

EMERGENCY PLANNING

1.0 Nature of Potential Emergencies

While it may not be possible to identify all emergencies which could threaten the well-being of students in attendance at a school, adequate planning requires that a reasonably comprehensive listing be compiled. To this end, the following potential emergencies or circumstances with the potential to create emergencies have been identified:

- a) Failure of one or more school building service systems such as power, gas, and water.
- b) Fire, either internal to the school, adjacent to the school, or in the vicinity of the school.
- c) Natural occurrences such as snow storms, tornadoes, or electrical storms.
- d) Release of toxic chemicals as a result of an accident in a school or in the vicinity of a school.
- e) Human actions of a life threatening nature such as bomb threats or threats involving the use of weapons.

2.0 Available Resources

In the planning and preparation for emergencies, the use of available human and material resources will be given careful consideration.

Human Resources

Generally fall into four categories:

- a) those immediately available on site (staff, volunteers);
- b) those immediately available within the Division (Facilities & Operations personnel, Workplace Health and Safety Officer, Superintendent's Department);

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- c) those readily available in the immediate vicinity (residents, block parents);
- d) those associated with emergency agencies (police, fire, ambulance, E.M.O.). Those falling into the first two categories can best be deployed to ensure the well-being of the students when such can be accomplished within the immediate community. Those falling into the third category can best be deployed to deal with the cause and effect of the emergency.

Material Resources

Can be categorized according to function:

- a) resources that would provide shelter and possibly food such as homes, community clubs, churches, shopping malls, commercial outlets, and other schools;
- b) resources related to transportation, such as school buses, the transit system, and private vehicles;
- c) resources to counter or overcome the emergency. Resources within the first category are within the school's jurisdiction and those in the second and third categories are primarily the responsibility of emergency agencies such as the police department, fire department, and E.M.O.

3.0 Primary Emergency Response

In the event of an emergency while students are in attendance at the school, three primary actions are to be taken:

- a) Safeguard the immediate well-being of the students; depending on the nature of the emergency, the well-being of students may best be ensured by either retaining them within the building or a portion thereof OR by evacuating the building;
- b) Communicate the emergency to 911;
- c) Communicate the emergency to the Superintendent's Department.

4.0 Retaining Students

In the event that students must be retained, they will be retained:

- a) until such time as danger no longer exists (i.e., electrical storm); or
- b) they can be returned safely to the care of their parents or guardians; or

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c) they can be safely relocated either within or outside the immediate community.

To ensure the well-being of students while they are being retained within the building, consideration will be given to:

- i) locating the students in the most safe portion of the building; and
- ii) which, if any, of the service systems should be shut down (i.e., gas, power, ventilation).

5.0 Evacuation

In the event of evacuation, five levels of evacuation may be enacted:

- a) immediate with re-entry within a short period of time (i.e., fire drill); or
- b) immediate with re-entry potentially within a reasonable period of time (i.e., bomb threats); or
- c) immediate with relocation to single alternative location within the community (i.e., another school, shopping centre, etc.); or
- d) immediate with relocation to multiple locations within the community (i.e., private homes). This alternative is optional in the case of junior high schools and senior high schools; or
- e) immediate with relocation outside the community under the direction of an emergency agency (police, E.M.O.).

6.0 Student Accounting

To ensure all students are accounted for in the event of evacuation, the following will apply:

- a) A student register will be completed at the commencement of school in the morning and the afternoon (Early and Middle Years) or, in the case of junior and senior high schools, at the commencement of each class. Where circumstances permit, the homeroom teacher will remove such registers at the time of evacuation.

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- b) The staff member having jurisdiction over a given group of students (K -12) will assume primary responsibility for evacuation. Accounting for students subsequent to evacuation will be the responsibility of the homeroom teachers for grade K to 6, and of the teacher at the time of evacuation in the case of junior and senior high schools. Subsequent to accounting, the homeroom teacher (Early and Middle Years) or teacher (9-12) will report to the principal or designate in accordance with the procedures established for that purpose.

- c) Each senior high school and junior high school will maintain an alphabetical listing of students registered in the school. This listing will be readily available and, in the event of evacuation, will be removed from the building by a designated staff member. In the event that it becomes necessary to do so, this listing will be used to identify students accounted for.

- d) The administrative and support staff will be responsible to ensure that specifically assigned areas of the building have been evacuated. At least two staff members will be assigned to each given area.

- e) In the event that students and staff are relocated, a second accounting of all students should be undertaken and communicated to the principal or designate subsequent to arrival at the relocation site or sites.

- f) Where a school has students with special needs in attendance, a responsible person will be assigned to ensure that the individual students are evacuated and, where necessary, relocated to a specified location.

- g) In the event that an emergency occurs before school, during the lunch period, or after school, the following will apply:
 - i. if warranted the principal shall evacuate the students and staff to a designated location;

 - ii. at the Early Years level, students will assemble in classroom groups and the homeroom teachers will identify students present in a manner specified for that purpose. At the junior and senior high school level, student accounting will be undertaken using an alphabetical listing. To facilitate the accounting, students and staff will assemble in a predetermined order;

 - iii. should any further evacuation/relocation action be deemed necessary by the principal or designate, individual staff members will have responsibility for the students present in their class or group.

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7.0 Communication

Adequate and appropriate communication in the event of an emergency is of paramount importance. Development of the communication plan will take into consideration the need to communicate to students, staff, emergency agencies, parents, senior administration, Board, and the media. To facilitate communication, each school should designate a communication centre in the event the school cannot be re-occupied.

- a) To ensure that all staff and students are accounted for and adequately instructed as to actions to be taken, the following will apply:
 - i. the need to evacuate the building immediately will be signaled by the local fire alarm OR where necessary, by a predetermined messages communicated verbally;
 - ii. students, or staff responsible for students, will not re-enter the school until such time as advised to do so by the predetermined signal;
 - iii. where re-entry within a short period of time is not possible, the students and staff will be directed to reassemble at a given location to receive instructions as to the next course of action to be taken;
 - iv. should relocation within the immediate community be necessary, verification of safe arrival and student accounting will be communicated to the principal or designate as soon as possible, both in the event of relocation to a single location or multiple locations;
 - v. the principal or designate will communicate actions taken in response to an emergency either to the Superintendent or a member of the senior administration team as soon as it is possible to do so.
- b) Each Early Years and Middle Years schools will prepare a fan-out phone system to communicate with parents in the event of an emergency. Such a system will also contemplate provision of temporary care for students whose parents cannot be contacted either at home or at work or may not be readily available.
- c) All media inquiries should be forwarded to the Superintendent's department
- d) Subsequent to the immediate emergency, all communication will be through the Office of the Superintendent.

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8.0 Recap of Planning Required at the Individual School Level

- a) Establish appropriate student accounting documents/materials [Sections 6.0 a), b) and c)].
- b) Assign staff to check specific areas to ensure complete evacuation [Section 6.0 d)].
- c) Assign responsibility for students with special needs [Section 6.0 f)].
- d) Establish assembly areas and staff responsibilities for evacuations necessary outside regular school hours [Section 6.0 g)].
- e) Designate a communication centre [Section 7.0)].
- f) Establish message system as alternative to alarm [Section 7.0 a) i)].
- g) Establish re-entry message [Section 7.0 a) ii)].
- h) Establish re-assemble message and area [Section 7.0 a) iii)].
- i) Prepare fan-out phone system [Section 7.0 b)].
- j) Identify alternative single locations.
- k) Identify and assign specific multiple locations.
- l) Develop and implement an information/education program for students.
- m) Develop and implement an information/education program for parents.
- n) At least once annually, undertake a simulation evacuation to test all established procedures.
- o) File school plan with the Superintendent's Office.

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