



Saskatoon
Public
Schools



GREATER
SASKATOON
CATHOLIC
SCHOOLS

Working Together for Safe Schools

Saskatoon schools have well-developed partnerships in our community. We work closely with the Saskatoon Police Service and Saskatoon Fire and Protective Services to help ensure that our schools are safe places to be. With their help we have developed, and regularly review, our safety plans. These plans enable our staff to effectively and efficiently respond to any emergencies and crisis situations that may arise in our schools.

Parents and guardians also play a role in working with all partners in keeping our students safe. This document provides you with information on school safety planning.

School safety plans

Prevention is the best defence against a crisis occurring. That is why we prepare safety plans and why we practise drills in our schools. All schools have developed safety plans for many different scenarios. In each instance the situation is assessed, a level of response is identified, and action is taken. These actions will depend on the specific incident. For example, one or more schools may evacuate, lockdown, or initiate a shelter in place response, according to the nature of the event.

Our school staff works directly with Saskatoon police officers and firefighters who provide us with advice on the best way to respond to a potential event. They are the experts.

Key objectives in all event responses are to:

- Make sure everyone is safe
- Make sure schools have the supports they need
- Ensure timely and accurate communication during and after the incident
- Bring the incident to a prompt and safe solution
- Ensure timely continuation of classes
- Ensure appropriate debriefing and follow-up

Flexibility is a key component of each school's plan and of school division-wide preparations. If police officers and/or firefighters are involved in the incident, school staff members follow their instructions.

Evacuation

Each school has determined an alternate safe location in the event of an evacuation. Parents and guardians are made aware of this safe location through school newsletters and handbooks. Parents and guardians are contacted by school staff in the event of an evacuation. They are informed if students will be evacuated to the safe location or if they are expected to come to the school to pick up their child(ren). Information is also shared with the media and updates are provided via radio and television newscasts.

Cancellation of classes due to severe weather

In cases of severe weather, there may be instances where schools cancel classes and invoke their emergency dismissal procedures. Closing schools is a rare occurrence. If classes are cancelled, at a minimum, a staff member will always be in the building in case a student shows up at the school.

Each school principal is responsible for developing a response plan for the emergency dismissal of students and ensuring that all parents and guardians are aware of the plan. Many factors are taken into consideration when deciding to cancel classes, but the safety of students and staff is the number one consideration.



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Shelter in place

During a shelter in place, staff and students remain in the school. Staff members secure the school, including windows and the ventilation system. No one is allowed to enter or leave the building until the appropriate public safety agencies declare it safe to do so. For example, a shelter in place may occur during severe weather or if there is a hazardous material spill in the neighbourhood.

School lockdowns

An emergency may prevent the safe evacuation of a school and require a specific response to protect students and staff in the building. In this instance, staff institute a school lockdown. Depending on the danger, two different lockdown levels may be used.

- A perimeter lockdown is used when an emergency happens near the school and requires an enhanced level of safety. School exterior doors are locked to ensure that no individuals leave or enter the building. Individuals are only allowed to exit and enter via the front doors of the school with the approval of school administration.
- A school lockdown alerts staff and students that an imminent danger exists inside or just outside the school. School personnel lock classroom doors and windows. Students and staff move away from windows and doors and remain in their classrooms until directed by emergency personnel that it is safe to leave.

Our school divisions also have plans in place to address other disruptive events including power outages, water main breaks and severe weather.

Prevention is the best defence against a crisis occurring.

Ways that parents/guardians can help in an emergency:

- Be familiar with your school's safety plan and discuss the plan with members of your family.
- Provide current emergency contact names and phone numbers at the beginning of each school year. Inform the school of any changes to emergency contact information.
- Do not call the school in emergency situations. Phone lines must remain open for staff to communicate with emergency personnel and with families.
- Do not come to the school site during lockdowns and shelter in place situations. It may not be safe to do so and your presence may complicate the emergency response.
- Please attempt to limit cell phone use during wide-scale events such as severe weather, in order to prevent overloading of the phone system.

In emergency situations, parents and guardians are kept informed through local radio and television newscasts.

If you have any questions about what is in this brochure, or would like more information on your school's safety plan, please contact the principal at your school.

A copy of this brochure is also available on the internet at:

- Conseil des écoles francsaskoises at: www.cefsk.ca
- Greater Saskatoon Catholic Schools at: www.gscs.sk.ca
- Saskatoon Public Schools at: www.saskatoonpublicschools.ca
- Saskatoon Fire & Protective Services at: www.saskatoon.ca under Fire and Protective Services
- Saskatoon Police Service at: www.saskatoonpoliceservice.ca