

# JESSAMINE COUNTY SCHOOLS

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Superintendent

## *Emergency Awareness for Parents:*

School Emergencies;  
Information parents need to know

The safety and security of our students and staff are top priorities for Jessamine County Schools. The following information will help parents

become more familiar with JCS  
emergency response procedures.

[www.jessamine.kyschools.us](http://www.jessamine.kyschools.us)

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## Introduction:

The safety and security of our students and staff are top priorities for Jessamine County Schools (JCS). This pamphlet explains some of the procedures that have been planned and practiced to prepare us in the event of an emergency at your child's school.

School administrators work closely with police, fire, emergency services and public health to ensure our School Safety Plans reflect appropriate practices and that all schools are prepared for emergencies. Key personnel are trained in National Incident Management System procedures, and JCS takes an all-hazards approach to emergency readiness. We are prepared to work in partnership with emergency responders should a critical incident occur in our school district.

Our comprehensive emergency plan addresses a multitude of potential incidents, not because we expect them to occur, but because we want to be prepared in case they do. For security reasons, specific details are not made available to the public; however, parents and students have a vital role and it is important that you know what to do in an emergency. Please review information in this pamphlet to make sure you and your child understand the emergency procedures.

## What is an Emergency?

An emergency is any unexpected incident that could put your child's safety at risk. It could be anything from a disruption in utilities to a terrorist activity and could affect one child, one school, or the entire school district. School officials, and sometimes emergency responders, will evaluate the seriousness of each situation and determine the best course of action to respond quickly, safely and appropriately.

Advanced planning and preparation can minimize the risks in any emergency situation. This pamphlet offers guidelines for preparedness, what parents should do, and what the school will do in the event of an emergency. Communication procedures and student release procedures are also outlined.

## Preparedness - What Should Parents do to Prepare for an Emergency?

Parents have an invaluable role in preparing their children for emergencies. Listed below are some of the ways you can help them understand that if an emergency occurs at school, teachers and school officials are trained to handle the situation. Reassure them you will be contacted by the school and you will be reunited with them as soon as it is safe to do so.

- Be sure emergency contact information is current and correct. Contact the school secretary immediately whenever your work, home or cell number changes.
- Keep the school nurse informed of any medical conditions or physical limitations your child may have or medications your child may be taking.
- Identify who is authorized to pick up your child if you are not able to respond. Make sure their contact information is current and correct. Please understand that your child will only be released to parents and persons identified on the emergency contact list. Discuss this information with your child.
- Make sure your child knows the name, address and phone numbers of parents or guardians. If there is only one parent or guardian, your child should have contact information for a second responsible adult on file with your school.
- Talk with your child about the importance of remaining calm and following instructions in the event of an emergency. If an emergency occurs while students are at school, their teacher will provide them with appropriate instructions and information.
- Let your child know that students could be moved to another location until they can be picked up. Explain the term “Evacuation” in order to ease anxiety and fear if/when an evacuation takes place.

- Explain that cell phones may be used to **briefly** to communicate his/her status to you, such as I am safe. Emergency responders will depend on cell phones for communication. If students and parents are trying to contact each other, cell circuits may become overloaded, interfering with the ability of emergency responders to communicate vital information.
- Whenever you are on school grounds, remain alert to activity in and around the school. Report any suspicious activity to school administration or law enforcement so they can investigate.
- Establish a family preparedness plan including a communications plan. This will enable you to communicate with all family members during an emergency.
- In case of an emergency in which your child can not go home, make sure there is another place he or she can go and be safe while waiting for a family member to pick them up.

## What Will Schools do in the Event of an Emergency?

What we do in an emergency depends on the situation and the specifics of the incident. We will make every attempt to ensure that instruction continues, even when it becomes necessary to lock down the school. Depending on the severity of the threat or emergency, additional measures may be taken, including sheltering-in-place, evacuating students from the building or even altering the dismissal time.

If emergency responders are called to the scene, we will work with them in a unified command to determine which plan should be implemented. School emergency plans vary from school to school, based on school size, building layout and other relevant factors, and are initiated depending on the events unfolding at the time of the incident. While every school has common pre-established plans of action, evacuation sites, and family reunification plans, these plans must remain confidential for the safety of our students and staff and must be flexible as conditions change. Parents will be informed as soon as we have done everything we can to ensure the safety of all students and when it becomes possible to provide accurate and helpful information.

## Protective Actions the School May Use:

Each school has an emergency preparedness plan involving a number of possible actions. The response varies, depending on the conditions and the situation, and is determined by a crisis management team trained to make such decisions. **It is important for parents to understand that if a critical incident occurs, students will be released to parents only when danger has passed.**

Schools may use the following protective actions:

- A lockdown is used to protect building occupants from potential dangers in the building. Specific lockdown procedures are developed by school officials and local law enforcement officials. During a lockdown, all interior and exterior doors are locked. No one is permitted to enter or exit the building until school officials and/or law enforcement officials have determined it is safe to do so and staff, students and visitors are accounted for in the building. The length of the period of lockdown is based on the situation at hand, and could be a few minutes or even hours. It is possible that a lockdown might involve detaining students beyond the regular school day. It is never our intention to hold students unnecessarily, and we will not do so except to ensure their safety. Conditions will return to normal as soon as it is safe to do so.

Parents may or may not be notified when the school goes into lockdown. There are times when the school goes into lockdown for drills or training, or for an external event that does not involve the school.

- Shelter-in-Place - This protective action is considered when an event takes place around the school and officials determine the safest course of action is to keep students and staff inside the building until the external event is handled. Some examples could be a weather situation, hazardous materials release, or a situation unfolding in the community where students should not be released. Students who are outside are moved inside. If a shelter-in-place is called for that may extend beyond the school day, parents will be notified.
- Secure the Building is used to protect building occupants from potential dangers outside the building such as police pursuit of a suspect. Students and staff will continue normal routine inside the building until further instructions are provided. Procedures are developed by school officials and local law enforcement officials.
- Evacuation - If it is unsafe for students and staff to remain inside the building, the school will be evacuated. Students and staff may remain on school grounds until the building is safe to re-enter or be relocated to a safe location off school property. In the event of an off-campus evacuation, school administrators will work closely with emergency officials and our

transportation professionals to move students to a safe location. From there the students will either be transported home or wait for family members to pick them up from the reunification site. In either event, we will make sure parents are notified. Emergency responders will instruct students and staff members who were evacuated from a site where they left a personal automobile as to when they may return to their car.

- **Emergency School Closing** - This procedure will take place when school administrators determine students are safer at home than at school. This most often occurs due to loss of utilities or a weather emergency. Parents will be notified that school(s) will be closing. Students who normally ride the bus will be transported home as usual and parents will be notified.
- **Off-Site Family Reunification** - Students are moved off-site when school officials determine students and staff should not re-enter the building until it is rendered safe. Several off-site locations have been determined in advance, but are not shared with parents until an incident unfolds. Emergency responders and school officials choose the best reunification site at the time of the incident, depending on the circumstances of the emergency. Parents will be notified of the family reunification site as soon as it is tactically appropriate to do so. Our main priorities in an off-site evacuation are student safety and accountability. We want to ensure that students are released to authorized individuals and our sign-out procedure will be in place.

In the event of an off-site school evacuation, parents will be provided information as to where the reunification site is located. Parents or authorized adults will be required to show photo identification in order to pick up a child. The process may take some time because we want to make sure reunification is made with authorized individuals only.

## What Should Parents do in the Event of an Emergency?

The most helpful parental responses to a school emergency are to remain calm and wait for accurate information and instructions to be sent to the number listed on your child's emergency contact card. We understand it is a natural instinct for parents to want to rush to their child. It is important for you to understand that, during such an

event, individual schools and emergency responders have made preparations to deal with these incidents. Your cooperation in an emergency is essential to the safe and swift resolution of the incident.

Please do not call the school. It is essential to keep phone lines open so school officials can make outgoing emergency calls. If students are ill or injured, the parents of those students will be notified first.

**Please do not go to the school.** As we have learned from past school emergencies, one of our greatest challenges is how to manage a large number of parents and concerned citizens rushing to the scene to “help”. By doing so, parents can inadvertently create traffic jams that may block emergency responders from getting to the scene or from leaving to transport injured students or staff to emergency medical facilities.

- Remain calm, follow procedures, and cooperate with school and public safety officials.
- Remain close to the phone listed as your emergency contact number.
- Tune in local television or radio stations designated to carry JCS emergency information. Obtain current information about the incident from
  - District website - [www.jessamine.kyschools.us](http://www.jessamine.kyschools.us)
  - Download - Jessamine County Schools App
  - Facebook - Jessamine County Schools
  - Twitter - @JessCoSchools
- Understand that emergency pickup procedures are different than routine pickup procedures. In the event you are notified to pick up your child at school or at a designated family reunification site, bring a photo identification card. If you must send someone else to pick up your child, be sure it is someone who is listed on school records as an individual authorized to do so and make sure they are in possession of a photo ID. Your child will not be released to anyone who is unauthorized or who cannot provide appropriate identification.
- Follow emergency procedures. If you are asked to pick up your child, you will be asked to follow the checkout procedure established for emergencies. The family reunification system was developed to ensure the safety and accountability of students and it is vital that it be followed.



- Remain in designated areas at the family reunification site. Local law enforcement as well as emergency responders from other agencies will be present to support the family reunification efforts.
- Be patient. It is essential that the family reunification procedure be carried out in an orderly manner so we can protect and account for all of our students.

## Emergency Communications:

### How will Parents be Notified if an Incident Occurs at School?

Our first priority is to ensure all students are safe, accounted for, and under adult supervision. As soon as it is possible to do so, school administrators and Central Office staff, under the direction of the Superintendent, will communicate information to parents and the community. The school district has a variety of media outlets available to parents which will be updated, as needed, with the most complete and accurate information available.

#### District Emergency Information Links:

1. One-Call System - A recorded message sent to contact numbers in our system.
2. Jessamine County Schools Website - [www.jessamine.kyschools.us](http://www.jessamine.kyschools.us)
3. Social Media via Facebook, Twitter, or the Jessamine County Schools app
4. Superintendent's Office (Central Office) 859 885-4179

In the event of a significant emergency, parents are encouraged to tune in to one of the following local television stations to follow the event as it unfolds:

WLEX 18 - NBC

WKYT 27 - CBS

WTVQ 36 - ABC

## Recovery After a Crisis:

School leaders understand that a traumatic event in a school or in the community can have an emotional impact on students and staff. Jessamine County Schools has a trained Intervention Team of counselors, social workers, and psychologists who can respond to the school during and after a critical incident to provide assistance. The JCS Intervention Team helps those affected to cope with the aftermath of the incident.

## For Additional Information:

- For information regarding your child's school emergency plan, contact your child's school administrator or guidance counselor.
- An excellent website on emergency readiness is [www.ready.gov](http://www.ready.gov).
- To keep current on all items of importance in your school system, visit the Jessamine County Schools website often at [www.jessamine.kyschools.us](http://www.jessamine.kyschools.us).