ADMINISTRATION: Policy 310-R

EMERGENCY MANAGEMENT

Being ready to address different scenarios in collaboration with first responders and relevant community agencies takes considerable preparation on the part of school and district staff. The district engages with an ongoing emergency management cycle in order to provide thoughtful and effective emergency response to our schools and district facilities. All school district facilities must have staff trained in how to manage emergency situations that may arise.

DEFINITIONS

All-Hazard: Any incident or event, natural or human caused, that requires an organized response by public, private, and/or governmental entity in order to protect life, public health and safety, and minimize any disruption of government, social, and economic services.

Critical Incident: Any incident, whether natural or human-caused, that has a negative emotional impact on those affected resulting in a state of stress or discomfort and feelings of loss of control.

Disaster: An event, generally considered to have an even greater impact than an emergency, caused by an accident, fire, explosion or technical failure, or by the forces of nature, and has resulted in serious harm to the health, safety and/or welfare of people, or in widespread damage to property.

Emergency: An event or circumstance that is caused by accident, fire, explosion, technical failure, human action or force of nature, that requires prompt coordination of action or special regulation of persons or property to protect the health, safety or welfare and/or a person or to limit damage to property.

Emergency Management Cycle: An ongoing process to prevent, prepare for, respond to, and recover from an incident.

Incident Command System: A standardized on-site management system designed to enable effective, efficient incident management by integrating a combination of facilities, equipment, personnel, procedures, and communications operating within a common organizational structure.

DUTY OF CARE

As the employer, the Board of Education is responsible, pursuant to the Workers Compensation Act and Occupational Health and Safety Regulation, for the safety of employees.

The Supreme Court of Canada has articulated that "The standard of care to be exercised by school authorities in providing for the supervision and protection of students for whom they are responsible is that of a careful or prudent parent."

In the event of an emergency, staff must ensure that students are cared for until they are safely reunited with their parents or guardians.

DISTRICT RESPONSE PROTOCOLS

The district models emergency response protocols on the British Columbia Emergency Response Management System (BCERMS) which outlines the following priorities:
- Keep students and staff safe.
- Make sure that staff understand clear and consistent standards and procedures to follow.
- Clearly define roles and responsibilities.
- Ensure that communications and protocols are aligned with community partners (e.g., First Responders).
- Minimize disruptions and return to normal as soon as possible.

The district follows the Ministry of Education's Emergency Management Planning Guide for Schools, Districts and Authorities which outlines key elements of the Emergency Management Cycle:

Pre-Event Planning

Effective emergency management begins with ongoing assessment, prevention, planning, and training in preparation for the potential of an emergency situation.

Emergency Event

In the event of an emergency, the district operationalizes the All-Hazards Approach to emergency management. The All-Hazards Approach incorporates five key responses that must be activated appropriately based on the context of an emergency.

Drop-Cover-Hold On

Activated in an event such as an earthquake, where the physical structure becomes unstable. Students and staff must go into a drop-cover-hold on position to reduce the risk of injury.

Evacuation

Activated when the building or area becomes unsafe. In an evacuation, students and staff are to leave the building and go to a previously identified location outside of the building. If it is safe to do so, students and staff are able to re-enter the building.

Shelter-in-Place

Activated when a situation outside of the school is not safe e.g., coyote in proximity to the school. For personal safety, it is important for students and staff to remain inside the school. Exterior doors are locked and monitored to allow students and staff to enter. Once inside, no one leaves the building.

Hold and Secure

Activated by the RCMP when it is necessary to secure the school because there is a security threat occurring in close proximity. Exterior doors are locked and monitored to allow students and staff to enter. Once inside, no one leaves the building.

Lockdown

Activated in response to a significant act or threat of violence. If a lockdown is initiated by the principal, 911 is contacted for immediate response from the RCMP and other support agencies as necessary. Exterior doors and interior classroom doors are locked and no individual is permitted in or out of any area. Only the RCMP are permitted access to the school until the lockdown is over.

Student Reunification Protocol
The district Student Reunification Protocol requires the establishment of a designated area for staff and students to gather in the event of an emergency that requires evacuation of a district facility and activation of the protocol. The district is committed to the reunification of students with their parents as quickly as possible. Supervision of students until they are safely reunited with their parents or designated caregiver is the responsibility of school staff.

Post-Event Recovery
The following elements will require attention post-event:

- Emotional and psychological supports.
- Physical and structural needs of district facilities.
- Continuity of operations (e.g., alternate site arrangements).
- Restoring learning.
- Debriefing to support moving forward.

Violence Threat Risk Assessment (VTRA) Protocol

The Violence Threat Risk Assessment Protocol is one important aspect of the Ministry of Education's Expect Respect & A Safe Education (*erase)* Strategy. The Board of Education and our community partners are committed to making our schools safe for all students, staff and community members. As a result, we are committed to responding in a multi-disciplinary approach to all student behaviours that pose a potential risk to self or other students, staff and members of the community.

Violence Threat Risk Assessment

WE ARE IN THIS TOGETHER

Together we must commit to intervening in all situations in which students may be posing a threat to themselves or others. Parents, staff, students, and community members must report threat-related behaviours to the principal and/or appropriate authorities such as the RCMP or Child and Youth Mental Health.

WHAT IS A THREAT?

A threat is any expression of intent to do harm or to act out violently.

WHO IS PART OF THE THREAT ASSESSMENT TEAM?

Each school has a threat assessment team that includes a school administrator and counsellor. Schools are further supported by district personnel, the RCMP, and other support agencies as appropriate.

WHAT IS THE PURPOSE OF A THREAT ASSESSMENT?

- Ensure the safety of the school community
- Understand the context of the threat(s)
- Assess the factors contributing to the behaviours
- Develop an intervention plan

WHAT HAPPENS IN A THREAT ASSESSMENT PROCESS?

The assessment process starts with a commitment to address all threat-making behaviours. Parents and the student(s) involved will be interviewed to determine the level of risk, and to collaboratively develop an intervention plan to support any student(s) involved in threat-making behaviours. A support plan will also be developed to support anyone in the school community that has been impacted by the threat(s).

GATHERING OF INFORMATION

The district will gather information in compliance with privacy laws. Information gathering will only be undertaken when there is reasonable cause to believe that a risk exits. Relevant information collected as part of a threat assessment process may be provided to the RCMP.

Superintendent

The superintendent will ensure that emergency management policy and regulations are followed and that the chairperson of the Board of Education is updated in a timely way when a serious incident occurs.

Additional responsibilities include:

- Overseeing the development, maintenance and review of the District Emergency Management Plan (DEMP).
- Ensuring that School and Site Emergency Management Plans (SEMP) are up-to-date.
- Making staff training available and aligned with response protocols.
- Serving as the District Incident Commander and activating the District Emergency Operations Centre (DEOC) as appropriate.
- Reporting emergencies, disasters and critical incidence to the Ministry of Education.
- Reporting annually to the Board of Education on the state of the district's emergency preparedness.
- Updating stakeholder presidents in a timely manner and on a needs basis when a serious incident occurs.

Principal or Site Manager

The principal or site manager is responsible for the safe operation and management of the school or site at all times. In the event of an on-site emergency, the principal or site manager maintains responsibility until first responders arrive, at which point responsibility is shared based on context. In all school or district site-based emergency situations, the principal or site manager serves as the Site Incident Commander using the All-Hazards Approach. During a significant emergency event, the principal or site manager will initiate the Incident Command System (ICS).

Principals and site managers are responsible for:

- Ensuring that an up-to-date School or Site Emergency Management Plan (SEMP) is in place.
- Scheduling emergency drills on an annual basis.
- Maintaining a safe and orderly facility to the best extent possible during an emergency.
- Supervision of students until they are safely reunited with their parents or guardians.

School Staff

All school personnel, including teachers, education assistants, clerical, maintenance staff and others, are expected to be familiar with the School Emergency Management Plan (SEMP) and to understand their particular role(s) in carrying it out.

Students

Students have a responsibility to understand emergency routines to the best of their abilities and to follow instructions given by school staff.

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Parents and Guardians

Parents play an important role in support of the School Emergency Management Plan (SEMP) by:

- Ensuring that they are aware of the School Emergency Management Plan (SEMP).
- Providing up-to-date information regarding contact, medical, and student release information.
- Following the guidance provided when an emergency is taking place.
- Participating in drills or exercises related to emergency preparedness (including student release drills), when invited to do so by the principal.
- Encouraging their child to take drills seriously.
- Assisting with the acquisition and organization of emergency supplies on an ongoing basis.

First Responders

First responders (e.g., police, fire, paramedics) work at the site-level of an emergency event. Activities of first responders may include securing the perimeter, providing medical response, firefighting, and managing crowds or evacuation zones. First responders work in collaboration with the principal or site manager when arriving on-site.