

Emergencies

The West Valley School District is committed to having current safe school plans and procedures in place to maximize safety for all students and staff. A commitment to safety enables teaching and learning. The District and its schools shall develop comprehensive all-hazard emergency operations plans that address prevention, mitigation, preparedness, response, and recovery strategies.

District and school plans shall:

- Include required school safety policies and procedures;
- Include provisions for the special needs of staff and students;
- Include a family-student reunification plan, including procedures for communicating the reunification plan to staff, students, families, and emergency responders;
- Require the building principal to be certified on the incident command system;
- Consider community use of school facilities in emergencies;
- Be annually reviewed with emergency response agencies;
- Conduct inventory of all hazardous materials;
- Identify all staff members who are trained on the national incident management system and the incident command system;
- Collaborate with community agencies to update emergency first aid procedures, including training, use, funding, and placement of public access automated external defibrillators (AEDs);
- Identify school transportation procedures for evacuation;
- Provide information to all staff on the use of emergency supplies and alert procedures;
- Annually record and report information and activities;
- Set guidelines for requesting city or county law enforcement agencies, local fire departments, emergency service providers, and county emergency management agencies to meet with the district and participate in safety-related drills; and
- Include how substitute teachers and other temporary employees receive necessary information about safe school plans, including school safety policies and procedures and the basic functional drill responses described below.

Drills

Drills are an essential component of safety planning. Drills teach students and staff basic functional responses to potential threats and hazards. The five functional responses are adaptable and can be applied to a variety of situations. Additionally, some threats or hazards may require the use of more than one basic functional response. Therefore, each school in the district will conduct at least one safety-related drill per month, including summer months when school is in session with students.

Drill planning and implementation shall consider and accommodate the needs of all students.

Basic Functional Drills

The basic functional responses include shelter-in-place, lockdowns, secure and teach, evacuations, and earthquakes (drop-cover-hold -on):

- **Shelter-in-Place**

Shelter in place is designed to limit the exposure of students and staff to hazardous materials, such as chemical, biological, or radiological contaminants that are released into the environment by isolating the inside environment from the outside. Staff and students will receive instruction so that they will be able to remain inside and take the steps necessary to eliminate or minimize the health and safety hazard.

- **Lockdowns**

Lockdowns are meant to isolate students and staff from threats of violence, such as suspicious trespassers, armed intruders, and other threats that may occur in a school or in the vicinity of a school. Staff and students will receive instruction so that in the event of the breach of security of a school building or campus, staff, students, and visitors will be able to take positions in secure enclosures.

- **Secure and Teach**

Secure and Teach is used to secure the exterior of the school and clear the hallways, allowing teachers to continue to teach and students to continue to learn in the classroom. Secure and Teach is used to secure the school in response to a potential threat of harm, or, to secure the school during a medical emergency for an individual, allowing first responders uninterrupted access to the individual and providing the individual as much privacy as possible during the medical emergency.

- **Evacuations**

When an emergency within a school or its surrounding area necessitates evacuation and/or total or partial closure of the schools within the district, staff will be responsible for aiding in the safe evacuation of the students within the endangered school or its surrounding area.

Staff and students will receive instruction so that in the event the school or district needs to be evacuated due to threats, such as fires, oil train spills, earthquakes, etc., they will be able to leave the building in the shortest time possible and take the safest route possible to a designated reunification site.

Schools in mapped tsunami or mapped lahar hazard zones, will plan and participate in one pedestrian evacuation drill annually.

- **Earthquakes: Drop-Cover-Hold on**

The board recognizes the importance of protecting staff, students, and facilities in the event of an earthquake. Facilities will be designed and maintained in a manner that recognizes the potential danger from such an occurrence. Likewise, staff must be prepared to take necessary action to protect students and staff from harm.

“Drop - cover - hold on” is the basic functional earthquake response. The superintendent will establish guidelines and the action for building principals to take should an earthquake occur while school is in session.

Additional Drills

In addition to the above five functional response drills, the district shall, at a minimum, also develop response plans for the following:

Pandemic/Epidemic

The board recognizes that a pandemic outbreak is a serious threat that could affect students, staff, and the community. The superintendent or a designee will serve as a liaison between the school district and local health officials. The district liaison, in consultation with local health officials, will ensure that a pandemic/epidemic plan exists in the district and establish procedures to provide for staff and student safety during such an emergency.

When an emergency within a school or its surrounding area necessitates evacuation and/or total or partial closure of the schools within the district, staff will be responsible for aiding in the safe evacuation of the students within the endangered school or its surrounding area.

Bomb Threats

The superintendent will establish procedures for action in the event that any threat is received toward the school by telephone, letter, orally, or by other means.

Emergency School Closure or Evacuation (Modified Shelter-in-Place)

When weather conditions or other circumstances make it unsafe to operate schools the superintendent is directed to determine whether schools should be started late, closed for the day, or transportation will be provided only on emergency routes. Those decisions will be communicated through community media resources pursuant to a plan developed by the superintendent or designee.

The superintendent will establish procedures for the emergency closure of a building or department.

All safety plans and drills shall include protocols for both internal and external communications, as well as procedures for drill documentation. Evacuation plans shall also include reunification plans. Schools shall document the dates and time of such drills. Each school will maintain the time and type of drill in the school office.

Cross References: Policy 4310 District Relationships with Law Enforcement, DSHS, and the Health Department

Legal References: RCW 19.27.110 International Fire Code
28A.320.125 Safe school plans - Requirements - Duties of school districts, schools, and education service districts - Reports - Drills - Rules

Management Resources: Policy & Legal News, August 2024
Policy news, February 2021
Policy news, July 2017
Policy News, July 2017
Policy News, June 2013
Policy News, August 2008
June 2008 OSPI
Policy News, October 2006
Policy News, February 1999
Emergencies Policy Updated
School Safety Plans
School Safety Planning Manual
Pandemic Flu Planning for School Districts
Fire drills required monthly

Adoption Date: 02.99

Revised Dates: 10.06; 01.09; 06.13; 12.17; 06.21; 01.25