

# Tattnall School Safety Protocols

**Safe Learning and Working Environments** – Creating and maintaining safe schools for students, faculty, staff, and visitors is one of our main priorities every day. Parental support and community involvement are vital to helping the district maintain safe, orderly schools. The district regularly works in partnership with the Tattnall County Emergency Management Agency and all of our law enforcement agencies within the county, state and nation to develop and implement school and district emergency plans that help create safe school environments.

## **Emergency Preparation is Critical**

The school district works closely with local government, law enforcement and other emergency management officials to monitor safety concerns and respond quickly to situations as they arise. The district and all of our schools have plans to respond to emergencies, including inclement weather, fire, dangerous items on campus, utility outages, intruders, etc. Our schools have updated their site specific Safe School Plans and they have been reviewed by the district's safety officer with assistance from law enforcement. The district also provides several training opportunities to school staff to assist them in preparing for a wide range of potential emergencies. In addition, all schools conduct emergency drills throughout the school year so that students and staff are aware of the most effective and safe emergency responses. Each school has assigned key staff members to perform roles and responsibilities during emergency situations.

## **Parents Have a Key Role in Emergency Response**

During and following an emergency situation, school and district officials must act quickly and follow established emergency protocols to safeguard students and staff, secure schools, and communicate accurate information in a timely manner. Parents can assist greatly by helping with preparation before the emergency. Here are a few critical steps you can take:

- Do not call or go to your child's school during an actual emergency. Local law enforcement advises you to remain out of the area and keep lines of communication open. Please do not go to your child's school unless you have received direction from the school or district officials. Vehicular traffic around the school may impede the ability of emergency responders from entering/exiting the campus.
- Do not attempt to contact your child or school faculty and staff during an emergency. Students need to focus on emergency direction from school personnel and school personnel will be busy responding to the emergency and addressing the needs of students. Calling the school will only tie up phone lines that must be used for emergency communications with staff and emergency responders.
- Give school officials accurate contact information so you can be reached in case of emergency.
- Keep contact information current by notifying officials of any changes as soon as they occur. Multiple contact sources are helpful, including home, office and mobile telephone numbers and email addresses. Also important, in case you cannot be reached are the up-to-date names and contact information of family members, friends, and any other adults authorized as emergency contacts for your child.
- Be alert for notifications via Class Dojo, Remind101, and Facebook. The district and schools will send emergency and routine messages to parents/guardians via our mass telephone, email and text notification. Parents may register multiple phone numbers with their child's school to ensure messages are received.
- Talk to your child about your personal emergency notification arrangements and let your child and school officials know if you anticipate being unavailable or difficult to reach for an extended period of time.

- Stay informed about emergencies, potentially serious situations, or inclement weather. When serious conditions arise at school or in the community which may result in school evacuations, early dismissals, or school closings, monitor school system messages and local media outlets. Information will be broadcast on Tattnall County Schools' electronic messaging system via telephone, email and text, Facebook Pages, Class Dojo, and Remind101, the district's website [www.tattnallschools.org](http://www.tattnallschools.org), and local media outlets: WTOG, WSAV, and WJCL.
- Notify school officials if you see or hear of anything that could create a danger at school.
- All schools are equipped to safely continue operations and food services despite unforeseen utility outages. There is no need to come and pick up your child due to a utility outage unless you have been notified by the school to do so.

### **Delayed Dismissal and Emergency School Closings**

Occasionally, an unforeseeable event or emergency may require the closing of a school or all schools for a period of time. The decision to close schools, or alter opening and closing times is made by the superintendent after consulting with county and municipal public safety agencies and school district staff. Notification of emergency closings is given as soon as possible so parents and guardians can make arrangements for students to be cared for during these times. The decision to close schools is based on many considerations, the most important being the safety of students, staff, parents, and others in the community.

In cases of threatening weather, the district maintains close contact with the National Weather Service, the Tattnall County Emergency Management Agency and local law enforcement officials to help make decisions about dismissal of students or school closings. Officials want to make the safest possible arrangements for students and may delay the dismissal of students during exceptionally hazardous weather conditions, such as lightning.

The district's electronic messaging system will be used to notify parents about delayed dismissals, closings or other emergency conditions. In most situations involving delayed dismissal, students who walk or ride bicycles may be kept at school until parents can arrange for them to be picked up. Bus riders will be delivered home when conditions allow for a safe dismissal.

### **Emergency Release of Students to Parents**

School officials want to maintain as safe and orderly an environment as possible at all times. During an emergency, special procedures are followed to help ensure student safety. Principals have procedures in place to help parents who wish to pick up their child from school. Depending upon the emergency conditions, students may be released from a designated area to parents and guardians with proper identification.

For your child's safety, your child can be released only to an adult who you have properly designated as an emergency contact and who has proper identification. Noncustodial parents who may pick up students must be listed with your child's emergency contact information as a guardian and also must show proper identification.

### **Reuniting with your child**

When the situation allows, students will be released following reunification procedures. This procedure ensures that each student is released to a parent, relative or other authorized person designated by the parent in an orderly manner. Individuals picking up students will be asked to present valid picture identification and may be asked to sign students out to ensure safety and accountability. It is imperative that you do not change your child's route of transportation during an emergency. If your child is a bus rider, he/she will go home on the bus even if you are outside the gated area. You are to meet the bus at your home.

- **Alternate pick-up site** – In some emergencies, it may become necessary to move students and staff from their school to an off-campus evacuation location. Due to the unpredictable nature of any emergency, the location of the evacuation site will be announced only at the time of the event. If this occurs, parents will be notified via multiple means, including the district’s electronic messaging system and local media. However, if your child is a bus rider they will go home on the bus from that alternate site. Only regular car riders are to come to that alternate site.
- **Students who remain at school** – If a parent, guardian or authorized designee cannot pick up their child following an emergency, they will remain under staff supervision until the parent, guardian or authorized designee arrives at the school.

### **Emotional Support for Students during Emergencies**

It is important that students feel safe in their schools, especially after a crisis has occurred. Should there be a need, the district can provide counseling services to students and/or staff through the school counselors and school psychologists within our district’s Student Support Services department.

