



# A Parent Guide to School Emergencies

The Metropolitan School District of Washington Township (MSDWT) is committed to maintaining a safe and secure learning environment for our students and staff. The School District has established policies and procedures that have been designed to effectively deal with an emergency incident should it occur in our School District and community. These policies have been established in cooperation with the MSDWT's District Safety Committee, its school safety specialists as well as the Indianapolis Metropolitan Police Department, Indianapolis Fire Department and the Indianapolis Department of Homeland Security, which continue to be valuable partners in our effort to maintain a safe and secure school environment.

Each of our schools has its own building emergency plan, specific to the staff, the facility and the students in that school. Each school also has a school emergency response team (SERT) which reviews the plan regularly with our school resource officers and other public safety partners. Additionally, we conduct safety drills in collaboration with the IMPD, IFD and other community response teams to ensure our plans are being implemented correctly and to allow us to make adjustments as necessary.

The District has established a District Safety Committee comprised of District administrators, teachers, community members, school resource officers and first responders (police/fire/ EMS) to address any issues or concerns and provide feedback regarding the District's safety procedures.

## Visiting Our Schools

All MSDWT schools have updated secure entrances. Parents are welcome visitors to our schools, and we ask that you comply with our visitor procedures in order to maintain a safe environment for our students and staff.

- All visitors will be required to use the building's Main Entrance and identify themselves and their purpose for visiting to the office personnel, who will allow visitors to enter the building.
- Upon entrance, visitors are to go directly to the main office to present valid photo identification and obtain a Visitor's pass, which must be worn during the visit.
- Visitor instructions are posted at the Main Entrance of all school facilities.

**PLEASE NOTE: Weapons of any kind are STRICTLY prohibited inside any MSDWT district property.**

## How Parents Can Help in Emergency Situations

For the safety of everyone, parents are asked to wait for instructions from the school district regarding how you can be reunited with your child in an emergency situation.

- Please do not call the school during an emergency. If you call the school during an emergency, you will probably not be able to speak with anyone, and you may tie up telephone lines that could be used for communicating with 911 and other first responders.
- Please refrain from going to your child's school and follow the instructions from the school district regarding where and when you can be reunited with your child. Our goal is to get you reunited with your child as quickly as possible, and parents who arrive at the school in an emergency situation only delay the reunification process.
- Please pick up your child at the designated Relocation Site. While we understand that emotions are high in an emergency situation and parents want to be reunited with their child as quickly as possible, parents who arrive at the school in an emergency will interfere with the ability of first responders to do their jobs.

**PLEASE NOTE:** The MSDWT will release students **ONLY** to the adult(s) designated on the student's Emergency Information Card. **Photo ID WILL BE REQUIRED.** Please be patient during the reunification process, as it is important to verify that students are being released to the proper adult.

### Keep your Emergency Information Current

During an emergency, it is vital that the school district have accurate and up-to-date emergency contact information for all students. In an emergency, the District will contact parents via telephone and email using the School Messenger Notification Service. If your

telephone number(s) changes, please contact the main office at all of your children's schools to get your updated contact information immediately entered into the student database.

## Safety Practices and Procedures

The MSDWT conducts a variety of safety drills throughout the school year, so students and staff can become familiar with the procedures associated with each of the scenarios, including fire, weather and other emergency procedures.

We encourage parents to talk about the drills with their children to emphasize the need to stay calm, not be scared, listen carefully, follow instructions and to take the drills seriously. While it is our hope that a real emergency never occurs, these drills are an effective way to ensure that students and staff know and can follow the procedures in an emergency situation.

The MSDWT has trained its staff in standardized response protocols, including:

- **Hold and Secure:** Used to protect building occupants from potential dangers outside the building.
- **Lockdown:** Used to protect building occupants from potential dangers **INSIDE** the building or from external threats that may imminently enter the building.
- **Evacuation:** Used when conditions are safer on the outside than from the inside of the building.
- **Shelter-in-Place:** Used when hazardous materials have been released into the environment when the safest action is to remain indoors and prevent exposure.
- **Severe Weather Shelter:** Implemented during a severe weather emergency, such as tornados or earthquakes.