

Wheatland Elementary School - USD 385 Andover Public Schools
Crisis Response Guide for Parents

There are many responders in a school emergency, including police, fire and medical, teachers, staff and parents. While parents aren't usually present during a school emergency, here is information that can make you a powerful partner in protecting the safety and well-being of our students and staff.

Possible Responses to a Crisis Situation

Response plans are one important tool that we use to protect the safety and security of our students and employees during an emergency.

Evacuation - Used to safeguard students and staff when a threat exists in a portion or in the entire building creating a need to move students from one place to another.

Heightened Alert - Used when a threat exists outside the building but there is no threat inside or on school grounds. All exterior doors are locked and outdoor activities are avoided. Efforts are made to maintain a regular schedule and routine for students, but hallway passage is limited. Depending on the threat, office staff may allow people to enter the building.

Lockdown - Used to safeguard students and staff when a threat exists within the building, on school grounds or in other situations and evacuation is not possible. All doors inside and outside the building are locked and students and staff remain in their classrooms and offices. There is no movement in the halls or between rooms.

Run-Hide-Fight is a national **active-shooter response protocol** designed to minimize the number of victims when someone is shooting a gun in a district school or office building. If Run-Hide-Fight is used, students and employees will run away from the threat, if it is safe, or hide from the threat if it is not safe to run. Students practice both of these in crisis drills. Fight, which is the third option -- and last resort -- is practiced by employees and occasionally discussed with students.

RUN *Direct contact or cannot secure area *Clear escape path	HIDE *Indirect Contact *Able to secure area	FIGHT *Elementary students are not taught to fight. This is for adults only. *LAST Resort *Direct contact and cannot run and risk to life
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Parental Role in a Crisis

Parents are important partners in our efforts to keep students safe during and after a crisis. Here are things that you can do to help keep your student safe during a crisis:

- Remain calm and wait for information from the school or district. We will email and/or call you as soon as we have information to share, including the **reunification location**.
- Stay away from the school or emergency site. Emergency responders and school district employees will need to focus on the needs of students and staff. Phone calls and office arrivals can make this very difficult.
- Avoid calling the school or district office for more information. We will share information and updates with parents as quickly as we are able. Calling us with questions can often make this take longer.
- Trust us to keep your child safe, just like you do on a regular day. This can be really hard if you are emotional or feeling a sense of panic. It is especially important to keep yourself safe by staying away from the emergency scene.
- Remember that our teachers and staff members are trained to respond to emergencies in a way that protects the well-being of every student in their care. Our most important goal, every day, is to keep your student safe. This is especially true during an emergency.

Talking to Your Child about Crisis Procedures

When you talk to your child after an emergency or crisis drill, your questions, comments and tone will make a big difference. Consider the following steps to help your child process:

- Ask what your child's teacher did to keep everyone safe. Maybe it's locking doors, turning off lights, being quiet. Most importantly it focuses the conversation on the actions that adults took to keep them safe.
- Reinforce that the most important thing for a student to do during a crisis or crisis drill is to **DO WHAT THE ADULT SAYS TO DO**.
- Talk about the "helpers" who kept everyone safe. These may be the teachers and staff, emergency responders or others. Talk about how brave these people are in their work to keep others safe.

- Ask how your child felt during the emergency or drill, and acknowledge that it's okay to feel that way (scared, nervous, anxious, etc.). Ask how he or she is feeling now, and acknowledge that it's okay to feel that way, too.

- Watch for any lingering signs of stress over the following days and weeks. Anxiety about school, lack of appetite, difficulty sleeping, or any behavior that is out of the ordinary – these may mean that your child still needs help healing from the trauma of the crisis. We can help.

- Share feedback with the school to improve our preparation and response.

After a school emergency, keep in mind that your child may or may not know a lot about what happened during the response. Follow your child's lead about the information he or she knows or wants, and contact the school if your child would benefit from the support of counselor as they process their feelings and fears.