

Wadsworth City Schools

School Emergency Guide for Parents/Guardians

Wadsworth City Schools is committed to making school safe for students and staff. We work closely with safety officials to maintain a safe environment for our staff, students, and visitors. We have a school safety plan to ensure our staff and our safety officials respond quickly should an emergency occur. In addition, we conduct training and practice sessions on a regular basis during the course of the school year.

The School Emergency Guide for Parents was created to help you better understand your important role in our school safety plans. Open communication between home and school is critical to the safety and well-being of our students. If you have any questions or concerns about school policies or your child's safety, please contact your school building principal or the District School Resource Officer at ainnocenti@wadsworthcity.org.

What Parents Can Do

1. Provide accurate contact information to your child's school, including alternate phone numbers for you and family/friends you have arranged as your backup. Notify the school if this information changes.
2. Talk to your child about the importance of following instructions in the event of an emergency.
3. **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. As such, safety force personnel, when in place, will prohibit parents from reaching school buildings.
4. Get accurate information and directions:
 - a. **Listen for a phone message** – the district uses Alert Now for calling. The system will call the phone number provided to the district.
 - b. **Visit the district website:** www.wadsworth.k12.oh.us.
 - c. **Visit the district Facebook page:** www.facebook.com/WadsworthCitySchools.
 - d. **Tune to the local radio stations.**
5. **Do not listen to rumors or non-official social media commentary.** If your child does contact you, remember that he or she only knows pieces of the larger picture.
6. **Do not respond to a child's request to leave school.** Tell your child to remain calm and to follow instructions from school or safety officials.
7. **Do not call 9-1-1 or the Wadsworth Police or Fire Departments for incident information.** School safety is a priority response for these agencies and answering your calls takes away essential response resources in times of emergencies.

School Emergency Responses

There are several actions that the school may take during an emergency. The following is a description of those responses:

- **Lockdown:** *Used when there is a perceived danger inside the building*
An emergency may prevent the safe evacuation of a school building and require steps to isolate students and staff from danger by instituting a school lockdown. In a lockdown, all students are kept in classrooms or designated locations that are away from danger. Hallways are cleared of students and staff. Staff members are responsible for accounting for students and ensuring that no one leaves the safe area. School personnel will also secure building entrances, ensuring that no unauthorized individuals enter the building.
- **Shelter-In-Place:** *Used during severe weather, issued for neighborhood or other environmental threats (e.g., air contamination due to a local fire)*
Shelter-in-place is a temporary solution to a short-term problem. It is not the school system's intention to detain students any longer than necessary. It is an effort to isolate students and staff from danger. Staff is responsible for accounting for students.
- **Evacuation:** *Used to move students and staff out of the building*
Evacuation means that students and staff must leave the school building for safety reasons. They may move to

an area outside the school or to an offsite location. Schools practice evacuations regularly (often monthly) during fire drills. The evacuation of students from the school campus will be considered only when authorities have determined that occupation of the school campus is unreasonable due to unsafe conditions.

Where to Turn for Information During an Emergency

In an emergency every effort will be made to keep parents informed so they understand the situation and what is being done in response. Families will receive information and instructions from these listed communication sources:

- School: Wait for a call from the school or school district. The school will call the emergency phone numbers on file. You will receive instructions on what to do during an emergency.
- Website: Visit our district website at www.wadsworth.k12.oh.us.
- Visit the district Facebook page: www.facebook.com/WadsworthCitySchools.
- Local TV and Radio stations: Tune in to local TV and radio stations for news alerts.

Important Things to Remember During a School Emergency

- If the school is in a lockdown, ***entrance is limited to school personnel and safety officials.*** All others will wait until the site is secured and the situation is cleared.
- Wait for the school to call you with instructions. Main phone lines will be needed to help with the emergency.
- A designated area will be assigned so you are able to pick up your child(ren). District personnel and safety personnel will be working to help ensure the safety of your child(ren).

Emergency Release of Students to Parents

School officials want to maintain a safe and orderly environment at all times. During an emergency, special procedures are followed to help ensure student safety. School officials have procedures in place to help parents who wish to pick up their child from school. Depending on the emergency conditions, students may be released from a designated area to parents and guardians with proper identification. For safety reasons, children will only be released to an adult that has been properly designated as an emergency contact and who has proper identification. Non-custodial parents who may pick up students must be listed with the child's emergency contact information and also must show proper identification.

Helpful Guidelines to Keep in Mind When Talking with Children about School Safety

For some children, even participation in a drill may cause some emotional distress, especially if it reminds them of a prior crisis event or if they otherwise are feeling vulnerable or anxious. As a parent, you are in the best position to help your child cope. Any conversation with a child must be developmentally appropriate.

- **Young children** need brief, simple information that should be balanced with reassurance. This includes informing children that their school and home are safe (once these are secure) and that adults are available to protect them. Young children often gauge how threatening or serious an event is by adult reactions. This is why, for example, parents are encouraged not to get overly emotional when saying goodbye on the first day of school. Young children respond well to basic assurance by adults and simple examples of school safety, like reminding them the exterior doors are locked.
- **Upper elementary and early middle school children** may be more vocal in asking questions about whether they are truly safe and what is being done at their school. They may need assistance separating reality from fantasy. Parents can share the information they have about the school's safety plan and any other relevant communication to ease their child's mind.
- **Upper middle school and high school students** may have strong and varying opinions about causes of violence in school and society. Parents should stress the role that students have in maintaining safe schools by following the school's safety guidelines (e.g., not providing building access to strangers, reporting strangers on campus, reporting threats to school safety made by students or community members, etc.).