



# **SCHOOL EMERGENCY RESPONSE PLANS**

## GUIDE FOR PARENTS AND GUARDIANS





# A MESSAGE FROM THE SUPERINTENDENT

During any emergency situation, the division's top priority is the safety of its students and staff. Emergency procedures are necessary when sudden and unexpected events bring the regular schedule to a standstill. Planning and preparation are critical elements for effectively managing and successfully resolving any emergency situations that may arise.

During the year, schools conduct training and drills to help better prepare students and staff for possible emergencies. These drills are an opportunity to rehearse emergency procedures, train students and staff to act quickly and help minimize a child's fear during a real emergency. All staff, students and adults/volunteers in the building are required to participate in drills.

Our Division and School Emergency Response Plans are designed to enhance communication and coordination of School, Division, and Community resources to meet the needs of those members of our school community who are involved in a crisis. Both individual school plans and the Division plan are reviewed annually and after each emergency. While our plans provide proactive, standard approaches to dealing with critical incidents within the school, the way Westwind School Division responds to a crisis is influenced by the specifics of the incident.

The following Guide for Parents and Guardians outlines the critical elements of our plans and answers questions our parents frequently ask regarding emergency preparedness. I hope you find the guide helpful and informative.

We appreciate your support and assistance in our continued safety efforts.

Sincerely,

Darren Mazutinec, Superintendent



# EMERGENCY PROCEDURES



## LOCKDOWN

Lock-Downs are used in response to acts or threats of violence to students and/or staff directly impacting the school. During a Lockdown all doors to and within the school are locked. No one is permitted in or out of any area once it has been locked. Students and staff must respond very quickly to a Lockdown command to get to a safe location before doors are locked. **No one, other than law enforcement, is permitted access to the building until the Lockdown is over.**



## HOLD & SECURE

Hold and Secure is used in response to security threats or criminal activity outside the school. During a Hold and Secure, all entrance doors to the school are locked, with no one permitted in or out of the building. **No one, other than law enforcement, is permitted access to the building until the Hold and Secure has been cleared.**



## SHELTER IN PLACE

Generally, Shelter-in-Place is used during an environmental emergency, such as a severe storm or chemical spill. During Shelter-in-Place, students and staff retreat to safe zones to seek shelter. This includes having students or staff who are outdoors come back into the school. Each school's emergency response plan identifies the safest location for building occupants. **Students will not be released or dismissed until the situation has been resolved.**



## EVACUATION

An Evacuation requires all students and staff to leave the school and go to an alternate location. This may mean only going outside and away from the building until it is safe to re-enter the school. In other cases, students and staff may need to go to an evacuation centre. Parents will be informed of the alternate location through the school's usual phone and email distribution system.



## CONTROLLED STUDENT RELEASE

Under some circumstances it may be determined that it is best to dismiss students to their homes and families as expeditiously as possible. Should this be the case, every attempt will be made to alert the emergency contact for each student of the situation and to ensure young students are not left unsupervised.





# WHEN AN EMERGENCY OCCURS

Although your natural instinct in an emergency may be to go to the school to safeguard your child, doing so could impede the response to the situation. Extra vehicles and people at the site make the task more difficult. Follow the instructions provided to you through the school website and social media channels. Do not come to the school to pick up your child unless requested to do so.

If you are volunteering or visiting the school when a drill or emergency occurs, you will be required to follow all of the school's established protocols and the instructions of the principal or supervising staff member.

If you arrive at the school in the midst of an emergency, please respect the protocol in progress. While the division understands personal circumstances or initial reactions might move you to do something contrary to the school's established procedures, schools cannot compromise the safety of students or staff to accommodate individual requests that could put others at risk.





# KEEPING INFORMED DURING AN EMERGENCY

During an emergency, it's unlikely you will be able to reach the school by phone. However, the school will make every effort to contact parents directly through one of the methods below.

## ▷ **WEBSITE, SOCIAL MEDIA, AND RECORDED MESSAGES**

The school or Division will keep parents informed through SchoolMessenger notifications - by phone or email - and by posting information regarding the emergency on the school and/or WWSD website and Facebook.

## ▷ **MEDIA**

The Division may also use local media to share information in the event of an emergency. Stay tuned to local TV and radio stations for news alerts.



# REUNITING WITH YOUR CHILD



We recognize when an emergency occurs, parents are worried and want to be reunited with their child as quickly as possible. We intend to make this happen. However, specific procedures have been established for releasing students to ensure every child's safety and the safety of staff.

**DURING AN EMERGENCY, DO NOT  
COME TO THE SCHOOL TO PICK UP  
YOUR CHILD UNLESS REQUESTED TO  
DO SO.**

Parents are asked to adhere to the parent-child reunification procedures listed below. Staff will work to ensure these procedures take place without delay. Understand the process will take some time, and we ask for your patience when you arrive at the designated parent-child reunification area.

## Parents-Child Reunification Procedures:

**1. A Parent-Child Reunion Area will be established.** Parents are notified at the time of the emergency of the reunion area's location. The location may not be at the school - the location will depend on the specifics of the emergency.

**2. Students will only be released to an individual designated as a legal guardian or emergency contact** in the student's official registration information. Make sure to keep this information current with your school, as the school will only release a child to an authorized individual - no exceptions are made.

**3. Valid identification is required to pick up your child.** Requiring identification protects students from any unauthorized individuals attempting to pick them up. Even if school personnel know you, you must still present your ID, as the school may receive assistance from other schools or agencies.

**4. You may be required to fill out a Student Release Request Form.** The form ensures all students are accounted for at all times. Please do not just take your child from the school or evacuation centre without signing for his or her release.

**5. Once you have been reunited with your child, please leave the area immediately.** Leaving immediately ensures your safety and that of your child.

**If you are unable to pick up your child,** he or she will be kept at the parent-child reunion area until alternate arrangements can be made. Your child will be supervised at all times.