



# SCHOOL EMERGENCY MANAGEMENT PLAN

## *Template*

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*(School Name)*

*(Address)*

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*This template can be used as a foundation for the individualized school emergency plan. The editable electronic version of this template is available at **www.EDnet.ns.ca** in the "Schools — Emergency Management Planning" section of the Document Depot.*

School Emergency Management Plan—Template

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Prepared by the Department of Education

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# Emergency Contact Information

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A list of individuals and organizations that assist in an emergency should be prepared on a separate sheet of paper and placed in the emergency management kit so that the person assigned can immediately begin to make phone calls to those on the list. Your local emergency management agency can recommend other agencies that can be called during an emergency. Please note that any volunteers enlisted to assist during an emergency should be pre-screened and that the volunteers on the school's list must receive training before becoming responsible members of the emergency management team. Some phone numbers to have on hand include:

- school board emergency management team
- Canadian Red Cross
- clergy, including law enforcement chaplaincy
- parent volunteers trained to help fellow parents receive information, answer questions, and maintain calm at the relocation site



# Definition of Emergency

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**Emergency:** an emergency is defined by the Nova Scotia Emergency Management Organization as “an abnormal situation which, in order to limit danger to people or damage to property or environment, requires prompt action beyond normal procedures.”

# Designation of the Person-in-Charge

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The principal or his or her designate will be known as the person-in-charge and will have full authority within the provisions of this plan in addition to the other responsibilities of his or her office. A predetermined chain of command will be established should the principal not be available to delegate his or her authority.



# Evacuation

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## ASSESSMENT

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**Fire:** If a fire alarm sounds, all students, staff, and visitors will follow the recognized procedures.

**Other Emergency:** In the event of another type of emergency, the person-in-charge will assess the situation and determine if an evacuation is warranted.

## IMPLEMENTATION

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**Fire:** If a fire is suspected within the building, all staff, students, and visitors persons have the responsibility to sound the fire alarm.

**Other Emergency:** In the event of another type of emergency, the person-in-charge will give clear directions to the students, staff, and visitors on the safest means of leaving the building.

**Announcement:** Once an emergency is identified, the person-in-charge will announce the evacuation by the safest and most expedient means. If a specific area of the building is determined to be unsafe for any reason, the person-in-charge may choose to give directions for alternative exits. If the person-in-charge chooses to use the PA system to announce the evacuation, he or she should use plain, clear language (no codes), with specific directions. For example,

- *“Attention. Everyone must leave the building immediately and assemble at your fire drill relocation points.”*
- In the event of a bomb threat, the person-in-charge may include the direction: *“Take your backpack if you have it with you.”*

**Alternate Exits:** (Include alternate exists to be used if usual exits are unsafe.)

**Evacuation Procedures Outside of the Classroom:** (Include evacuation procedures during lunch, assembly, etc.)

## **DECISION TO RE-ENTER/RELOCATE**

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Once the evacuation is complete and all occupants are accounted for, the person-in-charge will consult as appropriate with responding emergency services and/or the school administration supervisor on whether to re-enter the building, relocate to another site, or dismiss.

The decision to re-enter the building will follow the re-entry procedures used during fire alarm drills.

If the person-in-charge decides to relocate, he or she will follow the procedures as listed under the Relocation section of the school emergency management plan.

## **DUTIES**

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### **Person-in-Charge**

- decides on the safest means of evacuating the building
- announces an evacuation and gives simple, clear directions
- contacts 911 to request assistance as appropriate
- contacts the emergency answering service or the appropriate school board staff person as soon as practical
- directs staff to assist in the most appropriate manner
- puts on the provided safety vest to ensure other-agency recognition
- leaves the building and reports to the predetermined assembly point
- ensures that all students and staff have left the building and are accounted for
- liaises with the responding emergency services
- speaks with the media as required
- determines if students and staff should relocate to another site  
OR
- announces that students and staff should re-enter the building

### **Administrative Assistant**

- follows the directions of the person-in-charge
- brings the following items:
  - emergency management kit
  - list of that day’s class trips
  - list of that day’s substitute teachers
  - visitor sign-in sheet
  - staff sign-in/sign-out sheet (if applicable)
  - student medications
- leaves the building and reports to the predetermined assembly point

### **Teachers/Classroom Assistants**

- follow the directions of the person-in-charge
- bring the classroom emergency management kit
- bring the class attendance sheets
- supervise students during evacuation
- assist special needs students as required
- open blinds and close windows
- close doors after the last person has left
- leave the building and report to the predetermined assembly point
- take class attendance and report the information to the person-in-charge

### **Maintenance Staff**

- follow the directions of the person-in-charge
- check washrooms and other areas to ensure that everyone has left
- check to ensure that classroom doors are closed
- leave the building and report to the predetermined assembly point
- report to the person-in-charge for further directions

### **Students**

- follow the directions of their class teacher
- remain calm and quiet
- leave the building and report to the predetermined assembly point

### **Visitors/Tenants**

- follow directions of the person-in-charge
- leave the building and report to the predetermined assembly point



# Relocation

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## ASSESSMENT

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If the school is evacuated, the person-in-charge will assess the situation and determine if it is necessary to move the students and staff to a relocation site.

The person-in-charge may decide to relocate at the time of the evacuation or after information has been received that indicates that the evacuation may be prolonged.

## IMPLEMENTATION

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On making the decision to move the students and staff to a relocation site, the person-in-charge will issue the directions to do so either by using a megaphone or by sending messengers (if it is safe) to each class teacher.

## DUTIES

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### Person-in-Charge

- announces the relocation and gives precise directions
- contacts 911 to request assistance as appropriate
- contacts the emergency answering service or the appropriate school board staff person as soon as practical
- directs staff to assist in the most appropriate manner
- puts on the provided safety vest to ensure other-agency recognition
- contacts the school administration supervisor to request transportation if required
- liaises with the responding emergency services
- speaks with the media as required
- monitors the movement of students and staff
- decides when and how students will be dismissed

### **Administrative Assistant**

- follows the directions of the person-in-charge
- advises the receiving facility of the impending arrival
- brings the following items:
  - emergency management kit
  - list of that day’s class trips
  - list of that day’s substitute teachers
  - visitor sign-in sheet
  - staff sign-in/sign-out sheet (if applicable)
  - student medications

### **Teachers/Classroom Assistants**

- follow the directions of the person-in-charge
- bring the classroom emergency management kit
- bring the class attendance sheet
- supervise students during the relocation
- assist special needs students as required
- on arrival, confirm that all students are present

### **Maintenance Staff**

- follow the directions of the person-in-charge
- report to the person-in-charge on arriving at the relocation site

### **Students**

- follow the directions of their class teacher
- remain calm and quiet

### **Visitors/Tenants**

- follow the directions of the person-in-charge
- report to the person-in-charge on arriving at the relocation site

# Isolation

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## ASSESSMENT

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The person-in-charge will determine what, if any, threat exists to the students and staff and the seriousness of that threat.

## IMPLEMENTATION

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The person-in-charge will communicate this to the students and staff by using either the PA system, isolation alarm, classroom telephones, and/or messengers.

The means of announcing the isolation will be determined by the urgency of the situation and the safety of the students and staff.

The person-in-charge will use clear, plain language when directing the students and staff.

**Suggested script to “secure the building”:**

*“Attention all staff, secure the building now. Ignore the fire alarm and class change until further notice. All staff not supervising students report to the office (or other location).”*

If the threat is a violent or potentially violent intruder, the person-in-charge may decide to give specific directions to further ensure student and staff safety.

**Suggested script in addition to “secure the building”:**

*“Teachers’ position your students for safety.”*

If the threat or hazard is outside the building and the person-in-charge feels it is safe to do, he or she may choose to allow student movement within the building. This should be announced only after the building has been fully secured and all entrances and exits are being monitored by staff.

## DUTIES

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### Person-in-Charge

- decide on the level of isolation required and if it is necessary to have the teachers position the students for safety
- announce an isolation and give simple, clear directions
- contact 911 to request assistance as appropriate
- contact the emergency answering service or appropriate school board staff person as soon as practical
- direct staff to assist in the most appropriate manner
- put on the safety vest, if appropriate, to ensure recognition
- direct a staff person to meet the emergency responders at the identified entrance if safe to do so
- liaise with the responding emergency services
- speak with the media as required
- take all actions necessary to ensure the safety of students, staff, and visitors
- determine if students and staff should evacuate OR
- give the all-clear signal indicating that the isolation has ended

### Administrative Assistant

- follow the directions of the person-in-charge
- lock the doors to the administrative offices
- assist with communications as directed

### Teachers

- follow the directions of the person-in-charge
- confirm the presence of students against the attendance list
- if directed to, “secure the building”
  - if it is safe to do so, check the area immediately outside the classroom for students and bring them inside
  - lock the classroom doors
  - turn off all lights
  - ensure that all students remain in the classroom
  - ensure that all students remain calm and quiet

- do not open the door unless directed to by the person-in-charge or the correct means of identification is used by the person requesting entry
- decide if it is necessary to position students in the classroom for safety
- stand by for further directions
- if not supervising students, report to the administrative office for directions from the person-in-charge unless directed otherwise

### **Maintenance Staff**

- follow the directions of the person-in-charge
- lock doors to all assigned rooms
- if directed to “secure the building,” begin locking all exterior doors
- in the event of an external environmental threat such as a chemical spill, turn off the ventilation system and begin sealing all entrances with appropriate material

### **Students**

- follow the directions of the teacher
- if there is no teacher in the classroom, close the door, take cover, and wait for the all-clear signal
- if unsupervised, quickly get to a supervised classroom if possible, otherwise take shelter out of sight and wait for the all-clear signal
- if in the washroom or change room, take shelter out of sight and wait for the all-clear signal
- remain calm and quiet

### **Visitors/Tenants**

- follow the directions of the person-in-charge
- remain in the room and assist staff as requested



# Expansion

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## ASSESSMENT

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Confirm the identity of the displaced group and the number of people in the group.

Determine if any special needs individuals are present and if the school is able to accommodate them.

Consult with appropriate school board staff to determine if the school should be dismissed.

## IMPLEMENTATION

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On receiving information that a displaced group is on its way to the school, the person-in-charge will take all required steps to accommodate the group.

## DUTIES

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### Person-in-Charge

- inform the students and staff of the expansion
- make preparations as appropriate
- contact 911 to request assistance as appropriate
- contact the emergency answering service or appropriate school board staff person as soon as practical
- direct staff to assist as required
- liaise with emergency agencies and person-in-charge of the displaced group
- speak with the media as required

### Administrative Assistant

- follow the directions of the person-in-charge

### Teachers

- follow the directions of the person-in-charge

**Maintenance Staff**

- follow the directions of the person-in-charge

**Students**

- follow the directions of the person-in-charge

**Visitors/Tenants**

- follow the directions of the person-in-charge

# Hazard-Specific Planning

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Following are some of the common hazards that should be considered when developing your school emergency management plan.

## **BOMB THREATS AND SUSPICIOUS PACKAGES: SPECIFIC PROCEDURES**

Insert board policy and procedures dealing with bomb threats. Considerations when developing this section of the school plan include the following:

- Bomb Threat Checklist (on the next page)
- Notification Procedures
- Evacuation or Isolation
- Search Procedures
- Contingency Plans
- Evidence Preservation

Refer to page 23 of the *Planning Guide* for more information.

## BOMB THREAT CHECKLIST

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1. When is the bomb going to explode? \_\_\_\_\_
2. Where is the bomb right now? \_\_\_\_\_
3. What does the bomb look like? \_\_\_\_\_
4. What kind of bomb is it? \_\_\_\_\_
5. What will cause the bomb to explode? \_\_\_\_\_
6. Did you place the bomb? \_\_\_\_\_
7. Why? \_\_\_\_\_
8. What is your address? \_\_\_\_\_
9. What is your name? \_\_\_\_\_

### Exact Wording of Bomb Threat:

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Sex of caller: \_\_\_\_\_ Race: \_\_\_\_\_

Age: \_\_\_\_\_ Length of call: \_\_\_\_\_

Telephone number at which call was received: \_\_\_\_\_

Time call was received: \_\_\_\_\_ Date call was received: \_\_\_\_\_

### Caller's Voice

- |  |   |                                 |                                    |
|--|---|---------------------------------|------------------------------------|
| <input type="checkbox"/> accent  | <input type="checkbox"/> deep           | <input type="checkbox"/> lisp   | <input type="checkbox"/> raspy     |
| <input type="checkbox"/> angry   | <input type="checkbox"/> deep breathing | <input type="checkbox"/> loud   | <input type="checkbox"/> slow      |
| <input type="checkbox"/> calm  | <input type="checkbox"/> disguised      | <input type="checkbox"/> nasal  | <input type="checkbox"/> slurred   |
| <input type="checkbox"/> clearing throat   | <input type="checkbox"/> distinct       | <input type="checkbox"/> normal | <input type="checkbox"/> soft      |
| <input type="checkbox"/> cracking voice  | <input type="checkbox"/> excited        | <input type="checkbox"/> rapid  | <input type="checkbox"/> stutter   |
| <input type="checkbox"/> crying  | <input type="checkbox"/> laughter       | <input type="checkbox"/> ragged | <input type="checkbox"/> whispered |
| <input type="checkbox"/> familiar (If voice is familiar, who did it sound like?) _____ |   |                                 |                                    |



## HAZARDOUS SUBSTANCE RELEASE: INSIDE THE SCHOOL

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The person-in-charge will assess the need to evacuate the school based on all immediately available information and hazardous substance guidelines. Material Safety Data Sheets should be kept in a readily accessible location in accordance with occupational Health and Safety regulations (such as near dangerous chemicals or near the front entrance for emergency responders).

## HAZARDOUS SUBSTANCE RELEASE: OUTSIDE THE SCHOOL

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An event such as a fire, motor vehicle accident, train derailment, industrial incident, or a natural disaster may cause a hazardous substance release. As a result, emergency responders may request that you secure and seal the building.

Here are some examples of when you may be asked to secure and seal the building:

- There has been an outdoor release that may affect your building.
- There is not enough time or warning to safely evacuate.
- The release is expected to pass over the area quickly.
- The source and nature of the release have yet to be determined.
- A safe evacuation route has yet to be verified.
- It is safe to evacuate but you need assistance.

Those who have been advised to secure and seal the building will be notified if additional measures are required and when it is “all clear.”

- Immediately gather everyone indoors and stay there.
- Close and lock all windows and outside doors.
- If possible, tape (duct tape) the gaps around the exterior door frames.
- Turn off appliances or equipment that either
  - blow out or use indoor air, such as
    - washroom and kitchen exhaust fans
    - built-in vacuum systems
  - suck in outside air, such as
    - heating ventilation and air conditioning (HVAC) systems
    - fans for heat recovery ventilators or energy recovery ventilators (HRV/ERV)
- Turn down furnace thermostats to the minimum setting and turn off air conditioners.

- Leave open all inside doors.
- Avoid using the telephone, except for emergencies, so that you can be contacted by emergency response personnel.
- Even if you see people outside do not leave until told to do so.
- If you are unable to follow these instructions, notify emergency response personnel.
- After the hazardous substance has passed through the area, you will receive an all-clear message from emergency response personnel. If required, you may also receive the following instructions:
  - Ventilate your building by opening all windows and doors, turning on fans, and turning up thermostats. During this time the air outside may be fresher, and you may choose to leave your building while ventilating.
  - Once the building is completely ventilated, return all equipment to normal settings and operation.

## **SCHOOL BUS ACCIDENT/INCIDENT**

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### **Driver/Staff at the Scene**

The following protocol outlines the steps to be taken by the driver or school staff should an accident occur:

1. Call 911, if warranted.
2. Call the person-in-charge at the school.
3. Help to implement basic first aid until emergency medical services and/or law enforcement arrives and takes charge of the emergency.
4. Move all uninjured students to a safe distance from the accident.
5. Provide to the school the names of all injured students and the location to which they may have been taken for medical treatment.

### **Principal/Person-in-Charge**

1. Notify the appropriate school board staff person.
2. Ascertain the names of any injured students and the nearest location of any medical treatment facility.
3. Notify parents/guardians of all students on the bus as quickly as accurate information is available.
4. Direct a designated school staff representative to proceed to any medical treatment facility to which an injured student has been taken to assist parents and to provide support to students, as appropriate.
5. Complete appropriate documentation.

### **Additional Steps for Our School/Facility (If Any)**

## **AFTER-HOURS SCHOOL USAGE**

---

Any time a school activity is being conducted outside of normal hours, it is necessary that someone be identified as the person-in-charge with the responsibility to activate the emergency management plan. This section should include any alterations to the plan required to accommodate the time of day and available staff.

## **EXTENDED ISOLATION (SHELTER-IN-PLACE)**

---

This is a situation where it is necessary to hold and care for students for an extended period of time. Situations that may result in an extended isolation include extended police action in the vicinity of the school or sudden and severe weather and an interruption to means of transportation or transportation routes. Considerations for an extended isolation include the following:

- backup electric generator
- emergency food stores (24 hours minimum)
- blankets
- flashlights and batteries

Other considerations for an extended isolation include communicating with parents, resources for special needs students, and access to emergency medical assistance.

## **OFF-SITE SCHOOL-RELATED EMERGENCY**

---

Any time a school activity is being conducted away from the school building, it is necessary that someone be identified as the person-in-charge with the responsibility to activate the Emergency Management Plan. This section should include any alterations to the plan required to accommodate the activity, location, and available staff.

# Appendices

## A. SCHOOL PROFILE AND BUILDING INFORMATION

This is a brief description of the school, including what grades or age levels attend, how many buildings and rooms are on the school property, how many teachers and staff, etc. Be sure to include any unique situations or information, such as other tenants. Include the location and identification of external doors.

The following form, adapted from the RCMP School Action For Emergency (SAFE) Plan, can be used to document school profile and building information.

<b>School Data Form</b>			
LAST UPDATED:			
<b>School Profile</b>			
Name of School:		School Hours:	
Name of School Board:		Grades Levels:	
School Address:		<b>Numbers</b>	
		Students:	
		Mobility Challenged Students:	
School Phone:		Staff:	
School Fax:		Floors:	
After Hours Emergency Contact Name: Phone:		Classrooms:	
		Portables:	
<b>Building Information</b>			
Position	Name	Office Phone	Cell Phone
Principal			
Vice-Principal			
Vice-Principal			
Vice-Principal			



Security Cameras		
#	Location	Coverage
Instructions for Use		
Monitoring Locations		

  

Utilities		
Type	Location	Shutoff Instructions
Gas/Propane		
Water		
Electrical		

  

Sprinkler System	
Control Valve Location	
Shutoff Instructions	

  

Cable/Satellite Television	
Location of Televisions	
Main Feed Shutoff Instructions	

  

Boiler Room	
Location	
Access	

Main Telephone Panel	
Location	
Access	

  

Roof Access	
Location	Access

  

Elevators	
Location	Instructions for Use

  

Emergency Power System	
Type	
Location	
Provides Power To	
Shutoff Instructions	

  

On Site Hazards	
Custodial Areas	
Science Labs	
Machine Shops	

## **B. EVACUATION ROUTES**

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This section should include the fire evacuation routes, which should also be posted in every classroom.

## **C. LOCAL HAZARDS ASSESSMENT**

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Include plans for situations external to the school that may present a threat to students and staff.

## **D. OFF-SITE EMERGENCY PLAN**

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Include protocols or procedures for staff when supervising students away from the building. Items that should be included are

- emergency contact lists
- first-aid kit and someone with training
- student emergency contact information
- staff/chaperon emergency contact information
- what to do in the event a student is injured
- what to do in the event a student is missing

## **E. COMMUNICATIONS PLAN**

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The communications plan provides guidance to the person-in-charge regarding communications before, during, and after an emergency in the following areas:

- Police/Fire/Emergency Health Services (EHS)/Emergency Management Organization (EMO)
- School/Board Staff and Tenants
- Parents/Guardians/Students/Community
- Media

### **Police, Fire, EHS, EMO**

During an emergency, one of the first priorities will be to contact police/fire/emergency health services/emergency management organization. The most expedient means is by calling 911. The 911 operator, you will ask you to state your emergency. This is done to ensure that the appropriate agency or agencies are dispatched. It is vital at this point

to be clear as to what has actually happened or is happening. Do not speculate, exaggerate, or minimize the facts. The Enhanced 911 system will provide the operator with a specific address for a telephone, however you will be asked to confirm your address. It will be vital that you clearly describe where the main entrance is located or where the police should arrive or should avoid. It is important to remember that the Enhanced 911 system will not give a location if you are calling from a cell phone; therefore, you will need to state the address for the school as well as any specific directions responders should know.

The 911 operator will continue to ask you questions as responders are being dispatched. Questions you should be prepared to answer include

- What is happening?
- Is anyone or how many are injured?
- Are the suspects still on the scene?
- What are their descriptions?
- Do they have weapons?
- Who will meet the police/fire/EHS at the door and what is their name/description?

If the emergency involves injuries to students or staff, 911 operators will transfer you to Emergency Health Services dispatchers who will ask further questions in relation to the injuries or illness as well as giving directions for emergency care.

Finally, if the emergency is ongoing, the 911 operators will request that you stay on the line with them to provide updates and additional information until the emergency responders arrive.

### **Staff, School Board Staff, and Tenants**

The school plan should answer the following questions:

- How will you communicate with staff internally during an emergency?
- How will you communicate internally in the event of a power failure?
- How will you communicate internally/externally in the event of a phone/cell phone failure?
- With whom, when, and under what circumstances will you communicate with school board staff during an emergency?
- Include additional relevant information.

### **Parents/Guardians/Students/Community**

The school plan should answer the following questions:

- How will you communicate the plan to parents of new students?
- How will you communicate with parents/guardians during an emergency?
- How will you communicate with parents/guardians after the emergency is concluded?
- Include additional relevant information.

### **Media**

All staff should be aware of the person responsible for communicating with the media.

The school plan should answer the following questions:

- Who is the media spokesperson for the school?
- If the media spokesperson is not available, who will communicate with the media?
- When will you defer media inquiries to the responding emergency service?
- Has an area been designated for media to gather to deter them from approaching or photographing students? (For the safety of everyone involved, this staging area should be away from emergency operations and the school.)

Following are some guidelines for dealing with the media:

- No person other than the communications manager or the person-in-charge should speak with the media.
- Do not play favourites. Give all media access to the same information.
- Try to have consideration for the media's deadlines.
- Be factual. Don't speculate.
- Do not cover up or try to mislead the media.
- Keep records of all information provided to the media. Provide written press releases when possible.
- If the media will be on the site during the emergency/disaster, ensure that appropriate safety precautions are followed.

## F. SAMPLE LETTER OF AGREEMENT FOR RELOCATION

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### Letter of Agreement for Relocation

**Agreement Between  
(school name)**

and

**(relocation facility or agency name)**

Whereas (school) has developed an Emergency Management Plan dealing with procedure to be followed and facilities to be used during an emergency at the school, and whereas said plan involves the use by (school) of (facility) in the event of relocation following an evacuation, the parties hereby enter into the following agreement:

#### **Definitions**

In this agreement:

- SCHOOL means (school name)
- FACILITY means (facility name)
- EMERGENCY means an abnormal situation which, in order to limit danger to people or damage to property or environment, requires prompt action beyond normal procedures
- RELOCATION means moving students to a suitable temporary location because the school is considered to be unsafe

#### **Notification**

The school will, in the event of a relocation or potential relocation, advise the facility by notifying (name) or their designate.

Notification arrangements will be mutually agreed to from time to time, and will be reviewed and tested annually.

#### **Use of Facilities**

In the event of an emergency, the facility agrees to make available to the school such facilities as may be needed, with both parties giving due considerations to the requirements of the facility.

#### **Conduct on (Facility) Premises**

The school agrees to take all reasonable precaution against vandalism, mischief or behaviour contrary to federal and provincial statutes and school board and school policies by any one who is accommodated in facility premises, or who makes use of the facility, its facilities, or equipment.

**F. SAMPLE LETTER OF AGREEMENT FOR RELOCATION (CONTINUED)**

**Feeding**

Food preparation and consumption will only take place using equipment and areas agreed upon.

**Return of Equipment and Supplies**

The school will be responsible for removing any equipment or supplies it brought into or had delivered to the facility, and for replacing any equipment or supplies belonging to the facility used or consumed by the school during the emergency.

**Termination**

The facility retains the right to terminate this agreement after giving the school notification (within a specified time frame) as agreed to by both parties.

**Signatories**

\_\_\_\_\_  
Principal of School

\_\_\_\_\_  
Date

\_\_\_\_\_  
Manager of Receiving Facility

\_\_\_\_\_  
Date

## G. EVIDENCE PRESERVATION FOR SCHOOLS

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*At a crime scene, the safety of students and staff is a higher priority than the preservation of evidence.*

Crime committed in our schools is an unfortunate reality. Some of it is committed by outsiders, but much of it is by a small minority of students.

It is also an unfortunate reality that a great deal of a school administrator's day can be spent investigating these crimes.

Fortunately, most of the crime committed is property related, such as theft and damage, and does not pose a direct safety risk to students and staff. However, this type of crime does affect the school financially as the cost of repairing damage or replacing stolen property is borne by the school and board.

Occasionally, the crime is of a violent nature, ranging from common assault to assault with weapon or aggravated assault. Violence in our schools victimizes all of us, as it creates an atmosphere of fear that significantly hinders learning.

Often, school administrators will consider some of the lesser crimes as discipline issues and will deal with them accordingly. Occasionally, it is necessary to involve the police.

If the police are involved, they will want to begin collecting evidence in case the matter goes to court. For a case to be successfully prosecuted, it is vital that the police collect evidence in a very controlled manner. Failure to follow recognized procedures can result in evidence being excluded in court and ultimately the dismissal of charges against an accused.

Evidence can be categorized into two types: direct evidence such as eyewitness testimony or indirect evidence such as fingerprints. Even when there is an eyewitness who is willing to testify, the police are still obligated to secure any other supporting but less direct evidence.

Even if the situation is not yet a police matter, it is important to remember that circumstances can change that may cause it to become one. Evidence negligently handled or intentionally tampered with will not only result in losing a court case, but can also harm your credibility.

For the purposes of school staff becoming involved in an investigation, there are a few areas that should be considered that will greatly assist the police. General guidelines can be found on the next page.

## GENERAL GUIDELINES FOR SCHOOL STAFF

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### Interviewing Witnesses

When speaking with students or others who may have witnessed an event, it is important to understand that the story they tell should not be influenced by the interviewer. Often witnesses will differ in recalling what they observed. This can be frustrating for the interviewer, possibly leading them to believe that the witness is not being truthful or didn't actually see what happened. It is important that the interviewer does not intentionally or even unintentionally influence the witness by suggesting a different version of events.

### Interviewing Suspects

The Canadian Charter of Rights and Freedoms guarantees everyone certain rights when it comes to being interviewed or interrogated as a suspect in a crime. Even if the interview is not conducted by the police, the suspect's rights must still be respected. A suspect must be advised of their rights and read the criminal caution prior to an interview beginning by anyone in a position of authority over the suspect. Such is the case when the interview is conducted by a school staff person. Failure to do so may forfeit not only that statement as far as court is concerned, but also any subsequent statements taken by police. It is important that any interview of a suspect be conducted by the police if there is any possibility that charges may be laid in relation to the issue under investigation.

### Physical Evidence

Occasionally, school staff will be called on to intervene in an incident that has occurred either in the school or nearby that has created a crime scene. Assaults and break and enters are examples of such events.

If the situation is a crime of violence, the first priority is to ensure the safety of students and staff. Then, tend to the injured if there are any. Try not to move anything in the immediate area and do not clean up any blood or other fluids before authorized by the police.

Generally, it is appropriate to leave weapons such as a knife where they are. However, this may present an ongoing risk if the area cannot be secured and it is not removed from the scene. If it is absolutely necessary to remove a weapon, do so by touching as little of it as possible and only if it can be safely handled.

If the situation is a crime against property, such as property damage, theft, or break and enter, be careful not to disturb any evidence such as fingerprints. Do not repair any damage or replace moved items until authorized by the police.

It may be necessary for you to move an item or at least cover it to prevent it from being lost. An example might be footprints in the snow or mud. A piece of cardboard placed over them can help preserve them.

Regardless of the type of crime committed, try to prevent any unnecessary persons from entering the scene and possibly destroying evidence.

Once the scene has been secured, attempt to identify any witnesses and/or suspects. Remove these individuals to separate locations, when possible, for interviews.

As soon as practical, begin making notes of your observations and actions during the event. Remember, these notes may become part of a criminal investigation and subject to full disclosure.

## **H. SCHOOL EMERGENCY MANAGEMENT KIT CONTENTS**

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Refer to page 31 of the *Planning Guide* for details.

- school emergency management plan
- student data (name, phone number, address, emergency contact person, pertinent medical information, sign in/out sheet if applicable)
- student release forms
- staff data (name, phone number, address, emergency contact person, pertinent medical information, sign in/out sheet if applicable)
- list of staff with any emergency training/skills
- school profile and building information
- school photos/video
- aerial photos
- map of school area
- map of relocation route (if not included in the school area map)
- traffic safety vests
- keys
- first-aid kit
- charged cell phone
- megaphone
- portable radio(s)

**The administrative assistant brings the school emergency management kit as well as**

- list of that day's class trips
- list of that day's substitute teachers
- visitor sign-in sheet
- staff sign-in/sign-out sheet
- student medications

### **I. CLASSROOM EMERGENCY MANAGEMENT KIT CONTENTS**

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- a copy of the *Quick Guide*
- class student roster
- small first-aid kit
- other useful items

### **J. BUILDING TENANT INFORMATION**

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This section captures essential information for all building tenants, such as

- names and contact information of tenants
- number of mobility challenged tenants
- other appropriate information (refer to Building Information on pages 32–33 of the *Planning Guide*)

