

## What parents and the community can do in an emergency

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**Before an emergency happens**, make sure your emergency contact info is up to date. Confirm today online through Family Access, or call your school to make sure it is correct. If you move, change the school information.

**Record current medical information** about your student at school.

**When you visit a school, sign in and sign out at the front desk.** During emergencies, everyone must be accounted for. If you visit and fail to sign out, someone must re-enter the building following an emergency evacuation or practice evacuation and look for you. Visitors or itinerant staff who fail to sign out when leaving a school have caused an entire student body to stand outside in the rain while the whereabouts of the errant visitor is verified. Similarly, you do not want to be an unknown visitor in a school if it goes into a lockdown. If you've not signed in at the front desk, you automatically become an intruder on site during an emergency lockdown, diverting police or staff attention away from determining the real cause of the lockdown.

**Direct students NOT to call you** and don't call student cell phones. Here's why:

- Students will not know emergency details. They will know only that they've been directed to respond to an emergency and to do so in a specific way; they won't have a full perspective and can't give you an accurate picture of what is going on.
- In emergencies, it is vital students follow orders and the prescribed emergency procedures. Parents calling with different instructions for their kids pit parental authority against school authority when safety can best be ensured when everyone follows school directions and responds as drills have been practiced.
- The noise of cell phones and phone conversations could put students in danger. A school intruder may well be searching for people and be attracted to the sounds of cell phones or talking. During lockdowns, students and staff are to be absolutely silent. Some radio and cell phone frequencies can trigger explosive devices.
- As soon as possible, the district will use media, web, phones, or other methods to inform the public as much as possible of what is going on. Students who call news media during emergencies create misinformation from an uninformed perspective which creates confusion and takes more valuable time to correct.

**Stay away from the school.** Rushing to where your child might be clogs the roads and inhibits emergency response. The injured child the ambulance cannot get to just might be yours.

**Be patient with school parent/student reunification procedure.** Each student must be released to an authorized adult following an emergency. A rush of worried parents requires more time of staff assigned to reunite parents and students. Understand that, situation depending, parents may not be allowed on-campus access to students.

**Remember**, children demonstrate incredible strength and resilience that can collapse when they see a distraught parent.

**Have a plan.** Every family should have an emergency plan outlining where to meet, who to call, how to connect with someone out of state.

**Have a neighborhood plan.** This is a great way to get to know your neighbors.