



Family Guide to Emergency Response

If there is an emergency at your child's school, this is what you need to know.

Safety is Our Priority

The Arlington Central School District is committed to making our schools safe for students and staff. We work closely with local and state agencies including police, fire, emergency medical services, and public health officials to make certain that we are well prepared in the event of an emergency.

If an emergency occurs, our first priority is to ensure the safety of our students and staff. As soon as possible, we will provide you with as much accurate information as we can. Communication with parents during an emergency is critically important, but our first concern is the safety and well-being of your child, the other children in the school, and our staff. Please be patient and understand if we are unable to respond to you as completely and quickly as you would like.

How Can Families Prepare for a School Emergency?

- **Keep your contact information up to date, including phone numbers for your designated emergency contacts. Notify the school promptly if this information changes.**
- Talk to your children about the importance of following instructions in the event of an emergency.
- Tell your children NOT to use cell phones unless permitted. Unauthorized cell phone use could put people at risk during an emergency and may distract students from listening to important safety instructions.
- Make sure your children know what to do (e.g. ride the bus) and where to go in the event of an early dismissal. Review with younger children what they should do if they arrive home to an empty house.

What to Do During a School Emergency: Stay Home, Stay Informed, Be Ready

- Do NOT go to the school or scene of an emergency. We understand that this may be your first instinct as a parent, but your presence will interfere with the emergency response and may delay emergency responders from providing necessary emergency or medical support.
- Please wait for instructions from school officials or emergency responders. We will provide information as soon as we can. Please understand that we can only report facts as we know them.
- Get accurate information and instructions:
 - SchoolMessenger—check your home phone, cell phone or email for a message
 - Visit www.arlingtonschools.org
 - Listen to local radio stations
 - Call the District Office at 486-4460
- Do not listen to rumors. Most people, including your child, may only know pieces of a larger picture.
- Be cautious about what you see, read, or post on social media. Rumors and misinformation spread rapidly and cause undue panic and speculation.
- Remain as calm as you can if your child contacts you. They are looking for reassurance.

How Our Schools May Respond If an Emergency Occurs

Shelter in Place

When a “shelter in place” is used, students and staff are typically required to remain indoors, perhaps for an extended period of time, because it is safer inside the building than it is outside. Depending on the threat or hazard, students and staff may be required to move to rooms or areas without windows. As an example, a “shelter in place” may be called in the event of a severe weather emergency, such as a tornado.

Hold in Place

A “hold in place” is used to limit movement of students and staff while dealing with short term emergencies. This is intended to keep students and staff out of the affected area until the situation can be rectified. In general, students and staff will remain in their current classes until the hold in place has been lifted. As an example, a “hold in place” may be called in the event there is an altercation in a hallway, a maintenance issue in the building, or a medical emergency.

Evacuation

An “evacuation” is used to evacuate students and staff from the building. Each school has procedures for an evacuation; typically, we would evacuate due to a fire or a gas leak in the building.

Lockout

A “lockout” is used when there is an actual or perceived threat outside of the school. Students and staff follow the normal school schedule during a lockout, except that no one is allowed outdoors, and normally people are not allowed to enter the school. A lockout may be called when the school receives a report of criminal activity occurring nearby, or when there are reports of a dangerous animal outside of the school.

Lockdown

A “lockdown” is initiated when there is an actual or perceived imminent threat inside or around the school. The primary objective of a lockdown is to quickly ensure that school staff, students, and visitors are secured in rooms away from the immediate danger. Individuals will be kept within locked rooms until the incident is brought to a close by law enforcement personnel.

Reunification

“Reunification” is a formal process that is initiated after a major incident has occurred. If the need arises where students are to be transported to an off-site location, families will be directed as to where they can pick up their children. The goal of this process is to reunite students with an authorized parent, guardian or emergency contact. This process may take a long period of time, but helps staff and safety personnel account for students.

We Practice and Prepare

Arlington has a contract for the K-12 Emergency Management Program by Altaris to provide ongoing emergency management training to school administrators and other key staff members throughout the district. We also have three School Resource Officers (SROs) through the Dutchess County Sheriff's Department.

We have a [District-Wide Safety Plan](#) and each school has a building-level emergency response plan to help our staff and our public safety partners respond swiftly should a crisis occur. These plans are reviewed and updated annually. Each building has a Safety Committee that oversees the plan for each school. These committees meet regularly to review procedures and conduct training and drills so that students and staff are able to respond in an emergency. A District Emergency Response Team coordinates emergency response protocols for all of our schools.

Please visit our Safety: Emergency Preparedness and Response webpage at www.arlingtonschools.org/safety for more information.

Remember

An emergency involves unexpected events and rapidly changing conditions. We train to deal with different kinds of problems, whether caused by natural forces or by people. However, it is impossible to say in advance exactly how we will respond in any particular situation.

In general, you should know that we will do what is necessary to protect children and staff first and then to provide you with timely communications. If a situation is serious enough to require you to leave your home or workplace, we will either ask you to pick your child up at their school or we will direct you to a safe place where we can brief you on the latest developments and reunify you with your child. Please do NOT come to the school or to the scene of an emergency unless officials ask you to come.