



POLICY TITLE:

Emergency Preparedness and Response

Board Approval: January 23, 2020

Board Review: January 31, 2023

Background

In the event of an emergency, Summit West Independent School's (SWIS) primary concern is the safety of students and staff, followed by the preservation of property. Through SWIS Emergency Procedures Manual, specific administrative procedures have been established to ensure the most effective and efficient use of resources.

Definitions

Crisis:

is a present or imminent event that demands immediate action or special regulation of persons or property to protect the health, safety, or welfare of people, or to limit damage to property.

Level 1:

is an unplanned occurrence that interrupts the normal course of business, but to which standard internal response protocols apply. Examples include severe vandalism and medical emergencies.

Level 2:

is an unplanned occurrence that interrupts the normal course of business and requires enhanced response protocols, has the potential to escalate to Level 3, and may require response from external agencies. Examples include a missing child and a bomb threat.

Level 3:

is an unplanned occurrence that discontinues normal business functions and requires a broad-based response by SWIS and/or by a third party, as per the Disaster Services Act. Examples include fire and severe natural disasters.

Procedures

In the event of a crisis within the school, the Principal/Executive Director has the authority to make immediate decisions regarding emergency response, as guided by site Emergency Procedures Manual.

As soon as practical, the Principal shall contact the Executive Director to report the situation and to seek further guidance.

In the event of a crisis, the Executive Director, has the authority to make final decisions regarding crisis response, as guided by SWIS Emergency Procedures Manual.

SWIS Emergency Procedures Manual establishes guidelines and a standard set of response protocols for dealing with a variety of emergent events to ensure that administration, staff, and communicators are familiar with roles and processes in the event of a crisis. The plan sets the standard against which performance will be evaluated.

Crisis communication with all agencies, the public, and the media shall follow the lines of authority set out in the respective incident response plans. All questions or inquiries from the media or public shall be referred to the Executive Director without further response or comment.

The Principal/Executive Director shall:

- a. Provide specific guidelines and procedures regarding emergency response in his/her school/department;
- b. Review and update plans and communicate procedures annually;
- c. Ensure resources are in place to maintain emergency equipment and supplies required to support a crisis response; and
- d. Ensure all students and staff are aware of the rationale, procedures, functional protocols and exit routes for responding to a crisis event.

The Principal shall:

- a. Hold a minimum of six evacuation drills per year;
- b. Hold an additional two drills related to a severe natural disaster, hazardous material spill, lock-down, or shelter-in-place;
- c. Keep a record of each drill in the site Emergency Procedures Manual;
- d. Post evacuation routes near exit doors in each room in the school;

- e. Share emergency response protocols with the school community with detailed protocols outlined for staff in staff handbooks and classroom folders;
- f. Ensure an appropriate number of staff are trained in the operation of the site Emergency Procedures Manual and coverage is approved for decision making in the event the Principal is absent; and
- g. Make alternate arrangements to shelter students in a school evacuation. These arrangements are to be reviewed and documented annually in the site Emergency Procedure Manual.

Drills to Practice Keeping Safe

Throughout the year, SWIS conducts training and drills to help better prepare students and staff for possible emergency situations. When a school is confronted with an emergency, staff will assess the situation and then decide on a course of action.

Schools conduct drills throughout the year to rehearse emergency procedures. These exercises prepare students and staff to act quickly and help to minimize a child's fear during a real emergency.

In addition to the procedures described below, schools also practice protocols such as "Drop-Cover-Hold," a method of protecting vital body parts during some natural disasters, and conduct fire drills. All staff and students are required to participate in these drills.

Lock-Down

Lock-Downs are usually used in response to acts or threats of violence to students and/or staff directly impacting the school. During a Lock-Down 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 Lock-Down 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 Lock-Down is over.

Hold and 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 severe storms or chemical spills. During a 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. 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 center. The evacuation centre at Summit West Independent School is the Okotoks Public Library.

Dismissal

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.