



WE ALL HAVE A ROLE IN SCHOOL SAFETY

School Emergency Preparedness: A Parent Guide

visitor procedures when you visit your child at school?

- Complete and update school emergency contact information for your child, so that the school can contact you if an emergency occurs.
- If your child has a special health need that may be complicated during an emergency, talk with your school nurse to make sure that the correct procedures and supplies will be available.
- If your child requires important medications to be taken on a regular basis, discuss with your school nurse the need to have up to a 72-hour supply of medications available in the school at all times.

BE PREPARED

If an emergency occurs at your child's schools, be prepared to act safely.

- Remain calm and patient.
- Listen to the radio or TV, check your school district Web site, and check your phone or e-mail for messages from your child's school. Follow the school's directions as instructed.
- If the school is sheltered in place, you may not be able to immediately pick up your child. Listen for instructions on when and where you can pick up your child. You may be endangering your health as well as the health of your child if you try to enter a building that is sheltering in place.

- If you have received instructions through the media or an outgoing message from the school, do not call the school. This may tie up emergency lines.
- Be aware of how your child's school will notify you during an actual emergency. Schools may be unable to answer phone calls and may provide instructions on local TV and radio stations.
- Talk with your children about possible emergencies and how your family will respond to these events to decrease anxiety during a crisis.

School officials will work with police, fire and public health officials during an emergency. Understand that the safety of our school children is important to everyone in the community.



THE OHIO DEPARTMENT OF HEALTH School & Adolescent Health Services

246 N. High St.
Columbus, OH 43215



Resources

U. S. Department of Education
www.ed.gov/emergencyplan

American Red Cross
www.redcross.org
(202) 303-4498

Federal Emergency Management Agency
www.fema.gov
(800) 480-2520

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Many parents feel anxious about the safety of their children today. While we know schools in Ohio are generally safe places for our children, we can make our schools even safer by working together. All public schools in Ohio are required by law (Ohio Revised Code 3313.53.6) to have a comprehensive emergency plan in place. The specifics of each school plan may differ as the needs of their building, students and community are different. Your child's school emergency plan may include law enforcement, local health services, mental health professionals, parents, students and the media. So, how can you help increase the safety of your child at school?

BE KNOWLEDGEABLE

Do Your Homework! Be aware a school emergency plan may include components such as:

Lockdown Procedure: An emergency may prevent the safe evacuation of the school building and require steps to isolate students and staff from danger. This involves quickly locking all the school's classrooms, hallways and entrances. This prevents intruders from entering the building

or classrooms and decreases their ability to move freely throughout the school. Parents will be permitted to access the building and pick up their children when it is safe for them to do so.

Evacuation: Students and staff may need to leave the building and exit quickly to a safer environment in situations such as a building fire. If your child has special mobility needs, talk with your school nurse about the special procedures that may be needed.

Shelter-in-Place: In some emergencies, particularly with chemical, biological or radiological contaminants, local officials may advise your schools to "shelter-in-place." This is usually a short-term solution to temporarily protect students from coming in contact with a toxic substance in the air. The goal of shelter-in-place is to prevent contaminated air from entering the building and usually lasts only a few hours. You will be reunited with your child when public health officials determine leaving the building would not cause harm to your child.

Emergency Communication: Each school will have a communication plan to keep parents and community members informed about an emergency in the school. Know how your school will notify you (telephone, radio, television, e-mail) in case of an emergency. Remember to update your emergency contact information. Ask if there is a way that you could send important messages to your child's school during an emergency.

Parent Reunification Site: This is a pre-determined location where students and school staff may safely relocate if a community safety official

requires a school building to be evacuated. Some school districts will provide the reunification site location to parents ahead of time; for security reasons, others may not disclose the location until the time of an evacuation. It is important that you know how your school district will communicate this information to you during an actual emergency.

BE INVOLVED

Be an active partner in school safety. Learn more about your school and community.

1. Learn more about the possible types of school emergencies your community could expect.
2. Ask your child what he/she knows about his/her school emergency plan.
3. Ask your child's school principal or safety officer if they have written policies and procedures related to crisis preparedness planning and if they practice the plan.
4. Ask your child's school if its employees have received training on emergency planning and procedures.
5. Volunteer to serve on a school or community safety team.
6. Ask yourself if you help to make your schools a safer place for your children. Do you follow the school's safety rules? Do you follow the

