

## **McFarland School District**

### School District Emergencies - Parent Information

#### **What is an emergency?**

An emergency is any unexpected incident that could possibly put your child's safety at risk. It could be anything from a disruption in utilities to an act of violence and could affect one child, one school, or the entire school district. School officials, and sometimes emergency responders, will evaluate the seriousness of each situation and determine the best action to respond quickly, safely and appropriately. Advanced planning and preparation can minimize the risks in any emergency situation. This document offers guidelines for preparedness, what parents should do, and what the school will do in the event of an emergency. Communication procedures and student release procedures are also outlined.

#### **What will the school do in the event of an emergency?**

What we do 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 place the school in a hold or 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 closing the school. While every school has pre-established plans of action, evacuation sites, and family reunification plans, these plans must remain flexible as conditions change. Parents will be informed as soon as we have done everything we can to ensure the safety of students and when it becomes possible to provide accurate and helpful information.

Each school has an emergency preparedness plan involving a number of possible response actions. The response varies, depending on the conditions and the situation, and is determined by a situation response (crisis management) team trained to make such decisions. It is important for parents to understand that if a critical incident occurs, students will be dismissed to parents only when danger has passed and it has been deemed safe to release students. The length of time a school remains in a response action is based on the situation at hand, and could be a few minutes or hours. ***It is possible that when a response action has been initiated at a school, it may involve keeping 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.***

#### **Emergency Communications -**

##### **How will parents be notified if an incident occurs at school?**

Our first priority is to ensure all students are safe, accounted for, and under adult supervision. As soon as it is possible to do so, MSD will communicate information to parents and the community. The school district has a variety of media available to parents that will be updated, as needed, with the most complete and accurate information available.

1. School Messenger (phone and text messaging)
2. MSD Website ([www.mcfarland.k12.wi.us](http://www.mcfarland.k12.wi.us))
3. MSD Main Phone Number (838-4500)

In the event of a significant emergency, parents are encouraged to tune in to one of the following local television stations or their websites to follow the event as it unfolds:

Channel 3 - WISC (CBS); <http://www.channel3000.com>

Channel 15 - WMTV (NBC); <http://www.nbc15.com>

Channel 27 - WKOW (ABC); <http://wkow.com>

Channel 47 - WMSN (FOX)

### **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 to be sent to the number listed on your child's emergency contact.

- **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 or scene of the crisis/emergency. By doing so, parents can inadvertently create traffic jams that may block emergency responders from getting to the scene or leaving if necessary to transport injured staff or students to emergency medical facilities.
- Remain close to the phone listed on the student enrollment form you submitted at the beginning of the school year.
- Tune in to television designated to carry MSD emergency information. See "Emergency Communications" section above.
- 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 the designated family **reunification\*** site, **bring a photo identification card.**

***\*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 are determined in advance, but are not shared with parents until an incident unfolds. School officials will 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 make sure students are released to authorized individuals and a sign-out procedure will be initiated. 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 ensure reunification is made with authorized individuals.*

### **Preparedness - What should parents do to prepare for an emergency?**

Parents have an invaluable role in preparing themselves and their children for emergencies. Listed below are some of the ways you can help if an emergency occurs at school.

- Whenever you are on school grounds, remain alert to activity in and around the school. Report any suspicious activity to school administration so they can investigate.
- Be sure **emergency contact information** is current and correct. If an e-mail address, work, home or cell phone number changes, please update it immediately in the Campus Portal. If you are unable to do so, then contact the school office.
- **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 your child will only be released to parents and persons identified on the emergency contact list. **Discuss this information with your child.**
- Make sure your child knows their parent or guardian's **name, address and phone numbers.** If there is only one parent or guardian, your child should have contact information for a second responsible adult.
- In case of an emergency in which your child cannot go to their home, make sure there is another place he or she can go and be safe while waiting for an authorized family member to pick them up.
- Establish a family preparedness plan including a **communications plan.** This will enable you to communicate with all family members during an emergency.
- Talk with your child about the importance of remaining calm and following instructions in the event of an emergency. If an emergency occurs while they are at school, their teacher will provide them with appropriate instructions and information.
- Let your child know they could be moved to another location until you can pick them up. **Explain the term "evacuation"** so they are not afraid of being evacuated from their school
- Explain that cell phones should not be used during an emergency unless directed to do so by a teacher. Emergency responders will depend on cell phones for communication. If students and parents are trying to contact each other, cell

phone circuits may become overloaded, interfering with the ability of emergency personnel to communicate vital information.

- Keep the school nurse informed of any **medical conditions or physical limitations** your child may have or medications your child may be taking.

### **Recovery after a crisis**

The school officials understand that a traumatic event in a school or in the community can have an emotional impact on staff and students. MSD has a trained team of counselors, social workers, and psychologists who can respond to the school during and after a critical incident to provide assistance. If there is a chance a critical incident makes an emotional impact upon staff or students, the MSD student services intervention team helps those affected cope with the aftermath of the incident.