

Jessamine County Schools

Matt Moore, Superintendent

Emergency Awareness for Parents: School Emergency Information

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The safety and security of our students and staff are top priorities for Jessamine County Schools. The following information will help parents.

Introduction

The safety and security of our students and staff are top priorities for Jessamine County Schools (JCS). This document explains some of the procedures that have been planned and practiced to prepare us in the event of an emergency at your child's school. School administrators and district staff work closely with police, fire, emergency services and public health to ensure our School Safety Plans reflect appropriate practices and that all schools are prepared for emergencies. Our comprehensive emergency plan addresses a multitude of potential incidents, not because we expect them to occur, but because we want to be prepared in case they do. For security reasons, specific details are not made available to the public; however, parents and students have a vital role and it is important that you know what to do in an emergency. Please review information in this pamphlet to make sure you and your child understand the emergency procedures.

What is an Emergency?

An emergency is any unexpected incident that could put your child's safety at risk. It could be anything from a disruption in utilities to a terrorist activity and could affect one child, one school, or the entire school district. School and district staff, and sometimes emergency responders, will evaluate the seriousness of each situation and determine the best course of action to respond quickly, safely and appropriately.

Preparedness – How Can Parents Prepare for an Emergency?

Parents have an invaluable role in preparing their children for emergencies. Listed below are some of the ways you can help them understand that if an emergency occurs at school, school and district staff are trained to handle the situation. Reassure your child that, in case a safety situation occurs, you will be contacted by the school and you will be reunited with them as soon as it is safe to do so.

- Be sure emergency contact information is current and correct in Infinite Campus. Make sure to update information as soon as there is a change.
- Keep the school nurse informed of any medical conditions or physical limitations your child may have or medications your child may be taking. Also make sure this is included in your child's Infinite Campus profile.
- Identify who is authorized to pick up your child if you are not able to. Make sure their contact information is current and correct in Infinite Campus. Please understand that your child will only be released to those listed in IC. Discuss this information with your child.
- Make sure your child knows the name, address and phone numbers of parents or guardians. If there is only one parent or guardian, your child should have contact information for a second responsible adult on file with your school.
- Talk with your child about the importance of remaining calm and following instructions in the event of an emergency. If an emergency occurs while students are at school, their teacher will provide them with appropriate instructions and information.
- Let your child know that students could be moved to another location until they can be picked up. Explain the term "Evacuation" in order to ease anxiety and fear if/when an evacuation takes place.
- Explain that cell phones can be used to briefly communicate his/her status to you, such as I am safe. Emergency responders will depend on cell phones for communication. If students and parents are trying to contact each other, cell circuits may become overloaded, interfering with the ability of emergency responders to communicate vital information.
- Whenever you are on school grounds, remain alert to activity in and around the school. Report any suspicious activity to school administration and law enforcement so they can investigate.
- Establish a family preparedness plan including a communications plan. This will enable you to communicate with all family members during an emergency.

- In case of an emergency in which your child can not go home, make sure there is another place he or she can go and be safe while waiting for a family member to pick them up.

What Will Schools Do in Emergency Situations?

How schools respond in an emergency depends on the situation and the specifics of the incident. We will make every attempt to ensure that instruction continues, even when it becomes necessary to lock down the school. Depending on the severity of the threat or emergency, additional measures may be taken, including sheltering-in-place, evacuating students from the building or even altering the dismissal time. If emergency responders are called to the scene, we will work with them in a unified command to determine which plan should be implemented. School emergency plans vary from school to school, based on school size, building layout and other relevant factors, and are initiated depending on the events unfolding at the time of the incident. While every school has common pre-established plans of action, evacuation sites, and family reunification plans, these plans must remain confidential for the safety of our students and staff and must be flexible as conditions change. Parents will be informed as soon as the school has done everything we can to ensure the safety of all students and when it becomes possible to provide accurate and helpful information.

Protective Actions the School May Use:

Each school has an emergency preparedness plan involving a number of possible actions. The response varies, depending on the conditions and the situation, and is determined by a crisis management team trained to make such decisions. It is important for parents to understand that if a critical incident occurs, students will be released to parents only when danger has passed.

Schools May Use the Following Protective Actions:

<p>Lockdown - A lockdown is used to protect building occupants from potential dangers in the building. Specific lockdown procedures are developed by school and local law enforcement officials. During a lockdown, all interior and exterior doors are locked. No one is permitted to enter or exit the building until school officials and/or law enforcement officials have determined it is safe to do so and staff, students and visitors are accounted for in the building. The length of the period of lockdown is based on the situation at hand, and could be a few minutes or even hours. It is possible that a lockdown might involve detaining students beyond the regular school day. It is never our intention to hold students unnecessarily, and we will not do so except to ensure their safety. Conditions will return to normal as soon as it is safe to do so. Parents may or may not be notified when the school goes into lockdown. There are times when the school goes into lockdown for drills or training, or for an external event that does not involve the school.</p>	<p>Evacuation - If it is unsafe for students and staff to remain inside the building, the school will be evacuated. Students and staff may remain on school grounds until the building is safe to re-enter or be relocated to a safe location off school property. In the event of an off-campus evacuation, school administrators will work closely with emergency officials and our transportation professionals to move students to a safe location. From there the students will either be transported home or wait for family members to pick them up from the reunification site. In either event, we will make sure parents are notified. Emergency responders will instruct students and staff members who were evacuated from a site where they left a personal automobile as to when they may return to their car.</p>
<p>Shelter-in-Place - This protective action is used when an event takes place around the school and it is determined that the safest course of action is to keep students and staff inside the building until the external event is handled. Some examples could be a weather situation, hazardous materials release, or a situation unfolding in the community where students should not be released.</p>	<p>Secure the Building - Secure the Building is used to protect building occupants from potential dangers outside the building such as police pursuit of a suspect. Students and staff will continue normal routine inside the building until further instructions are provided.</p>

<p>Students who are outside are moved inside. If a shelter-in-place is necessary that may extend beyond the school day, parents will be notified.</p>	
<p>Emergency School Closing – This procedure will take place when school administrators determine students are safer at home than at school. This most often occurs due to loss of utilities or a weather emergency. Parents will be notified that school(s) will be closing. Students who normally ride the bus will be transported home as usual and parents will be notified.</p>	<p>Off-Site Family Reunification – Students are moved off-site when school officials determine students and staff should not re-enter the building until it is rendered safe. Several off-site locations have been determined in advance, but are not shared with parents until an incident unfolds. Emergency responders and school officials choose the best reunification site at the time of the incident, depending on the circumstances of the emergency. Parents will be notified of the family reunification site as soon as it is tactically appropriate to do so. Our main priorities in an off-site evacuation are student safety and accountability. We want to ensure that students are released to authorized individuals and our sign-out procedure will be in place. In the event of an off-site school evacuation, parents will be provided information as to where the reunification site is located. Parents or authorized adults will be required to show photo identification in order to pick up a child. The process may take some time because we want to make sure reunification is made with authorized individuals only.</p>