

ADMINISTRATIVE PROCEDURE 312

Emergency Response

Purpose

System and school administrators in the Renfrew District School Board believe that the safety of students and staff members is a matter of the highest priority.

The director of education has developed this administrative procedure to ensure that each site has a plan in place to react to emergency situations including but not limited to fires, bomb threats, inclement weather, and major violent incidents. While school sites are required in law to carry out these duties, it is an expectation that non-school sites would create and develop similar emergency plans appropriate to their site.

In the event of a community emergency, staff would follow the Joint Emergency Plan established for disaster response. Authority would rest with the local emergency response team responding to the community disaster.

A. EMERGENCY PLANS

1. The School Emergency Response Plan

- 1.1 Each school shall develop an emergency response plan to respond to emergency situations. These plans shall include:
 - 1.1.1 names and responsibilities of members of the school emergency response team;
 - 1.1.2 an emergency contact list;
 - 1.1.3 a communication plan;
 - 1.1.4 a transportation plan;
 - 1.1.5 a plan for the management of tragic events;
 - 1.1.6 a student shelter plan, including plans for shelter in an off-site location;
 - 1.1.7 an evacuation plan;
 - 1.1.8 an emergency evacuation kit, as described below;
 - 1.1.9 specific plans related to the emergencies outlined in this procedure; and
 - 1.1.10 a plan for training, education and practice.
- 1.2 Each school emergency response plan must be updated annually. Current emergency response team membership and emergency contact lists must be available to the staff. The school plan and the emergency evacuation kit shall be located in the main office. A copy of the current school plan is to be submitted to the appropriate superintendent for retention in an off-site, central location.
- 1.3 Schools need to contact local police and fire departments during preparation of the plan to consult and communicate aspects of the plan as it relates to emergency response services.

2. Safety

- 2.1 The safety of students and staff members will take priority during any emergency situation. The school emergency plan must include plans for evacuation of the school, provision of shelter for students and the staff, first aid measures and continued care until students and the staff may return safely to their homes. Evacuation of the school may include relocation to another school, community site or private facility that will provide safe accommodation. Information about this off-site location must be included in the plan.
- 2.2 After safety concerns have been addressed, building systems must be protected and the building made secure.

3. School Emergency Response Team

- 3.1 The school emergency response team, at minimum, shall include the principal, secretary, custodian and specified teachers. Roles for each team member shall be defined in the school emergency plan and may include:
 - 3.1.1 liaison and overall school co-ordination;
 - 3.1.2 communication;
 - 3.1.3 the reception and departure of students, staff and parents (if applicable) at the site;
 - 3.1.4 plant issues such as heat, electricity, hygiene and sanitation;
 - 3.1.5 transportation liaison and co-ordination; and/or
 - 3.1.6 co-ordination of accommodation.
- 3.2 Alternate staff members must be assigned to carry out these roles in the absence of the originally assigned staff member.

4. Emergency Contact List

- 4.1 Each school plan shall include an emergency contact list with the following information:
 - 4.1.1 student list, including home contacts and medication needs;
 - 4.1.2 staff list with home phone numbers;
 - 4.1.3 a contact list for system administrators;
 - 4.1.4 contacts for police, fire, ambulance; and
 - 4.1.5 contacts for bus operators, drivers, etc.

5. Communication Plan

- 5.1 Principals of schools which do not have a back-up power system must have a plan in place for signalling to persons in all parts of the school building in case of an emergency during a power failure. In schools where a power failure will render the alarm system useless, principals are instructed to plan, with all personnel in the school, a method of signalling which is understood as a signal to evacuate the building.

- 5.2 Each school shall have in place an emergency communication plan to allow contact with individuals listed in section 4 above. An emergency telephone chain may be employed. Schools need to consider emergency operation of telephone systems in the event that telephone lines are not operating.
- 5.3 A plan for regular situation updates to the director of education or designate and the plant department must be considered.
- 5.4 Plans need to include a method of communication for students and staff to contact families if retention is for an extended period.

6. Emergency Evacuation Kit

- 6.1 Each school shall have an emergency evacuation kit that contains, at minimum, materials such as:
 - 6.1.1 student lists and home/emergency contact numbers, including a list of students with high risk medical needs;
 - 6.1.2 staff lists;
 - 6.1.3 a telephone and emergency telephone numbers (fire, police, etc.);
 - 6.1.4 a floor plan of the school; and
 - 6.1.5 a copy of the school emergency response plan.

7. Training and Practice

- 7.1 Principals shall ensure that all staff members are aware of the school emergency plan and this procedure. The staff shall arrange for practice drills to test the components of the plan. It is important that occasional teachers have access to information about the emergency plan.

B. EMERGENCY SITUATIONS

8. The Fire Plan, Alarms and Drills

The Plan

- 8.1 Each principal shall have a fire safety plan on record that is specific to the building.
- 8.2 Staff members and students must know their exits and alternate exits. All rooms in the school must have clear information about exits on the appropriate printed cards.
- 8.3 Staff members and students must be familiar with all signals related to fire safety. In some fire drills hand bells may be used to prepare for possible power failures.
- 8.4 It is important that occasional teachers and volunteers are aware of the fire safety procedures.

Fire Alarms

8.5 The school principal or designate shall follow this sequence of steps in case of fire:

- 8.5.1 sound the alarm;
- 8.5.2 call the fire department;
- 8.5.3 supervise the safe evacuation of all occupants; and
- 8.5.4 advise the school superintendent and plant department as soon as possible, using a cell phone if available.

8.6 All alarms are to be treated as real. False alarms must be investigated and verified as false by the principal before a return to the school building is announced, or the alarm is discontinued.

Fire Drills

8.7 Total evacuation fire drills shall be held a minimum of three times in each of the fall and spring terms in accordance with the Ontario Fire Code.

8.8 When a fire drill is held in a school building, every person in the building shall take part in the fire drill.

8.9 Staff members must be appointed to check all washrooms, change rooms, and other non-classroom spaces. Staff members shall be assigned to assist students who are incapable of walking out with the class. Administrative Procedure 313 Emergency Evacuation Procedures for Persons with Physical Disabilities provides direction for this assistance.

8.10 Teachers shall ensure that the classroom windows and door are closed.

8.11 Teachers are responsible for the direction and deportment of the class. The teacher with the class at the time of the alarm shall carry the class list on leaving the room. As soon as possible after evacuation, each teacher shall check the attendance roll for the class and take a report to the principal or designate of unaccounted students.

8.12 Teachers of industrial arts, family studies, technology classes, etc. as well as custodians, must ensure that all motors and other equipment in their immediate area are shut off immediately after the alarm is sounded.

8.13 The principal may make the situation simulate a genuine emergency by the blocking of a corridor, a staircase or an exit. The principal and staff shall correct any confusion or faults at the time and make the necessary changes to the plan.

8.14 In order to avoid unnecessary response by the fire department, the principal or designate is required to notify the appropriate fire department at least fifteen (15) minutes prior to a drill. At the conclusion of the drill, the principal will ensure that all fire systems and monitors are enabled.

- 8.15 Records of the drill will include date, evacuation times (that is, total evacuation = 2 minutes), problems and notations, and will be available in the school.

9. Bomb Threats

- 9.1 When a bomb threat is first telephoned to a school, the secretary who receives the call will observe the following procedure:
- 9.1.1 Listen intently and note the voice characteristics and content of the threatening message.
 - 9.1.2 Firmly inform the caller that the school takes no action on prank calls.
 - 9.1.3 Suggest calmly that if the threat is intended to be taken seriously, the person should telephone the school in five minutes and ask to speak to the principal.
 - 9.1.4 Display an uncooperative and non-receptive attitude.
 - 9.1.5 Inform the principal immediately of all data pertaining to the call.
- 9.2 In the event of receipt of a second call, the secretary follows these steps:
- 9.2.1 Remain calm.
 - 9.2.2 Do not ignore this threat; treat it as genuine until established otherwise.
 - 9.2.3 Notify the principal or designate using a prearranged signal, to monitor the conversation, if possible.
 - 9.2.4 Keep the caller on the line as long as possible in order to obtain as much information as possible.
 - 9.2.5 Record vital information about the exact message, tone of voice, terminology, apparent age of the caller, background noise, etc.
 - 9.2.6 If the principal or designate is not aware of the call, notify him or her immediately afterwards.
- 9.3 The principal will notify local police immediately, share his or her professional judgement of the threat, and consult with them as to next steps.
- 9.4 The school superintendent or director of education is also to be notified immediately. The superintendent or director will notify the plant department.
- 9.5 If the decision is to conduct a visual inspection, the principal or designate shall, by use of a pre-arranged coded message via the public address system or other appropriate means, notify staff of the threat. Staff members are expected to visually inspect a pre-assigned area in a calm manner, without revealing the threat to students. Visual checks to locate alien objects in teaching areas are best conducted by teachers. Checks in boiler rooms, public areas and exits are best conducted by the custodial staff. Each staff member is best qualified to carry out this visual inspection in his or her own work area by reason of familiarity with what should be in it.
- 9.6 This inspection is designed as an overview of general areas and does not include cupboards, drawers, closets, etc. Special attention should be given to hallways, lobbies, washrooms, stairways, and staff rooms. Staff members are to look for an unusual object and are not expected to search through items which may endanger their own safety.

- 9.7 Under no circumstances should the staff approach, touch or move an item that seems out of place or is suspected of being an explosive device.
- 9.8 The principal or designate, in consultation with the police, will make the decision whether or not to evacuate the school at this time. Evacuation is not always the best method of ensuring student and staff safety. For example, a bomb may be placed in hallways, stairways or exits.
- 9.9 If the decision is made to evacuate the building, exits to be used shall be checked before evacuation. The principal will request a search of the building by the police and staff members who volunteer to assist. The principal will then supervise the evacuation process, making sure that students and all other personnel move to a safe distance from the building. Teachers will take student lists and check attendance when the class is outside. They will report to the principal when students are unaccounted for. The principal or office person responsible will take the emergency evacuation kit outside.
- 9.10 If a cell phone is available, the principal will update the director's office. Any release of information to the media with respect to the bomb threat will be handled by the director's office.
- 9.11 Police will respond without use of sirens and work with volunteer staff members to conduct a search.
- 9.12 If actual or suspected explosives are found, school officials will take direction from the police department until the emergency situation has been declared over by the officials in charge.
- 9.13 If no actual or suspected explosive device is found, the principal, in consultation with the police and director of education or designate shall either instruct students to return to class or keep students secure until transportation arrives and then dismiss them.
- 9.14 The principal shall record all pertinent details of the situation on receipt of a bomb threat, including the date, hour, and special school programs in progress. The principal shall report the essential features of each bomb threat to the director.
- 9.15 The Board shall seek full prosecution of any person who is involved in making a bomb threat.

10. Inclement Weather

- 10.1 The principal will conduct tornado drills to ensure that students and staff members are aware of the following directions:
 - 10.1.1 Stay away from windows, doors and outside walls.
 - 10.1.2 Go to the basement or lowest floor, an inside hallway or small interior windowless room, or get under something sturdy.
 - 10.1.3 Go to the centre of the building or the side away from the storm.
 - 10.1.4 Avoid areas with large expanses of unsupported roof such as the gymnasium, or areas with skylights.
- 10.2 Principals are expected to conduct a tornado drill once each school year in April, to review procedures prior to the start of the season in which most tornadoes occur in Ontario.
- 10.3 Each school office must be equipped with a radio that can be battery operated and with batteries that are charged.
- 10.4 The principal or designate should be aware of the possibility of a tornado during the season in which most tornadoes occur. Even though tornadoes are difficult to predict, it is important to be aware of potential danger and to know which radio stations in the area carry up-to-the-minute weather information.
- 10.5 The principal should be aware of the weather and understand the difference between a “weather watch” (possible storms in the next six hours) and a “weather warning” (expected event within the next two hours).
- 10.6 In the event of a severe weather warning, students and staff must be moved from portables to the main school building.
- 10.7 Procedures related to school bus delays or cancellations or school closing are the same as those for severe winter conditions. These procedures are determined by the joint transportation policy between the coterminous boards.

11. Major Violent Incidents

- 11.1 Detailed and comprehensive directions for dealing with major violent incidents when a school cannot be safely evacuated are found in Administrative Procedure 314 Violent Incident Emergency Response Plan (Code Red - Lockdown).

Legal References:

Education Act s. 265

Ontario Regulation 298 - Operation of Schools, s. 6; s. 11

Regulation 454 of the Revised Regulations of Ontario, 1990 (Fire Code)

Renfrew County District School Board References:

AP 311 - Violence Prevention and Reporting of Incidents

AP 313 - Emergency Evacuation Procedures for Persons with Physical Disabilities

AP 314 - Violent Incident Emergency Response Plan (Code Red - Lockdown)