

## **Emergency Management Procedures**

### **Lockdown**

An options-based lockdown model is a security procedure that is used when there is an imminent danger inside or in close proximity to the school. It is designed to remove students from harm's way in anticipation of a police response to the scene. During a lockdown, we move all students to predetermined secured areas under staff supervision. All students are accounted for and remain sheltered until an "all-clear" is declared.

### **Lockout**

A lockout is used to alert staff and students of a potential danger at or in the vicinity of the school. Students are accounted for and under the close supervision of staff at all times. Classroom instruction continues as usual with exterior security precautions, and strategies such as limited outside student activity, no visitors to the school and cancellations of meetings.

### **Hold In Place/Stay Put**

A hold in place is a security procedure used during medical emergencies, searches or other situations when school administrators wish to temporarily limit student movement. Instruction continues as normally as possible, with staff and students remaining in their current locations (classroom, gym, library, etc.) until the "all clear" is called.

### **Emergency Sheltering**

Emergency sheltering is a response used in the event of natural disasters, weather-related issues, terrorist threats, environmental crises or accidental emergencies. Students are moved to pre-determined areas with greater structural integrity or to large group instructional areas (gyms, auditoriums, etc.) that offer improved supervision and protection from potential hazards.

### **Emergency Evacuation**

Evacuation procedures are used to ensure the safety of students when the building has been threatened or when critical systems have been damaged presenting an immediate danger. This includes fire, toxic spills, flooding, natural disasters and potential acts of terrorism. The purpose of the evacuation is to: (1) remove students and staff from harm's way, and (2) account for and unite students with parents in the most effective way possible. Our individual school plans provide for bus and walking evacuations to pre-determined alternative shelter sites.

### **Emergency Communications**

The first order of business during a crisis is to ensure the immediate safety of students and staff. It is very important for parents, guardians and students to remain calm and follow the recommended guidelines in the event of an emergency. This allows school personnel and emergency service providers to work to ensure the personal safety and wellbeing of students and staff.

Automated calls and other communications will be made after an emergency has been stabilized and clear, accurate information and/or directives can be provided.

Parents and guardians have access to several resources to get current information on emergency situations taking place in the North Adams Public School District, including the following:

**School Messenger** allows administrators to alert parents of emergencies and significant events through a rapid dialing system. It can dial home, work, cell phone and other emergency numbers to reach parents with accurate emergency information. (See the description on other side for additional details.)

### **North Adams Public Schools Website**

([www.napsk12.org](http://www.napsk12.org)) provides regularly updated information about emergencies and general

communications affecting the District as a whole, as well as individual buildings.

**Local media** will make announcements and provide updates on emergency situations. Parents and guardians can tune in to WNAW (1230 AM) on the radio and WRGB Channel 6, WTEN Channel 10, and WNYT Channel 13 on the television and [www.iBerkshires.com](http://www.iBerkshires.com) on the Internet.

### **Students are not allowed to use cell phones during emergency situations.**

Under the recommendation of experts in law enforcement and school safety, we require that all student cell phones be turned off during emergency situations. It is essential that all communication be directed by school personnel to ensure accuracy and avoid confusion. Cell phone use can interfere with the ability of emergency personnel to respond to a situation. Cell phone use can cause secondary emergencies and can overload and therefore disable emergency communication systems. The North Adams Public Schools has had a policy in effect since 2008 that prohibits cell phone use during normal school hours. Once an emergency situation has been stabilized, students may receive permission to contact parents and guardians using school phones.

**Parent/Child Reunification** is a systematic process used by the North Adams Public Schools during an emergency or crisis to assist schools in effectively and efficiently reuniting students with parents and guardians. Under most emergency situations, parents and guardians are not allowed to enter the school facility until law enforcement agencies declare it is safe to do so. They will need to bring personal identification to assist the school in the reunification process. Parents and guardians may designate other adults as having authority to pick up their children in an emergency situation, but this must be done in advance. Parents and guardians are encouraged to consult their child's school to become familiar with their specific emergency planning and preparedness efforts.

## ***Safety Is Our Top Priority***

This brochure is intended to inform parents, guardians, students and the public about the North Adams Public Schools' Emergency Management plans and procedures that have been designed to protect students and staff in every building.

The school district takes a proactive approach to ensuring the safety of all students, staff members and families. In cooperation with local law enforcement agencies, the District Emergency Management Team has developed a district-wide Emergency Management Plan. Likewise, each School Safety Management Team (SSMT) has developed and practiced corresponding emergency management plans for their individual school sites. Our preparedness program includes means of preventing and mitigating emergencies and crises, as well as preparing for, responding to and recovering from such events

Also, we continually review and improve our emergency plans, complete safety audits of all our schools, retrain our District and School Emergency Management Teams, provide additional training to staff members and maintain a staff manual to prepare us to respond to various emergencies, should they occur. In addition, all students are instructed in an age appropriate manner regarding possible emergency scenarios. They participate in safety drills throughout the school year.

Equally important, the District works in close collaboration with local, state and federal health, safety and emergency personnel to develop and maintain plans for responding to a variety of emergency situations. These plans involve efforts to protect all students while they are at school.

If you have specific questions about school safety and support responses at your child's school, please contact your principal directly. Everyone in the North Adams Public School District is working to make all of our schools safe and secure environments for every student.

### **About School Messenger**

School Messenger reinforces the District's commitment to remain personally connected to parents and guardians by providing notification services for parental outreach, emergency broadcasts and student attendance communications for all students. Parents and guardians can receive phone calls, text message alerts and emails about a range of important issues such as academic performance, upcoming events, cancellations and student safety. Parents may request that a secondary phone number be added for alerts. Become part of the School Messenger system by filling out the emergency contact form at the beginning of each school year, and be sure to notify the school when you add or change a phone number. If you would like to verify or change the contact information for School Messenger, please contact the secretary in the main office at your child's school.

North Adams Public Schools  
North Adams, Massachusetts

# Emergency and Crisis Preparedness in the North Adams Public Schools

## *Safety Is Our Top Priority*

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