

SOUTH WINNESHIK COMMUNITY SCHOOL DISTRICT

304 S. Webster Street * PO Box 430 * Calmar, Iowa 52132-0430

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www.southwinn.com

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Dear Parent/Guardian:

RE: School Emergency Procedures

This letter is to inform you the South Winneshiek School District has steps in place to address student and staff safety issues through the adoption of a District-wide Emergency Response Plan. The plan would be implemented in the event of a local disaster or school emergency.

The Emergency Response Plan is a preparatory measure. Statistics show schools are still among the safest places to be on a day-to-day basis, due to the strong commitment of educators, parents, and communities to their children. Nevertheless, disasters do happen and, because of that, no community can be complacent in its efforts to make its schools even safer. For this reason, we have implemented the plan, so please do not be alarmed by this precautionary action.

Drills

Although it is unlikely that the Emergency Response Plan will need to be fully activated at your child's school, the possibility still exists. Therefore, to prepare all members of the school community, including your child, to act on a moment's notice, we will be conducting emergency practice drills at the school. These drills, which will occur on a periodic basis throughout the year, will cover a variety of circumstances. In addition to practicing the drills, we will also be discussing with the students the appropriate actions to take during a number of emergencies. These drills and accompanying discussions are designed to prepare your child to act quickly and to minimize your child's fear should an emergency occur.

Parent-Child Reunification

Some emergencies will require students to evacuate the building and scatter to safe locations. In such an event a reunification site will be determined. The Emergency Response Plan incorporates a systematic approach to reuniting children with their parents. Due to the unpredictable nature of any emergency, we will only be able to tell you where the Parent-Child Reunification Site is located at the time of the emergency. You will be notified of the location via the District's JMC School Messenger system. **Please do not come to the school.**

Reuniting with Your Child

In order to ensure your child's safety, it is necessary for us to establish some protocols related to picking up your child. Therefore, please be advised of the following guidelines when picking up your child from a Parent-Child Reunification Site:

- No student will be released unless you or an individual designated on the student's Emergency Information Card arrives to pick up that student. **It is critical that the information and phone numbers on your child's Emergency Information Card is current.** We will be using this information to contact you through the District's JMC School Messenger system with the evacuation process and location for picking up your child.

•**You will be required to present valid identification.** This step is required to protect your child from any unauthorized individuals attempting to pick up your child. The school will be receiving assistance from outside agencies such as local law enforcement, fire departments, and EMS, therefore, may not know you.

•**You will be required to sign for the release of your child.** This is extremely important as it is our only means of ensuring that all students are accounted for at all times. Please do not just take your child from the Reunification Site without signing for their release. We recognize that you may be worried and want to be reunited with your child as quickly as possible. However, this system has been established to ensure your child's safety. You may be jeopardizing your child's or another child's safety by not adhering to these procedures.

•Should our normal transportation system be unable to transport your child home; your child will be kept at the Reunification Site until such time as you can arrange to pick them up.

•If you are unable to pick up your child, he/she will be kept at the Parent-Child Reunification Site until alternate arrangements can be made. Your child will be supervised at all times.

Keeping Informed During an Emergency

During a real emergency, you probably will not be able to reach the school by phone, as staff will be busy responding to the emergency and the needs of the students. We will, however, make every effort to contact parents, either directly, or through the District's JMC School Messenger system. Additionally, we may utilize local radio and television station broadcasts to relay information.

- **Please do not call the school.**
- **Please do not expect your son or daughter to text or communicate with you via cell phones.**

In the event of an emergency situation, the use of cell phones by too many users can create challenges for emergency management officials. Too much data being passed through cell towers will disrupt communication. Phone lines need to be kept accessible at all times, and overloading the phone system may mean that the school will not be able to communicate with first responders.

The District will also keep parents informed by posting information and updates regarding the emergency on the District's website and voice recordings on the District's JMC School Messenger system.

District's website: www.southwinn.com

Finally, we want you to know that your cooperation in preparing your child for the event of an emergency and helping us to ensure their safety is greatly appreciated. As always, should you have any questions or concerns regarding anything stated in this letter, please feel free to contact your school administrator during regular work hours.

Thank you for your assistance in this matter,

Sincerely,

Kris Einck
Superintendent