



# Emergency Guide for Families and Staff

*At the Washoe County School District (WCSD), safe and secure learning environments are our first priority. Students must first feel safe in order to grow academically, socially, and emotionally.*



An emergency is any unexpected incident that could impact the health or safety of Washoe County School District students or staff. Emergencies can affect one student, one school, or the entire district. They can include, but are not limited to, natural disasters, a national/state/local emergency, and/or threats to a person or persons. When an emergency occurs, the school and the district will implement the appropriate protocols and procedures under the District Emergency Operations Plan and School-Based Emergency Operations Plan.

This guide, created by the WCSD Safe and Healthy Schools Commission, is intended to provide general information and is not all-inclusive of what can or will occur during specific events.



## EMERGENCY PREPAREDNESS

The emergency operations plans for the district and individual schools are documents that detail what should occur during various emergency scenarios. All plans are reviewed annually by the district's Development Committee and each school's site administrator and school committee. While the plans are based on national best practices, they are specific to the district and individual schools. The plans are considered confidential by law and shared with other regional and state emergency services agencies as directed by Nevada law.

## EMERGENCY DRILLS

During the school year, each school is required to conduct emergency drills in the event of evacuation, earthquake, or lockdown. At least half of all drills must be related to lockdowns.

**Evacuation** – more commonly known as “Fire Drills,” students learn how and when to exit a building safely in the event of an evacuation. Students are led to evacuation points so they are aware of where to go if they are not in their classroom when an evacuation is called.

**Earthquake** – school sites teach students what to do in the event of an earthquake. If an earthquake occurs, evacuation of the building(s) may be necessary.

**Secured Campus** – all building doors are locked and students and staff remain in the building. Instruction in the classrooms continues as normal and the school remains in a heightened state of alertness and security until the hazard has subsided. WCSD School Police will be on site for the duration of the incident.

**Lockdown** – building doors are locked, instruction ceases, and all students and staff move into areas of safety. Students and staff will remain in lockdown until released by police.



## SAFE AND HEALTHY SCHOOLS COMMISSION

The Board of Trustees created the Safe and Healthy Schools Commission to provide a greater voice from the community in decisions related to the safety and security of students and staff. The Commission continues to look for ways to improve safety and security through monthly public meetings and an annual safety forum where members of the community are invited to learn about safety improvements and provide feedback to improve district systems.

***For updates on the commission, including meeting dates, visit:***

***<https://www.washoeschools.net/Page/6120>***





## IF AN EMERGENCY OCCURS:

The district will send a ConnectEd call and text to all families impacted by an emergency within 15 minutes if a Lockdown is called and by the end of the day if a Secured Campus is called.

## IF THE EMERGENCY OCCURS DURING SCHOOL HOURS:

***FAMILIES SHOULD NOT GO TO THE SCHOOL SITE. Please do not attempt to enter the school so that emergency responders can complete their mission.***

Remember that during an actual emergency, you will not be able to get to the school as emergency response agencies from the entire area will be present and stopping anyone from going near the school. No one, aside from emergency personnel and district staff trained in emergency response, will be allowed to enter or depart the campus during an active incident.

If the district determines the remainder of the school day will be cancelled, you will be contacted with information on when and where you may pick up your student(s).

## STUDENT RELEASE AND PARENT REUNIFICATION

In the event the reunification process for families is required, please remember to bring legal identification (driver's license or passport) to the designated reunification site. For the safety of your child, students will not be released to anyone who is not listed on enrollment records as a parent or guardian.

### REUNIFICATION PROCESS:

Parents and guardians shall report to the "Check-in Area" where they will complete identification paperwork and provide the names of the students to be picked up.

Once cleared, parents or guardians will be taken to a "Reunification Area" where their student(s) will be brought to them.

We understand you will be extremely anxious to be reunited with your child and have your child with you; however, we ask for patience as the process may take time. Please know that while your children are separated from you, they are with school and

district personnel trained in crisis and trauma interventions who are talking with the students to support their emotional well-being. If mental health care professionals note anything of concern during this time, they will speak with you privately in the reunification area. School Police officers will always be on campus during emergencies.

When you reunite with your child, be a model of calm, control, and comfort. Let your children know you will protect them. Listen to your child and watch for temporary changes in behavior such as being clingy or angry, having trouble sleeping, acting out, or acting scared. Seek assistance for negative behavior changes that persist after two weeks.



## HOW CAN FAMILIES HELP?

Report all threats to police. If after school hours, report threats to 911 or SafeVoice. **DO NOT REPOST POSSIBLE THREATS ON ANY SOCIAL MEDIA.** School Police must investigate all threats to schools and often have already resolved the situation; however, every time a threat is reposted, School Police is required to investigate as if it is a new threat.

Develop a family emergency plan. Visit [Ready.gov](https://www.getready.gov) for assistance. Students need to know that the schools will do everything possible to protect them. Students should also have an idea of what may occur in the event they are evacuated from school, including reunification procedures, etc.

Be patient. The district takes safety and security extremely seriously and will not provide any information to parents or the community unless it is factual. The district has a responsibility to conduct a thorough investigation. The district also has a responsibility to protect student privacy and will not release or confirm the names of students or any disciplinary action taken against a student.



Talk with your children not only about possible emergency situations and what may occur, but also about the emergency drills they will practice in the schools. We know the drills may be upsetting to some students and we will do everything we can to ensure the students have a clear understanding

of the importance of practicing these drills. If you see or hear anything concerning after a drill or an actual emergency, please inform the teacher or counselor so we can provide the student with the support needed to understand why the drill was conducted. If you are unsure of how to speak with your children, school counselors can provide various age-appropriate resources.

**For active emergency updates please visit:**  
**[www.washoeschools.net/alert](http://www.washoeschools.net/alert)**

**To notify police of any threats against our schools or students:**

**Emergency: 911**

**Non-Emergency:**  
**775-348-0285**

**Secret Witness:**  
**775-322-4900**  
**[secretwitness.com](http://secretwitness.com)**

**Safe Voice:**  
**1-833-216-SAFE (7233)**  
**[safevoicenv.org](http://safevoicenv.org)**





# Emergency Management Terms

*The definitions for Lockdown and Secured Campus are general definitions that apply to most incidents. However, since not all situations are the same, school administration may utilize the response most appropriate based on information available to them at the time of the incident.*

## **Lockdown**

A Lockdown occurs when there is a suspected or confirmed direct threat to a school. The school will implement maximum security measures while emergency response agencies are called to manage the situation. During a Lockdown, staff and students are securely locked inside offices and classrooms with the doors shut and windows covered. Students and staff are not allowed to leave the building until the situation has been safely resolved or they have been evacuated by emergency personnel.

## **Secured Campus**

A Secured Campus is a precautionary process where a school enters into a heightened state of security and alertness to ensure that staff and students will be prepared to react quickly in case of an emergency. During a Secured Campus, staff and students continue with the business of teaching, learning, and conduct school operations in the secured campus. A Secured Campus is commonly called when law enforcement advise a school of police activity in the area or when dangerous wildlife wander onto the campus (bears are a common occurrence at Incline schools).

## **ADDITIONAL DEFINITIONS**

### ***District and Site-Based Emergency Management Plan***

The emergency management plans for the District and individual schools are documents that detail what should occur during various emergency scenarios. All plans are reviewed annually by the District Incident Response Team (DIRT) and the Site Incident Response Team (SIRT). While the plans are based on national best practices, they are specific to the District and individual schools. The plans are considered confidential by law and are shared with other regional and state emergency services agencies as directed by Nevada law.

### ***Drill***

A drill is an event where school personnel and students practice the action they must take in an emergency. During the school year, each school is required to conduct emergency drills to prepare for an evacuation, earthquake, or lockdown, with at least half of all drills related to lockdowns.

### ***Emergency Operations Center (EOC)***

EOC is a central command and control location responsible for emergency preparedness, emergency management, or disaster management functions during an emergency.



## ***Emergency Response Agencies***

An emergency response agency is a government agency that is trained on how to respond to an emergency situation. Examples include WCSD school police, the Washoe County Sheriff's office, or the fire department.

## ***Family Educational Rights and Privacy Act (FERPA)***

FERPA protects the privacy of student education records. The law applies to all schools that receive funds under an applicable program of the U.S. Department of Education. FERPA gives parents certain rights with respect to their children's education records. These rights transfer to students when they reach the age of 18 or attend a school beyond the high school level.

## ***Federal Emergency Management Agency (FEMA)***

FEMA is an agency of the United States Department of Homeland Security created to coordinate the response to a disaster that has occurred in the United States and that overwhelms the resources of local and state authorities.

## ***Health Insurance Portability and Accountability Act (HIPAA)***

HIPPA provides federal protection for individually identifiable health information held by the school district and their business associates and gives patients an array of rights with respect to that information. At the same time, the Privacy Rule is balanced so that it permits the disclosure of health information needed for patient care and other important purposes.

## ***Incident Command System (ICS)***

ICS is a standardized approach to the command, control, and coordination of emergency response providing a common hierarchy within which responders from multiple agencies can be effective.

## ***Incident Commander***

An Incident Commander is the person responsible for all aspects of an emergency response; including quickly developing incident objectives, managing all incident operations, application of resources as well as responsibility for all persons involved.

## ***Medical Emergency***

A Medical Emergency means that school staff is following established procedures for responding to a medical emergency or potential medical emergency.

## ***Natural Disaster***

An emergency derived from an act of nature. Examples include wildfires and earthquakes.

## ***Reunification/Controlled Release***

Following an incident at a school where the building has been under a lockdown, schools may have to securely reunify parents and guardians with their students. If a reunification process for families is required, student(s) will be released to only those persons legally allowed to pick them up, i.e. parent/legal guardian or a listed emergency contact. Individuals picking up student(s) WILL BE REQUIRED to show identification. Students WILL NOT be released to anyone without identification or not listed within Infinite Campus.

## ***Reunification Process***

Parents or guardians shall report to the “Parent Check-in Area” where they will complete identification paperwork for themselves and the names of the students they are picking up.

Staff will check the information within Infinite Campus to ensure the person is permitted to remove the student from the school. For security purposes, only persons listed in Infinite Campus will be allowed to pick up students.

Once cleared, the parent or guardian will be taken to a “Reunification Area” where their student(s) will be brought to them.

Although parents and guardians may be extremely anxious to be reunited with their children, the process may be slow. Please know that while children are separated from their parents and guardians, they are with school and District personnel, including counselors, social workers, and psychiatrists trained in crisis and trauma. Care will be taken to make sure children are doing okay emotionally. If a mental health care professional notes anything concerning during this time, they will speak with parents or guardians privately in the reunification area. School Police officers will always be on campus during all emergencies.

## ***Safe and Healthy Schools Commission***

The Board of Trustees created the Safe and Healthy Schools Commission to provide a greater voice from the community in decisions related to the safety and security of students and staff. The Commission looks for ways to improve safety and security through public meetings and an annual safety forum where the community is invited to learn about safety improvements and provide feedback to improve District systems.

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