



## QUINCY PUBLIC SCHOOLS SCHOOL EMERGENCY GUIDE FOR PARENTS

The purpose of this guide is to provide a quick reference for parents when there is a crisis at school, describe what parents can do to best help their children before and during the incident, and explain the process for the safe return of your child.

### *3 Simple Steps you can take*

to prepare for a school emergency:

- 1 Communication is vital** in any type of emergency. To be sure we can quickly contact you, please make certain that your child's emergency contact information is accurate. Also, please remember to update your contact information whenever it changes.

Individuals listed as Emergency Contacts should:

- Know that you are listing them and agree to accept the responsibility of picking up your child when necessary,
- Be readily available during the day,
- Have easily accessible transportation to pick up your child from school, and
- Have a good relationship with your child.

- 2 Talk with your child** about the importance of listening to school staff members and following directions during an emergency. Also, discuss the emergency training that is provided at school, and ask them to explain their role during the various drills. If you have any further questions about your school's emergency procedures, please feel free to contact the principal for details.

- 3 School Emergency Cards for Parents** are located on the third page of this guide. Cut them out and carry one in your wallet or purse. The School Emergency Cards for Parents have important instructions to follow during a school emergency.

### *Emergency Options*

during a school emergency:

**Evacuation.** Certain emergencies require everyone to leave the premises to keep safe. Each school has made arrangements for off-site evacuations. Evacuation during a fire may only require everyone to assemble in a field away from the building, while other emergencies may require relocating to another building. The other building may be a nearby shelter within walking distance or it may be another school building that requires busing to reach it. The type of crisis and the conditions outside the school will determine the response chosen.

**Shelter-In-Place.** Often it is safer to remain inside the school building because conditions outside are less safe. During a tornado warning, students and staff may respond to a designated shelter/safe area of the building, if there is time to do so. During an earthquake, the best response is usually to remain in the classroom and take cover to avoid potentially falling debris.



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**Lockdown.** During most violent intruder incidents, lockdown is the best response. Lockdown keeps students and staff in an area they know is safe at the time, while keeping violent intruders out of that area. Emergency responders will normally arrive quickly, so the more time spent in a safe area, the better. Although our drills end rather quickly, in a real event, students should prepare to remain quietly locked down for an extended period of time.

**Secure.** If a potentially dangerous situation is in the area of a school, the school may decide to Secure. A Secure may be caused by police action in the area, a vicious dog near the playground, or some other threatening circumstance that might endanger someone outside the building. Actually, our schools operate in a near-secure mode daily, as all incoming traffic is directed through the security entrance. In an actual Secure, any students who are outside would be brought back into the building, and no one would be allowed to enter or leave until the secure is lifted. Otherwise, it is “business as usual.”

### *Student Reunification*

procedures following a school emergency:

After an emergency or crisis has caused one of the responses listed above, it is our goal to reunite you with your child as soon as the situation has stabilized. Quincy Public Schools created a Reunification Plan to assist in the safe return of your child to you or your designee. School administration will implement this plan at the earliest opportunity.

**What to expect.** If an emergency interrupts the school day, QPS will disseminate information as soon as possible. QPS will activate its phone message system with specific information and instructions for parents and will post information on [www.qps.org](http://www.qps.org) as soon as possible, as well. If your child was harmed during the crisis, school personnel will personally contact you at the earliest possible time.

In most cases, students will either remain at their school or at the evacuation site until the regular end of the school day. The phone message will inform you as to their location and the appropriate place for you to respond, if you plan to pick them up.

**What you can do.** Please listen to the full message and respond as requested. We can return your student to you sooner if everyone follows the established procedures.

If you are directed to a reunification site, please follow directions regarding parking and **bring a government-issued photo ID**. This also applies to your previously approved contacts who may pick up your child in your place. Students will not be released to anyone unless they are on your approved list and they can prove that by presenting a government-issued photo ID. Students will only be released to parents or guardians who have presented acceptable identification and who are named as an emergency contact.

#### **What you should NOT do:**

- Please, do NOT call the school. School staff will be busy assisting students during the emergency and preparing for reunification immediately afterwards. Calling the school will delay them and tie up phone lines that may be needed to communicate with emergency personnel.



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- Please, do NOT immediately come to the school or evacuation site, unless instructed to do so. Traffic may already be impeded by emergency vehicles and adding more cars when no one is ready for release will only aggravate the situation. While parents' natural instinct in an emergency is to go to the school to safeguard their 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.

### *Ensuring School Safety* is everyone's responsibility!

Quincy Public Schools are committed to the safety of our students. Our staff works with public safety providers to maintain a safe environment for our students, staff, and visitors. Each summer, we meet with leaders from all local area first responder agencies to review and improve our Crisis Management Plan. As a parent, you should feel confident knowing that we provide emergency response training to school staff. The school's Crisis Management Plan is modeled from the National Incident Management System (NIMS) that has been developed by the Department of Homeland Security.

Throughout the school year, your child will be trained in emergency procedures and will be taught how to react, where to assemble, and what to expect in an emergency situation. This will be accomplished through fire drills, severe weather drills, and lockdown drills. While it can be unsettling to think about situations that require an emergency response, frequent review and practice will help to reduce risk and help both staff and students prepare for an actual event.

Following an emergency scenario practice drill, your child may wish to share their experience with you. If so, this would be an excellent time to review the information and procedures as a family. We created this School Emergency Guide for Parents to help you better understand your important role in our Safe School Plans. Open communication between home and school is critical to the safety and well-being of your child.

Please let us know if you have concerns or questions about school policies or your child's safety. You can learn more about this at our website ([www.qps.org](http://www.qps.org)).

***Please cut out and carry these quick reference cards with you.***



#### **QUINCY PUBLIC SCHOOLS SCHOOL EMERGENCY CARD FOR PARENTS**

***During an emergency, information will be provided in the following ways:***

- Visit the [QPS Facebook webpage](#).
- Wait for a call from the phone messaging system. You will receive information and instructions on what to do during the emergency.
- Tune into local TV and radio stations for news alerts.
- The school may call the emergency phone numbers you previously provided to the school.

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