



# Emergency Management

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**THE 7 ESSENTIAL STEPS FOR SCHOOL  
EMERGENCY MANAGEMENT**

## 1. A BROADCAST/COMMUNICATION SYSTEM

A broadcast/communication system that gives the school the ability to **send a one-way notification to any number of parents** – this could be a whole parent body notification as per an emergency lockdown situation, or to a specific group.



There are often emergencies when different messages need to be delivered to different groups of people at particular times during the incident. It's also critical to have the ability to know **who has read the message** that you have sent and who has not. Any system chosen must have this feature, whether it be by text and/or email.

## 2. A CRITICAL INCIDENT TEAM

A critical incident team, which includes an **experienced communication person**. This team needs to rehearse its role and responses and undertake drills for staff and students. Dusting off the manuals during the emergency adds to the stress and confusion that can otherwise be avoided.



The **initial first few minutes are vital** in ensuring the physical and emotional safety of everyone. Every opportunity to appear calm and in control helps lessen fear and regulate heightened emotional states of all involved.

### 3. A CLEAR SET OF PROCEDURES

A clear set of procedures for:

- Who communicates
- What is communicated (remember you have different audiences)
- What group is being communicated to
- Who authorises the message(s)

In your planning, you need to consider that some/all your students and staff have mobile phones and, therefore, will be communicating with family and friends. Depending on your school cohort, you cannot stop this – so **how can you minimise the problems that this might cause** and possibly use it to your advantage?



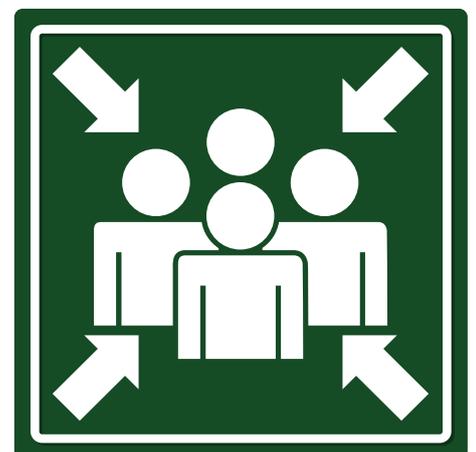
### 4. A CLEAR AND ACTIONABLE MESSAGE

It's not useful for a parent to receive notification of an emergency without instructions telling them what they can or need to do. This means someone, who can work calmly in an emotionally charged situation, has to **create that clear and succinct message.**

### 5. ASSEMBLY AREA

An assembly area **away from the incident** where, parents, families, local residents can gather and be briefed, and kept informed, of what is occurring, in real time.

Clear and precise information will not remove all fear but it will certainly **lessen the anxiety.** Family and friends should also be considered people that need to be assisted.





## 6. A MEDIA PLAN FOR WHEN THE MEDIA BECOME INVOLVED

It is important to be clear **who is speaking officially** for the school. This is often in coordination with the emergency services on the scene.

## 7. ENSURE THERE IS A REVIEW PROCESS AFTER THE INCIDENT

Like all emergency plans, a **review of how communication worked** during the incident is vital. This should include all participants. By continuing to learn about your community and their preferences, you get to improve your effectiveness. **An online survey is an easy and effective** way to collect this information, sort out meaningful trends and improve.

The media will seek out anyone willing to make a comment. Unfortunately, the more emotional the person, the more likely they are to be approached.

We have seen in past instances, along with the Principal of a school, **distraught and concerned parent(s) comments sought to add 'human interest' to the story.** Often parents arriving at the scene do not have all the facts and are highly emotional, so they are speaking out of fear, confusion and anxiety.





# Get in touch

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