



Crisis Preparedness Information for Parents in the Event of a School Emergency

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Introduction

The safety and security of our students and staff is a top priority for the Erlanger/Elsmere Independent School District. Within this document lies information that will help you have a better understanding of how we react to crisis situations in our schools.

All of our schools have school safety/emergency management plans. These plans are constructed in conjunction with district staff as well as our local first responders and in accordance with national standards. They are reviewed and revised as needed. Additionally, your child's school practices the procedures within these plans at various times throughout the school year. For security reasons, details regarding our plans are not made available to the public. Parents do, however, play a very important role in responding to a critical incident in our schools. After reading through this brochure, hopefully you will have a better understanding of what your role is, should a need arise.

***THANK YOU TO OUR COLLEAGUES FROM
CAMPBELL COUNTY SCHOOLS WHO PROVIDED US
WITH MUCH OF THE CONTENT AND STRUCTURE OF
THIS DOCUMENT***

What Should Parents do to Prepare for an Emergency?

Listed below are some ways you can help your child understand that if an emergency occurs at school, teachers and school officials are trained to handle the situation. Reassure them 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. Contact the school secretary immediately whenever your work, home or cell number changes.
- Keep the school nurse informed of any medical conditions or physical limitations your child may have or medications your child may be taking.
- Identify who is authorized to pick up your child if you are not able to respond. Make sure their contact information is current and correct. Please understand that your child will only be released to parents and persons identified on the emergency contact list. Discuss this information with your child and those persons you list as emergency contacts.
- 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 the evacuation takes place.
- Explain that cell phones should not be used during an emergency unless directed to do so by the teachers or school officials. 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 or 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 cannot 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 an Emergency?

What our schools will do in an emergency is largely dependent upon the nature of the event as it is unfolding. The best case scenario will have a school continuing to function normally— instruction, lunch, etc. all proceeding as if nothing has occurred.

If that is not possible and emergency responders are called to the scene, we will work with them in a unified command. The school's safety plans will be initiated and we will react to the degree that we must. If the need to evacuate the school arises, parents will be informed as soon as we have done everything to ensure the safety of all students first.

Schools may enter into a Secure in Place/Shelter in Place phase; an Emergency Lockdown phase; we may evacuate to alternate sites; we may close school; and we may need to have an off-site parent reunification phase.

Secure in Place/Shelter in Place: if there is an incident in the community requiring police activity, officials may determine it best to keep our students and staff inside our building and not permit outside access to our schools. A shelter in place situation may require us to stay within our buildings in case of a hazardous materials release, or a severe weather situation. Depending upon the length of the incident, we may need to keep children secured in place beyond the school day, at which point, we will notify parents in as timely a manner as possible.

Emergency Lockdown: if there is an incident within the building, or very near our schools, officials may move to an emergency lockdown to restrict movement inside/outside the school building. The length of the emergency lockdown will be dependent upon the incident and the information first responders relay to us. Schools may be initiating their school crisis plans at this time. An emergency lockdown may extend beyond the school day, and may impact other schools in our district. 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. Given the nature of the event, parents may or may not be made aware when a school enters into an emergency lockdown. Schools will pass along information about the incident status as it is possible.

Evacuation: If it is unsafe for students and staff to remain in their building, the school will be evacuated. This evacuation could simply be to get kids out of the building, or we may find it necessary to move students to an alternative location. In either event, school officials will be working side by side with emergency responders to determine the best course of action. If we need to transport students, transportation professionals will move the students and families will be made aware of the steps that will be needed to pick up your child.

Emergency School Closing: This procedure will take place when school administrators determine students are safer at home than at school. This would most often occur in case of severe weather or a loss of utilities to the school. Parents will be notified in the event of an emergency school closing.

Off-Site Parent Reunification: If school officials and first responders determine that an incident requires the movement of students off site, there are several off-site parent reunification locations that have been determined. If and when the need arises, parents will be given information on where/how they may pick up their children when it is tactically appropriate to do so. If we need to move children off-site, student safety and student accountability are our first priorities.

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.

What Should Parents Do in the Event of an Emergency?

The most helpful parental responses to a school emergency are to remain calm and wait for accurate information and instructions to be sent to the number listed on your child's emergency contacts. We understand it is a natural instinct for parents to want to rush to their child. It is important for you to understand that, during such an event, individual schools and emergency responders have made preparations to deal with these incidents. Your cooperation in an emergency is essential to the safe and swift resolution of the incident.

- Please do not call the school. It is essential to keep phone lines open so school officials can make outgoing emergency calls.
- Please do not go to the school. As we have learned from past school emergencies, one of our greatest challenges is how to manage a large number of parents and concerned citizens rushing to the scene to “help.” By doing so, parents can inadvertently create traffic jams that may block emergency responders from getting to the scene for from leaving to transport injured persons to emergency medical facilities.
- Remain calm—follow procedures and cooperate with school and first responders.
- Remain close to the phone listed as your emergency contact number as it may be utilized with the district all-call system (SchoolMessenger).
- Tune in local television/radio stations
- Infinite Campus Messenger may also be utilized as a form of communication. Those notices are received via Email through the address you have provided the school.
- Continue to check our district website: www.erlanger.kyschools.us. As we can, we will update the webpage with the most current information we have.
- Understand that emergency pickup procedures are different than routine pickup procedures. In the event you are notified to pick up your child at school or at a designated parent reunification site, bring a photo identification card. If you must send someone else to pick up your child, be sure it is someone who is listed on school records as an individual authorized to do so and make sure they are in possession of a photo ID. Your child will not be released to anyone who is unauthorized or who cannot provide appropriate identification.

- Follow emergency procedures as they are dictated to you...these plans have been established and practiced to ensure the safety and accountability of students.
- Remain in designated areas at the parent reunification site.
- Be patient. It is essential that the family reunification procedures be carried out in an orderly manner so we can protect and account for all of our students.

Emergency Communications: How will Parents be Notified if an Incident occurs at School?

1. District All-Call system—a recorded message sent to contact numbers in our system
2. Erlanger/Elsmere Independent School’s website—www.erlanger.kyschools.us
3. Erlanger/Elsmere Independent School’s Central Office—859-727-2009
4. Infinite Campus Messenger—information is received via the email address that you have provided our schools

In the event of a critical incident, parents are encouraged to tune in to one of the following local television stations to gather information as it becomes available:

WCPO—www.wcpo.com

WXIX—www.fox19.com

WLWT—www.wlwt.com

WKRC—www.local12.com

Recovery After a Crisis

School leaders understand that a traumatic event in a school or in a community can have an emotional impact on students and staff for days, weeks, and years after the event. The Erlanger/Elsmere Independent School System has several school counselors/social workers on staff to respond during and after a critical incident to provide assistance. Next steps for the district will be determined and communicated to all stakeholders as the immediate incident concludes and we enter into the recovery phase.

If you have additional questions about the content of this document, please feel free to contact any of the following staff at the district office: 859-727-2009

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