

# A Family Guide to School Emergencies



## IOWA-GRANT SCHOOLS

The Iowa-Grant School District is committed to maintaining a safe and secure environment for our students and staff. The District has established policies and procedures that were designed to effectively deal with emergencies in our District and communities. These plans were created by our **District Crisis Planning Team**, in cooperation with our local fire and emergency services, as well as Iowa & Grant County Law Enforcement and Iowa County Emergency Management Services.

## Keep Student Emergency Contact Updated

During an emergency, it is vital that the school district has accurate and up-to-date emergency contact information. Parents and Families will be contacted via text and email using the **School Messenger Notification** service. If your telephone numbers or email addresses change, please contact the office as soon as possible.

## In an Emergency Situation

In an emergency situation, parents will be notified by telephone and email using **School Messenger**. An emergency message will include basic information about the nature of the emergency. It is likely that school phone lines and cell phone usage may be overwhelmed, please DO NOT call the school or come to the school. It is also likely that all roads surrounding the school will be closed to traffic during these events. Students will not be released to parents or families during building emergencies and outside doors will be locked. Please wait for further information regarding the incident and updates via **School Messenger**. We will make every effort to send updates as often as necessary. Depending on the situation, we will establish a reunification point and notify you of the specific location, once it has been established.

The District will communicate with parents in an emergency via:

- School Messenger Notification system
- The District's Facebook page
- Local radio and television stations

The school's phone lines will not be available to take calls during an emergency. Also, the office personnel will not be available to unlock doors or accommodate visitors.

## How Parents Can HELP in Emergency Situations

**Please do not call the school during emergencies.** Our staff will be unavailable to take calls and you may tie up the telephone lines that may be communicating with emergency services.

**Please pick up your child at the Reunification Point.** While we understand that emotions are high in these situations and parents want to be with their child(ren) as quickly as possible, parents who arrive at the school during an emergency will interfere with the ability of emergency personnel to do their jobs. Our goal is to reunite families as quickly as possible at another location.

**PLEASE NOTE: The Iowa-Grant School District will only release students to the adult(s) designated on the Student's Emergency Information. Photo ID will be required at the Reunification Point. Please be calm and patient during the Reunification process, as it is very important that the school follows procedures and verifies that students are released to the proper adults.**



# A Family Guide to Iowa-Grant's Safety Practices and Procedures

The Iowa-Grant School District will conduct a variety of safety drills throughout the school year, so students and staff are familiar with the procedures associated with each of the scenarios.

We encourage parents to talk about the drills to emphasize the need to stay calm, listen carefully, follow instructions, and wait for further instructions. While it is our hope that a real emergency never occurs, these drills are an effective practice to ensure that students and staff know what to expect and what to do in various emergency situations.

## How to Talk with Your Child about School Safety Drills and the Possibility of School Emergency Situations

First and foremost, we reassure children that they are safe and our schools work very hard to ensure each child's safety. We encourage adults not to use words like shooter, gun man, or killer. We encourage limited exposure to news and conversations regarding violence and school threats. We focus on practicing the steps we take in various situations, not the reason. We talk about being safe and staying safe at all times. We talk about listening carefully to the adults and following instructions. We talk about staying calm. We keep the information that we share with children brief and simple, always mindful of the child's age. We give examples about how our school keeps children safe every day, not just in emergencies. We have safety rules in place on the playground, in the hallways, gym, and classrooms.

We also encourage families to discuss and practice their own emergency procedures for their home, including fire and tornado procedures. We always want children to feel safe and secure at home and school.

## At Iowa-Grant:

- We practice **Fire Drills** every month. Our staff is implementing new procedures to improve our efficiency and response in these situations. Because we practice regularly and discuss what to do and expect, our students are more comfortable with these drills and procedures.
- We practice **Tornado Drills** in the spring with a nation-wide Tornado Drill. We notify students that the sirens will be tested and the drill is not only for schools, but also homes and businesses.
- We will practice a **Lockdown Drill** a few times each year, so students and staff feel comfortable with the procedures.
- We cannot possibly plan for every situation, we hope to reassure our students, staff, and families that we are prepared to respond quickly and safely to any situation.

## Learn and Use the Words We Use at School:

**BUILDING SECURE HOLD or LOCKOUT:** In case of a situation outside our building, we might apply a LOCKOUT procedure. We continue with normal routines inside the building, but no one will be allowed in or out of the building during the procedure.

**CLASSROOM HOLD:** In case of a medical situation or various reasons, we might call for a CLASSROOM HOLD so students remain in classrooms and clear the hallways so emergency services can do their job.

**LOCKDOWN:** During a threatening event, we might call for a LOCKDOWN. Children and staff will report to designated areas for their safety. No one will be allowed in or out of the building during the procedure.

**EVACUATION:** If our school building is unsafe, we may have to EVACUATE to another location. If we must leave our schools, we will take students to another town for safety.

**SHELTER:** In case of severe weather, we may take SHELTER precautions in our school. Children and staff will report to designated areas for their safety.