

In the event of an emergency at school, please...

Do not call or rush to your child's school. Instead, please follow these tips:

✓ **DO** tune into local TV/Radio stations (News12, WHUD-100.7 FM), log onto our website at www.swboces.org, or follow @SWBOCES on Facebook for official school news alerts.

✓ **DO** rely only on official communication from school or public safety officials.

✓ **DO** listen for official information regarding reunification with your child.

✗ **DO NOT** call or rush to your child's school. Your presence could interfere with the efforts of emergency responders.

✗ **DO NOT** phone or text your child or school. Staff and students are discouraged from using cell phone communication for safety reasons.

What parents can do

- Keep your child's emergency information up to date, including alternate phone numbers for you and those family members or friends you have authorized as your backup.
- Notify the school promptly if this information ever changes.
- Talk with your children about the importance of following instructions in the event of an emergency.
- Have a plan for an emergency, and make sure your children are familiar with the plan.



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Parents' Guide to School Emergencies

What you need to know



Emergency Planning – A Guide for Parents

Southern Westchester BOCES takes emergency preparedness and the safety of our students and staff very seriously. During the ongoing pandemic, school communities have turned their attention to a new kind of emergency planning and response, and appropriately so. Even during the COVID-19 period, however, the need remains for safety plans that address a wide range of incidents, as well as the ongoing psychological and emotional needs of students and staff. This guide provides an overview of emergency response procedures and plans in place should a crisis occur.

A comprehensive district-wide safety plan assists our staff and public safety partners in responding swiftly to an emergency. We provide ongoing crisis management training to school administrators and other key staff members across our BOCES. Building-level emergency response plans are in place at each school, and building-based Safety Committees oversee these plans. Committee members have assigned roles and responsibilities in the event of an emergency.

New York State regulations require BOCES to test their emergency plans in each school building through exercises and drills. There may be some modifications to these drills to ensure adequate social distancing as per CDC and state Department of Health guidance. Specific plan details are not shared publicly. Parents and guardians will be informed of these drills, though specific plan details are not shared publicly. Outside of an emergency, all exterior school doors are locked while school is in session. Visitors must sign in at main entrances. School personnel must wear photo ID badges. Parents and guardians are encouraged to ensure the school has the most up-to-date emergency contact information and to review alternative arrangements in case an emergency prevents them from being home.

Common Safety Terms and Procedures



Shelter-in-Place

During a Shelter-in-Place, students and staff are required to remain indoors, possibly for an extended period of time, because it has been judged to be safer inside the building than outside. Depending on the nature of the threat, students and staff may be required to move to rooms that can be sealed or that do not have windows.



Hold-in-Place

A Hold-in-Place may be initiated if there is an internal incident or administrative matter that requires limiting movement by students and staff. This is intended to keep the affected area clear until the situation is resolved.



Evacuation

Each school has procedures for Evacuation that include a designated location where students may be taken for reunification. Students will be released only to documented emergency contacts who present valid picture ID.



Lockout

A Lockout is the response to an actual or potential threat from outside the school building. The primary objective is to quickly ensure all school staff, students and visitors are secure inside, away from danger. During a Lockout, outside activities are terminated, but the school day proceeds as usual.



Lockdown

A Lockdown is initiated when a school has become aware of an actual or imminent incident that poses an immediate threat in or around the school. The primary objective of a lockdown is to quickly ensure staff, students and visitors are secure in rooms away from immediate danger. Individuals will remain within locked rooms until the incident is resolved by emergency responders.

