



Highland Falls – Fort Montgomery CSD

EMERGENCY PLANNING A GUIDE FOR PARENTS

General Information

Preparation!! Being prepared for emergencies is not only a requirement of the State, but is also taken very seriously by the staff and administration of the Highland Falls – Fort Montgomery Central School District. The District has developed an emergency management and safety plan for each of its schools -- a plan that is reviewed and revised annually. This plan addresses an enormous range of issues from the relatively minor to the more severe while addressing the social, emotional, and psychological needs of staff and students during the aftermath of an incident.

The purpose of this guide is to provide basic information to parents on how their cooperation and assistance will aid the District and their children during a crisis.

Issues include:

- Where do I get current information?
- What should I do during a crisis?
- Who can I contact for help?

When disaster strikes, the first consideration for every staff member is the safety of our children.

The Highland Falls – Fort Montgomery Central School District has established emergency management and safety plans for each building in the District. All of these plans are coordinated with police, fire, EMS, and other officials from county and / or statewide agencies.



There are five general categories that the plans address.

Categories include:

1. Criminal Offenses such as bomb threats, kidnapping, or violent behavior
2. Natural hazards such as severe weather
3. Environmental hazards such as exposure to hazardous materials, explosions, or fires
4. Medical emergencies such as injury, contagious disease, exposure to biohazards, accidents or terminal illness involving a student, parent, or staff member
5. Death or suicide of a student, staff member or family member

HOW WILL THE SCHOOL RESPOND TO AN EMERGENCY?

When the Principal, Superintendent or designee determines that an emergency has occurred, there are five possible plans of action:

1) Go-Home Plan / Early Dismissal:

This plan returns students to their home and family as soon as possible.



Each school maintains information for each child's contact person(s). It is important to advise the building principal if the name or number of a contact person changes.

The school will not, under any circumstances, release a student to anyone who has not been authorized by the **parent or guardian**. Elementary students are never returned to an unoccupied or unsupervised home. If there is no one at home to meet an elementary student, the child is returned to a location that can provide security and supervision. The child will be held until a parent or authorized adult picks up the child.

2) Shelter In Place Plan:

Keeps students in their buildings when it is safer to stay inside than to go out. Ordinarily, sheltering is considered a short-term solution, but each school is prepared to keep students beyond normal dismissal if necessary. A part of the shelter plan will be a Stay-Put plan. In this instance, all students will remain in their current classroom until otherwise notified.

3) Evacuation/Relocation Plan:

Requires that all building occupants leave and go to an alternate location.

Evacuation may mean only going outside and away from the building until an all-clear signal is given. In some circumstances, students and staff may need to be transported and housed temporarily in another location until the Go-Home Plan can be put into operation.



4) Lockout Plan:

Allows no unauthorized personnel into the building. All exterior doors are locked and administrators, monitors or other school personnel monitor main entrance. This procedure allows the school

to continue with the normal school day, but curtails outside activity. This procedure is most commonly used when incident is occurring outside the school building, on or off school property.

5) Lockdown Plan:

An immediate and imminent threat to the school building population. Staff and students are secured in the rooms they are currently in and no one is allowed to leave until the situation has been curtailed. This allows the school to secure everyone and remove them from immediate danger. This plan is used most commonly when the building has an intruder.

Where will the students go if there is a relocation?

In the event that students must be moved to an alternate location, the school will attempt to reach all parents to advise them of the alternate location site. Depending upon the circumstances of the emergency, these plans may be utilized. Police, fire, EMS, county and state authorities know of the alternate locations; however, the alternate locations will remain confidential until an actual emergency occurs.

ARE THERE EMERGENCY PLANNING DRILLS?

YES, At least once each year, the District conducts a



test of its Go-Home (early dismissal) plan. Other drills are

conducted at various times during the school year in order to give students and staff practice in what to do during an emergency. Transportation and communication tests are part of each drill. Additional drills and simulations will be conducted by each school's emergency team -under the direction of the building principal -throughout the year. The District believes that response is best when everybody knows their role and has had an opportunity to practice.

SHOULD I PICK UP MY CHILD AT SCHOOL DURING AN EMERGENCY?

We strongly encourage parents NOT to come to the school during an emergency unless directed to do so.

While every person's natural instinct in an emergency is to go to the school to safeguard his/her child, please understand that

doing so may significantly reduce the school's ability to respond to the situation. In addition, going to the school may interfere with police or other emergency workers whose sole purpose is to assure the safety and well being of students and staff. Vehicles driven to the school, for example, may restrict access for emergency vehicles and/or school buses that are loading children for evacuation / relocation or to take them home. The building's staff will be actively working at all times to ensure the safety of all students. While it may seem logical that every student taken home by a parent reduces the workload of the staff, in a fast-moving crisis that requires careful coordination and communication, extra vehicles and visitors to the school may actually make the task of keeping track of all students exceptionally difficult and potentially dangerous.

WHERE CAN I GET INFORMATION DURING AN EMERGENCY?

Chances are that you may not be able to reach the school by telephone in a real emergency. Past experiences indicate that staff must react to the emergency first. District telephone lines will be busy with personnel who need to communicate to emergency and support services. Therefore, **it is important that you do not try calling the school building.**

- The District's website, www.hffmcsd.org will post updates throughout the course of an emergency.



- The news media (radio stations) WHUD / WLNA / WBNR / WSPK / WGNY / WPDH / WRRV will be contacted and kept up-to-date on all developments, and will be asked to broadcast important information.
- We will, however, make every effort to contact parents and guardians. Principals have a separate copy of every child's contact information that they will keep with them during an emergency.

The principal or designee may ask parent organizations to assist in disseminating information.

Please note that we have a home/school communication system in place. This system will allow us to inform parents in a timely fashion if we encounter a true emergency.

Do not call 911 for information as this is meant for reporting emergencies only.



WHAT PROVISIONS ARE MADE FOR STUDENTS WITH DISABILITIES?



Each school has an action plan that provides for students and staff who have special needs.

For more information, contact your building Principal.

WHAT CAN I DO TO PLAN AHEAD?

The most important things you as parent can do:

- Make certain your child's school has up-to-date emergency contact information.
- Periodically review with your child alternative arrangements you have made in case an emergency prevents you from being at home.
- Talk to your children and emphasize how important it is for them to follow instructions from teachers and school officials during an emergency.
- Carefully read all information you receive from the school. You may receive safety updates about

precautions from time to time.

- Please encourage your children not to use their cell phones as this can cause great confusion, and potentially shut down needed service by emergency responders

Questions about the information contained in this guide should be directed to your building Principal.

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