

SCHOOL EMERGENCY PLANNING

Parents should know the emergency plans used at their children's schools and understand what to do in the event of an emergency.

Emergency Plans

- Ensure that your child's school has established a school crisis plan that includes input from public safety agencies, including law enforcement and fire, health, mental health and local emergency preparedness agencies.
- The plan should address traditional crises and emergencies such as fires, school shootings and accidents, as well as biological, radiological, chemical and other terrorist activities.
- A school crisis plan should address the unique circumstances and needs of your child's school and should address these areas: prevention/mitigation; preparedness; response and recovery.

Be Prepared

- Understand the process the school has established for communicating with you during a crisis.
- Be aware of how the school plans to discharge students under all circumstances including severe storms, utility outages, fires, etc.
- Prepare a plan now to make sure your child has a secondary contact person, contact information is readily available at the school and your child knows who is authorized to pick them up from school. During a crisis or early dismissal you may not be able to get to the school to pick up your child. Emergency and school officials will use local media, including local radio and television, to distribute important information during a crisis.

During a School Emergency

- In the event a crisis has occurred at your child's school do not assume that you should go directly to the school to pick up your child- sometimes the safest place for them to be is within the school building. If there is a hazardous materials incident for example, you will in all likelihood not be permitted to drive on the school premises to pick up your child. Even if you go to the school, authorities will determine whether or not it is safe to discharge the children.
- Follow the directions of your local emergency officials.

School Safety Tips for Parents

Advocate for these safeguards at your child's school:

- **An emergency plan**
The plan should involve police, fire, ambulance services and other emergency-response organizations.
- **Regular emergency drills**
Drills can uncover logistical problems or glitches in school plans.
- **Readily available first aid kits and training**
Make sure that first aid kits are located throughout the school, preferably in every classroom. Ask about CPR and First Aid training for teachers and administrators. *Teachers' kits* should also include a class roster, a list of who has permission to pick up each child, pens, paper, whistle, student activities, drinking water and cups, portable radio and flashlight, extra batteries and any specialty items, such as extra medications, records of special needs and "comfort" items, such as toys, for smaller children. Classroom kits should be stored in portable containers or backpacks.
- **An off-campus meeting site.**
Whether it's a fire or hostage situation, you will want to rush to the school right away. But that can easily make the situation more dangerous for kids by diverting police attention and creating other problems, so all classrooms should have a designated off-campus meeting site. Know what this site is for your child's school so you will be prepared to go there in the event of an emergency.
- **A way to report bullying and violence and interventions for troubled kids.**
Many schools have hotlines or other means for students to anonymously report bullying or impending violence. Be sure you're your child's school has a program for combating bullying and detecting actions and communications suggesting a violent act is actually being planned.