

Unatego Central School District

Emergency Response Protocols

Introduction

At Unatego Central School District, the safety of all students, and staff members is our number one priority. District and building management plans and procedures have been designed to protect students and staff during emergency situations. Our plans include means of preventing and mitigating crises, as well as preparing for, responding to, and recovering from emergency events.

Responses that may be implemented in the event of an emergency:



Shelter-In-Place

Used to shelter students and staff inside the building.



Hold-In-Place

Used to limit movement of students and staff while dealing with short term emergencies.



Evacuate

Used to evacuate students and staff from the building.



Lockout

Used to secure school buildings and grounds during incidents that pose an imminent concern outside of the school.



Lockdown

Used to secure school buildings and grounds during incidents that pose an immediate threat of violence in or around the school.

Each of our schools follows emergency procedures that are much more detailed than those outlined here. Our planning is based on local, state and federal guidelines. Our goal is to help you, as parents, to gain a greater understanding of how we prepare to handle emergencies. This way, in an actual emergency situation, you will know what to expect, just as our ongoing training teaches us what to expect. As the saying goes, the way we train is the way we respond. This is why our emergency drills are so important, and why keeping you informed is such an integral part of that process.

Frequently Asked Questions

Q: What is the difference between a “lockdown” and a “lockout”?

A: In a lockdown, there is a threat inside the school. In a lockout, the threat is outside the building. While such threats may be serious, more often than not the lockdown or lockout does not involve an immediate danger to students and staff, but is implemented because of a potential threat, or the perception of one. When in doubt as to the seriousness of a threat, schools often respond out of an abundance of caution.

Q: What happens in a lockdown?

A: A school will go into lockdown when there is an actual threat, or concern about a potential threat, inside the building. The police are called immediately and take command of the building and grounds. Every interior door is locked, and everyone in the building remains in their respective place out of view of anyone who may look into a room from the hallway. No one is permitted to enter or leave the building. Staff and students are instructed to remain where they are until a law enforcement officer enters the room and gives the “all clear”. This can take some time, as police check every interior space to make sure it is safe. Sometimes, if there's a lockdown in one building, the other building may implement a lockout as a precaution.

Q: What happens in a lockout?

A: A lockout protects students and staff from a threat outside the building. No one is permitted to enter the building. Doors and windows are locked, and everyone who is already inside avoids being visible near outside windows. A lockout is sometimes called in response to an event in the vicinity, not necessarily even on school grounds. Unlike a lockdown, which will bring a rapid and large police response, the police response to a lockout will vary according to the severity and proximity of the threat. During a lockout, normal activities take place inside the building and outside activities (P.E. and/or recess) are suspended. A lockout may involve more than one school.

Frequently Asked Questions

Q: What is the difference between shelter-in-place, and hold-in-place?

A: Shelter-in-place means to seek immediate shelter and remain there during an emergency rather than evacuate the area. Shelter-in-place is used when it is safer inside the building or in a room than outside. Certain events may necessitate the initiation of a shelter-in-place, such as severe weather, or a hazardous incident outside of the building. Hold-in-place temporarily limits the movement of students and staff when an internal incident arises, such as a medical emergency, or a maintenance issue. A hold-in-place is initiated to keep students and staff out of the affected area until the situation can be rectified.

Q: What happens during a shelter-in-place?

A: During a shelter-in-place, clear directions will be given based on the situation. Students and staff may be instructed to move away from windows and doors or relocate to an interior hallway or room, such as during a weather emergency, or to move to rooms that can be sealed or without windows, such as in the event of a chemical or biological hazard.

Q: What happens during a hold-in-place?

A: A hold-in-place is a security procedure used to temporarily limit student and staff movement. Therefore, during a hold-in-place all students and staff will be instructed to stay in their classrooms and offices. If students are in the hallways, they should go to the nearest classroom, and remain there until the hold-in-place is lifted. Instruction continues as normally as possible.

Q: How will parents be notified during an emergency?

A: In an actual emergency in which police and/or other first responders are called, parents will be sent a message as quickly as possible through the district's phone messaging system. Updates will be provided continually as information becomes available. Direct communication with the school may not be possible for a period of time, as staff members must take shelter and/or focus on managing the situation.

Frequently Asked Questions

Q: Can I pick up my child from school during a lockdown or lockout?

A: Not until the incident is over. During a lockdown, a perimeter may be established around the school and no one will be allowed to enter the grounds until the campus is determined to be safe. It is imperative that the police and school staff are able to account for everyone inside the building. During a lockout, no one will be permitted to enter, and staff are trained not to open doors for anyone.

Q: What other kinds of emergency drills do the schools practice?

A: Offsite evacuation drills are held, in which the entire student body and staff move to another building. These drills were very well planned and highly effective. An actual offsite evacuation might take place in the event of a loss of heat or power, or other potentially hazardous, but not necessarily life-threatening situation. In addition to these offsite evacuations, numerous mandated evacuation drills and lockdown drills are also conducted every year.

Q: What should I do if I happen to be in school during an emergency or a drill?

A: Follow the instructions of staff and/or the police. In a lockdown or lockout, you should remain in your location along with students and staff. If the building is evacuated, you must leave the building promptly with students and staff.

Conclusion

Each of our schools follows emergency procedures that are much more detailed than those outlined here. Our planning is based on local, state and federal guidelines. Our goal is to help you, as parents, to gain a greater understanding of how we prepare to handle emergencies. This way, in an actual emergency situation, you will know what to expect, just as our ongoing training teaches us what to expect. As the saying goes, the way we train is the way we respond. This is why our emergency drills are so important, and why keeping you informed is such an integral part of that process.

Sources:

<http://www.corningareaschools.com/sites/templates/images.8/C-PPSafetyBrochure.pdf>

<http://www.minervasd.org/cms/lib7/NY01000156/Centricity/Domain/1/Minerva%20safety%20plan%202015.pdf>

<http://www.nyssba.org/news/2015/03/12/on-board-online-march-16-2015/5-kinds-of-emergency-responses/>

<http://www.oneonta.edu/security/documents/ShelterInPlace.pdf>

<http://www.roslynschools.org/Domain/30>