

Dear MERSD Parents and Guardians:

The District created emergency and crisis response plans for each of our school buildings. Police, fire, and emergency response agencies in both Manchester and Essex have reviewed the District's emergency plans. In the event of an emergency, the district will provide immediate, coordinated, and appropriate response to ensure the safety and security of our students and staff.

Our agreement with the Manchester and Essex police departments is that they will be responsible for the "scene" of any situation (e.g. fires, accidents, or acts of violence), and the administrative staff and faculty of the schools will be responsible for the care and safety of students and staff. In the case of a community-wide or larger event, we will follow the directives of Manchester and Essex Police and Fire officials. We have plans to shelter students, to evacuate students to alternate sites, or to send students home.

In the event schools need to be closed, we will make every effort to dismiss at the regular time. We will not send any Essex Elementary, Memorial Elementary, or Middle School student home unless we have verbal confirmation from a parent, guardian, or responsible adult that an adult will be home or that there is an alternate location to which the student may go. We will hold all PK-8 students at our schools or alternative evacuation site until a responsible adult has been contacted and a parent or guardian has confirmed a plan for the release of the student. High School students may be dismissed on an individual basis after the administration has verbally confirmed dismissal with their parents or guardians. We urge you to discuss your family's emergency procedures with your child.

Each school has an alternate site within walking distance to which students can be evacuated. In the case of an emergency that requires shelter or evacuation, we understand your need to find your child. It is our goal to unite parents and children as quickly and as safely as possible. Please do not call the school, as we will be using the phone lines for communication. An important question that has been asked is whether parents can come to the school to pick up their children during an emergency. As long as we deem it safe to do so, parents will be allowed to pick up their children and we will provide an orderly process for documenting such dismissals during the school day. We will provide information and instructions through our website www.mersd.org, and through the local media, as well as the Connect-Ed phone system.

There are some things you can do:

1. Discuss family emergency procedures with your child. How do you contact each other?
 1. Develop contingency plans in the event of an unexpected early release.
 2. Make sure the emergency contact information filed with the school is up to date.

Please be assured that our fundamental goal is to provide students with a safe learning environment. While we hope that our students and staff never face an emergency situation, we will continue to practice our emergency procedures so that students and staff understand what to do if faced with an emergency. If you have any question, please contact my office.

Sincerely,
Marcia Adams O'Neil, Ed.D.
Superintendent of Schools