seclusion of a student is only permitted within Victorian government schools in exceptional circumstances where it is immediately required and reasonably necessary to protect the safety of a student or another person.

Schools must take care not to inadvertently seclude a student when limiting or controlling the egress from a room or area by another student.

Every instance of seclusion must be reported to the Incident Support and Operations Centre (ISOC) on 1800 126 126.

There are very limited circumstances where a door may be locked or blocked by other objects or held closed by another person. These limited circumstances arise where:

* there is an imminent threat of physical harm or danger to a student or others, and
* the physical restraint and seclusion are reasonable in all the circumstances, and
* there is no less restrictive measure available in the circumstances.

Staff must ensure that the use of seclusion is time limited and that it stops as soon as the immediate threat of harm or danger to the student or others has passed.

In the event a door is required to be locked or blocked by other objects or held closed by another person, Principals must ensure:

* the purpose for limiting or controlling a student‘s egress from a room or space is to prevent imminent physical harm or danger to a student or others
* the principal has signed a statement affirming that evidence of necessary procedures is in place
* instances of seclusion are reported to the Incident Support and Operations Centre (ISOC) on 1800 126 126
* the following documentation is readily available in a secure location on site:
	+ details of the procedures and instructions of what to do if a locked door/s needs to be immediately unlocked
	+ details of the designated person or persons that have been instructed on the duties of unlocking the locked door/s confirming that the designated person or persons will always be available when the school is lawfully occupied to undertake the responsibility of unlocking locked door/s so that people in the school or part may immediately escape if there is a fire.
	+ a register of all ESM, including a Fire Safety Management Plan
	+ an up to date Evacuation Plan (or plans)
	+ a diagram showing the location of the locked door/s.

## Communications

Schools must:

* provide Building Surveyors undertaking preparation for an annual ESM report with documented evidence that the conditions of [Building Code Vic D2.21: Operation of Latch](https://www.education.vic.gov.au/PAL/building-code-vic-D2.21-operation-of-latch.docx) have been met
* make available, within 24 hours of a request, all ESM records, and reports for inspection by a municipal building surveyor (local council), the chief officers of the Metropolitan Fire and Emergency Services and Country Fire Authority and the Victorian Building Authority.

## Contact

If you have any questions regarding ESM or the Building Code Vic D2.21: Operation of Latch, please contact:

Victorian School Building Authority

Phone: 7022 0075

Email: essential.safety.measures@education.vic.gov.au

If you have any questions regarding physical restraint or seclusion, please contact:

Principal Behaviour Support Adviser

Email: restraint.seclusion@education.vic.gov.au