



Is My School Prepared?

8 Questions for Principals to Assess School Safety

1

Do we have a written emergency plan? And if so, when was it updated and have my school staff been trained on the implementation of the plan?

More and more states are requiring schools to develop, annually review and practice implementation of emergency plans.

2

Do we have a team in our school that meets regularly to discuss school safety issues and review the plan?

Having a team of educators helps you in not only the development and implementation of a plan, but also in the communication of how the plan is implemented. Taking a team approach fosters a supporting safety culture within your school.

3

Are we meeting or exceeding state/district mandated drills to test emergency procedures?

As they say, practice makes perfect. Emergency drills provide the opportunity to test and improve procedures, but also lessens anxiety in the event of an actual emergency.

4

Does my school district have school safety and security policies I need to be aware of?

It is very likely your school district has adopted guidance based on case law, legislation, and best practices. It is your responsibility to review those documents, implement requirements, and share pertinent information with students, staff, and parents.

5

Have we developed and practiced a reunification plan? Has that plan been communicated to parents so they understand their role and responsibility in the reunification process?

It may very well be that you have a reunification plan in place, but has it been communicated to ensure seamless implementation?

6

Do we have a process in place to make sure substitute staff understand their role and responsibility related to the plan?

This is a very important and often overlooked component of emergency preparedness. Do they have keys to lock doors? Do they understand evacuation and shelter in place procedures? It is possible they may be subbing for someone who has an important responsibility related to the implementation of the emergency plan.

7

What communication structures do we have in place to ensure we communicate effectively with parents in the event of a crisis?

Internal and external communications are essential during a crisis. The "what if?" scenarios are endless, but planning carefully and having a variety of communication tools at your disposal are going to be invaluable. Social media, text messaging, auto dialers, and mobile applications need to be considered as possible resources. There are many ways to communicate, parents just need to know where to find accurate and timely information.

8

How can I involve parents and the community in creating a culture of safety in my school?

Keeping our children safe is everyone's business. It is a responsibility that should not fall solely on the principal. Engaging parents and the community in this important work gives you more hands, feet, heads, eyes, ears, and hearts to ensure you are providing the children in your care safe and secure learning environment they deserve.

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