



Grande Prairie Public School District

Information for Parents and Guardians about our Emergency Procedures

Statistics show schools are still among the safest places to be on a day-to-day basis due to the strong commitment of educators, parents, and communities to their children. Nevertheless, an unforeseeable incident may happen anytime and because of that no community can be complacent in its efforts to make its schools even safer.

Grande Prairie Public School District would like to provide Parent and Guardians with the following information to help you and your family learn about our protocols and procedures that guide us in the event of an emergency at our schools. Please note, these protocols will be reviewed with your child in his/her classrooms.

Drills

To prepare all members of the School community, including your child, to act on a moment's notice, we conduct emergency practice drills at the school. These drills, which occur on a periodic basis throughout the year, cover a variety of circumstances. In addition to practicing the drills, we also discuss with the students the appropriate actions to take during a number of emergencies. These drills and accompanying discussions are designed to prepare your child to act quickly and to minimize your child's fear should an emergency occur.

Terminology

Below are some terms you and your family should become familiar with:

Emergency Type	Description
LOCK-DOWN	Used for threat of violence incident <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • All internal and external doors and windows are locked and secured • Staff and students requested to keep quiet and take cover away from windows, doors and out of sight lines • No one is allowed in or out of classrooms or the building, under any circumstance
HOLD AND SECURE	When security threat or criminal activity is outside and/or unrelated to the school <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Exterior doors and windows are locked • Class continues to be in session • No one allowed in or out of the building
SHELTER-IN-PLACE	Used to direct and control movement inside the school building when it is safer to remain inside and/or there is no threat of violence (door locking is not required) <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • No one is allowed to leave designated area until ALL-CLEAR or without permission Examples: severe weather or air quality incidents
EMERGENCY EVACUATION	Used when it is safer to be outside the building than inside. Follows prearranged routes and exits but exit with caution <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • All students are instructed to proceed to Student Assembly Area/Muster Point • Cannot return to building until ALL-CLEAR is provided by first responders
DROP-COVER-HOLD	Used during incidents related to potential structural damage or falling/flying debris (Examples: earthquakes, tornadoes, explosions) <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Requested to: drop under desk/sturdy table, get down onto knees and curl chest-to-knees, one hand behind neck and put head down with face between knees
ON-ALERT	Used to advise of a possible emergency, communicates pertinent instructions and provides opportunity to account for students <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Students return to classroom for attendance and wait for further instructions
ALL-CLEAR	Used to advise when the incident is brought to closure



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Dismissal

Under some circumstances it may be determined that it is best to dismiss students to their homes and families as expeditiously as possible. Should this be the case, every attempt will be made to alert the emergency contact for each student of the situation and to ensure young students are not left unsupervised.

We recognize that when emergencies occur parents will be worried and want to be reunited with their child as quickly as possible. It is our intention to make this happen. However, to ensure every child's safety and the safety of staff, specific procedures have been established for releasing students. In some emergencies enhanced student release procedures may be established. When this occurs, parents will be notified and are asked to adhere to the **Parent-Child Reunification Procedures** listed below. Staff will work hard to ensure these procedures take place without delay. However, please understand the process will still take some time: we ask for your patience when you arrive at the Parent-Child Reunion Area.

Parent-Child Reunion Procedures

1. A Parent-Child Reunion Area will be established. Parents will be notified at the time of the emergency of the Reunion Area's location. The location may not be at the school — the location will depend on the specifics of the emergency.
2. You will be required to fill out a Student Release Request Form. This ensures all students are accounted for at all times and students are only released to authorized individuals.
3. Students will only be released to an individual designated as legal guardian or emergency contact on the student's Emergency Card, which is completed at time of school registration. Please be sure to keep this information current with your school, as the school will only release a child to someone listed as an Emergency Contact — there will be no exceptions.
4. Valid identification is required to pick up your child. This is required to protect your child from any unauthorized individuals attempting to pick up students. Even if school personnel know you, you must still present I.D. as the school may be receiving assistance from other schools or outside agencies.
5. You will be required to sign for the release of your child. This is extremely important, as it ensures your child, along with other students, is accounted for at all times. Please do not just take your child from the school or evacuation center without signing for his/her release.
6. Once you have been reunited with your child, please leave the area immediately. This is for your own safety and that of your child.

If you are unable to pick up your child, he/she will be kept at the Parent-Child Reunion Center until alternate arrangements can be made. Your child will be supervised at all times.



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In the event of an emergency, we kindly request parents respect to the following:

- **DO NOT call the school:** We understand and respect your concern, but it is essential that the telephone system be available for emergency communications.
- **DO NOT call or text your child's cellphone:** Please do not call or text your child's cell phone, as this may impair emergency communications and, in some cases, may place your child at risk.
- **DO NOT come to the school until instructed to do so:** It may be necessary to keep the streets and parking lot clear for emergency vehicles. If evacuation is required, students may be transported to a location away from the school. You will be notified of this through the District Communication Department via the community hotline, district website, social media and the media.
- **If you arrive at the school during an emergency,** please respect the protocol in progress. While we understand personal circumstances or initial reactions might move you to do something contrary to the school's established procedures, we cannot compromise the safety of students or staff to accommodate individual requests that could put anyone at risk.

Keeping informed during an emergency, parents CAN:

- **CALL our community hotline (587-259-8101):** This hotline provides updated information regarding the emergency. It is a one-way system and cannot receive messages.
- **Visit our District website regularly (www.gppsd.ab.ca):** The main page on our website is continuously updated in the event of an emergency.
- **FOLLOW our social media pages:** We update our social media pages every 20 minutes to help the community and parents stay up-to-date with the situation.
 - www.facebook.com/gppsd2357
 - www.twitter.com/gppsd2357 (@gppsd2357)

Talk to your children: Emphasize how important it is for them to follow instructions from their teachers and school officials during any emergency. Carefully read all information you receive from the school. You may receive updates about our safety procedures from time to time.

We are proud that GPPSD is a safe school district, and we are doing everything possible to keep it that way. We appreciate your cooperation and support.

If you have any questions about this information or other aspects of our safety procedures, please contact your child's school during regular work hours or the Grande Prairie Public School District at 780-532-4491.