

SAMPLE Parent Letter on Emergency Procedures - Before an Incident Occurs

(Insert Letterhead)

(Insert date)

Dear Parent(s)/Guardian(s):

Should an emergency or disaster situation ever arise in our area while school is in session, we want you to be aware that the school has prepared to respond effectively. In fact, public schools in New Mexico are built to meet stringent construction standards and may even be safer than many homes in the event of a disaster.

Should we have a major disaster/emergency during school hours, your student(s) will be cared for at this school. Our school has a detailed crisis plan, which has been formulated to respond to major catastrophes.

Parent/guardian cooperation is imperative during an emergency. Please adhere to the following instructions in case of emergency:

1. Please do not telephone the school. Telephone lines may be needed for emergency communication. See #3 below for alternatives for communications.
2. In the event of a serious emergency, students will be kept at school until they are picked up by a responsible adult who has been pre-identified on the school emergency contact card, which is required to be filled out by parents/guardians at the beginning of every school year. Please instruct your child to remain at school until you or a designee arrives. It is recommended that you consider the following criteria when you authorize another person to pick up your child at school:
 - He/she is 18 years of age or older.
 - He/she is usually home during the day.
 - He/she could walk to school, if necessary.
 - He/she is known to your child.
 - He/she is both aware of and able to assume this responsibility.

For emergency announcements, go to the school website, local media channels, and social media and the apps. In addition, information regarding day-to-day school operations will be available by calling the District Office at _____.

If you opted into our mass notification system, you will also be notified via **phone, and/or e-mail** as soon as possible during an emergency.

It is important that we have your correct phone number and e-mail address so that you will receive these messages. Please do not call the school or your child's cell phone during an emergency, as phone lines will need to remain clear for emergency services.

Impress upon your children the need for them to follow the directions of any school personnel during an emergency.

During some emergencies, students may be taken to an off-campus relocation site. If this occurs, the school's relocation and family reunification plan will be activated, which means that students will be released from the relocation site only to custodial parents/guardians or persons identified on the school emergency card. It is recommended that parents/guardians familiarize themselves with the school's relocation and reunification plan, so that you have a better understanding of the protocols that may be utilized in this circumstance.

The decision to keep students at school will be based upon, among other factors, whether streets in the area are open and/or safe for travel. If an early release occurs, radio stations will be notified, and the school/district website will post relevant information. If a natural disaster takes place during the time that students are being transported, students will be kept on the bus and the driver will ask for assistance through radio contact with the school and district personnel. Any child who is home waiting for the bus will not be picked up (if roads are impassable) and remains the responsibility of the parent/guardian. In the event a natural disaster occurs in the afternoon, the driver will make every attempt to continue delivering the students to their homes. Should road or weather conditions prevent the driver from delivering students to their homes or to school in the morning, the students will be delivered to the nearest school site, and that school will communicate with the home school to inform them of the student's whereabouts. Parents will then be notified accordingly with instructions on how and where to pick up your student.

In case of a hazardous material release near the school, shelter-in-place procedures will be implemented to provide in-place protection from the outside elements. All students and staff will clear the fields, report to their rooms and all efforts will be made to prevent outside air from entering classrooms during the emergency. "Shelter-in-Place" signs will be placed in classroom windows or hung outside classroom doors during a drill or emergency. Students arriving at school during a shelter-in-place drill or event should report to the school office or to a previously designated area at the school, because classrooms will be inaccessible. When the dangerous incident has subsided, or drill has ended, the all-clear signal will be given, and classrooms will again be accessible.

Please discuss these matters with your children and immediate family members. Planning will help alleviate concern and confusion during emergencies.

Sincerely,