The Carmel Central School District takes emergency preparedness very seriously. We have a comprehensive district-wide emergency response plan that assists our staff and public safety partners to respond swiftly should an emergency occur. We provide ongoing crisis management training to school administrators and other key staff members throughout the district.

Building level emergency plans are in place at each school. A building-based safety committee oversees the plan for each school and committee members have assigned roles and responsibilities should an emergency occur. These committees meet regularly to review procedures and conduct annual training and drills so that students and staff are aware of the most effective and safe emergency responses.

Safety is our priority

The Carmel Central School District is committed to making school safe for students and staff. We work closely with local and state agencies including police, fire, emergency medical services, and public health officials to ensure that we are well prepared and children are protected.

Please know that should an emergency occur, we will do what is necessary to protect children first and then inform you as accurately and fully as we can. Communication with parents during an emergency is an important priority for the school district. Please be patient and understand if we are unable to respond to you as completely or quickly as you would wish. Our first priority is the safety of your child and the other children and staff in the school.

By definition...

An emergency involves unexpected events and rapidly changing conditions. We train to deal with different kinds of problems, whether caused by natural forces or humans. However, it is impossible to say in advance how we will respond in any particular case. In general, you should know that we will do what is necessary to prevent children first and then inform you as accurately and fully as we can. 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 or will direct you to a safe place where we can brief you on developments.

How to prepare for a school emergency

- Keep your child's emergency information up to date, including alternate phone numbers for you and family/friends you have authorized as your backup. Notify the school promptly if this information changes.
- Talk with 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 are familiar with a safe, alternate site (e.g., a neighbor's house) where they should go if they arrive home unexpectedly to an empty house. This could occur during bad weather, for example, when poor driving conditions may hinder your ability to get home before your child's bus.

What to do during a school emergency

- Do not go to the school or scene of an emergency unless officials ask you to, even though a child may ask you to come, and although that is your first instinct as a parent. Your presence may interfere with emergency response.
- Get accurate information and instructions.
- Look for communication from the school and/or district. This may be in the form of e-mail, phone call, and/or a posting on the district website (http://www.carmelschools.org) and is dependent upon the situation.
- Tune into local radio
- Do not listen to rumors. If your child does contact you, remember that he or she may only know pieces of the larger picture.
- Remain as calm as you can if your child contacts you. They are looking to you for reassurance.

The Carmel Central School District

SCHOOL

EMERGENCY

GUIDE

Some terms that may be used during an emergency situation

Lockdown or Modified Lockdown

Lockdown or modified lockdown is initiated when a school administrator, faculty or staff member has become aware of an actual or imminent threat in which students should be kept in locked rooms within the school building. A lockdown or modified lockdown may be implemented as a result of an intruder in the building, a hostage situation or biological threat. When a lockdown or modified lock-down is announced, school staff will immediately gather students from hallways, restrooms and common areas and lock all classroom and office doors. All students will be accounted for and kept within the locked rooms until the incident is brought to a close by emergency responders or law enforcement personnel.

How do I know the school is in lockdown?

The main entrance doors will be locked, and if possible, a sign will be posted on the front door indicating that the school is in lockdown. The emergency phone notification system will be put into place as swiftly as possible.

What should I do if there is a lockdown?

Do not go to the school. Do not attempt to enter the building. This may jeopardize student and staff safety. We will notify you when it is safe to enter the building. You can obtain information and updates as described in this guide. Try to remain patient and calm until the lockdown order is lifted.

What is the difference between a lockdown and a modified lockdown?

In a lockdown situation, all classroom activity stops and students are sheltered out of sight of windows and doors. In a modified lockdown, teachers can continue to teach, but students and staff are not permitted to move freely around the building.

Lockout

This is the response to an actual or potential threat from outside the school building. An example of such a threat might be an escaped fugitive or criminal activity occurring nearby, outside of the school. When a lockout occurs, all exterior doors and windows are locked and all outside activities are terminated.

Entry to the school building may be gained only through a locked and monitored door. Otherwise, the school day continues as normal.

Shelter in Place

This may occur when there is a threat of or actual weather related incident and the school population needs to move to a predetermined location within the school building. The building-level safety team will be activated and will move the school population to that site(s).

In the case of a bomb threat, the decision to evacuate students or shelter in place is dependent upon information received in the threat and how credible that information is. The school administration will consult with first responders and law enforcement when making that decision.

Evacuation

Each school has procedures for partial or complete evacuation, including a designated safe location to which students may be transported. If students are to be released from the off-site location, parents will be directed where to pick up their children and will be required to sign out their child. A student will be released only to an adult with proper identification and who is documented as an emergency contact.