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EMERGENCY PROCEDURE
MANAGING STUDENT RELEASE

PLANNING FOR EMERGENCIES

The District/School Emergency Plan will be implemented by a district or school administrator when conditions exist to warrant its execution. Emergency and disaster functions have been identified and pre-assigned by the principal or site administrator. The procedures are designed to assist the staff and students in a safe and orderly response to any emergency.

Student Release: Certain situations may involve releasing students from school or relocating them at a time when parents expect their children to be at the school site. Such actions are authorized by the superintendent or principal only in times of extreme emergency. Whenever possible, it is preferred that students remain at school during the academic day.

SEMS: The Standardized Emergency Management System (SEMS) is required by Government Code §8607(a) for managing response to multi-agency and multi-jurisdictional emergencies. By standardizing key elements of the emergency management system, SEMS facilitates the flow of communication and coordination among all responding agencies. Use of SEMS will improve mobilization, deployment, utilization, tracking, and demobilization of needed mutual aid resources.

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**FREQUENTLY ASKED QUESTIONS.
- CONSIDER THESE BEFORE AN EMERGENCY -**

BY PARENTS.

- φ How does a parent update information on the Student Release Emergency Card
- φ Whom does a parent call after an emergency to find out about the situation at school?
- φ If a parent can't get to school for early student release, what should the parent do?
- φ Does the school maintain a list of who is authorized to pick up each student?
- φ Can a parent phone in authorization for student pick up?
- φ Is a signed note brought in by an adult acceptable to authorize student pick up?
- φ How does a parent find out what will happen next after an emergency?
- φ What if it is unsafe for the child to return home?
- φ How can a parent volunteer to help out during the emergency?
- φ If a child is injured and needs immediate medical treatment, who notifies the parent?

BY STUDENTS.

- φ Can students who live nearby walk home without being released to an adult?
- φ Can a visiting relative pick up a student if the relative is not listed as an authorized adult?
- φ When should students return to school after a campus emergency?

BY STAFF.

- φ How will staff at the Student Request Gate know which students are absent, injured, receiving treatment at the First Aid Station, missing or in the restroom?
- φ How should a hostile or belligerent parent be handled, and by whom?
- φ Will parent custody restrictions apply when students are released during a school emergency?
- φ How are students contained in an assembly area that has no natural blockades?
- φ What happens during an emergency when some classes are outside and some are inside the school?
- φ What information about student status should be released to unauthorized adults?

STUDENT RELEASE SET-UP, STEP-BY-STEP.

1. Incident Commander (usually school principal, site administrator or designee): Set up Incident Command Post (ICP). Notify staff of school evacuation and communicate that this is not a drill. Designate the Student Assembly Area or direct teachers to a pre-designated spot. Analyze situation; re-evaluate evacuation spot to determine if students should be moved. Determine medical and assistance needs after population assessment. Determine search and rescue needs. Reassess as situation changes. Keep staff informed as to status of missing students. Reassign emergency teams as needed.
2. Teachers/Staff: Evacuate students to designated area, with students grouped as determined by district or school site. Take roll. Report population assessment to Incident Commander by holding up green or red card. Mark rollsheets with student status beside name: A=Absent; M=Medical for injured students taken to the First Aid station; U=Missing/Unaccounted. Send rollsheets to the Student Request Gate. Organize students. Monitor students' medical and emotional condition. Extra staff should partner for other assigned duties; report to Command Post.
3. Student Release Team: Take supplies to designated Request/Release Gate locations. Set out tables at least 20 feet apart to reduce crowding. For large student body, establish several lines at the Request Gate for speedier processing. Post signs and set out file boxes of Student Emergency Cards for each line. Identify volunteer runners and review where to find students. Wear identifying vests or hats. Distribute clipboards with Student Request Forms to parents in line. Set out white board for special instructions and parent requests. Pull cards of absent, injured and missing students. Note status on those cards and file at back of file box.
4. Traffic Controller(s): Set out parking area directional signs, traffic cones and enlarged site map. Keep parent vehicles from blocking access by first responders.

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PARENT NOTIFICATION.

It is important that parents understand procedures that they and school staff must follow in the event students are released prior to the end of the academic day. All adults should be prepared to provide photo identification in order to have a child released to them.

Attempts to notify parents as to the situation should be made as soon as possible. Multiple forms of communication should be used such as: telephone tree, website alert, radio announcement and school hotline. Notification messages by telephone should be kept direct and short. Two sample parent notification messages follow:

"This is [*caller's name*] from [*school name*], calling to inform you that due to [*type of emergency*], we are evacuating the school. The students will be dismissed at [*time*]. Regular bus transportation [*will/will not*] be provided. Call the school hotline for updates."

"This is [*caller's name*] from [*school name*], calling to inform you that due to [*type of emergency*], we must evacuate the school beginning at [*time*]. The children are being transported to [*location/address*]. You may pick up your child at [*school or evacuation site/address/cross street*]. Please park only in the areas designated by signs so that safety officials can get through. Please show your photo ID to pick up your child."

If a disaster renders the school unsafe and unable to be occupied, PARENTS SHOULD NOT CALL THE SCHOOL and tie up the school phones. Use the designated hotline for a recorded message.

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POPULATION ASSESSMENT.

Immediately upon evacuation, it is essential to make a population assessment and communicate the results to the Incident Commander. The objective of the initial assessment is to communicate within three to five minutes a preliminary understanding of any immediate, life-threatening emergencies and to provide a *general* understanding of the location and condition of the entire staff and student body. This information enables the Incident Commander to make critical decisions based upon the magnitude of the incident.

As soon as a classroom has evacuated, teacher or staff member should:

- ❑ TAKE ROLL by use of rollsheets;
- ❑ MARK STATUS of students, if known.
- ❑ SEND rollsheet of unaccounted students to the Request Gate immediately;
- ❑ RAISE a colored status card, provided in the teacher's emergency backpack:

GREEN = All clear: all students accounted for, no other problems

RED = Need assistance: student injured, gas odor, damaged building

The colored cards are used to:

- ❑ PROVIDE a fast and simple overview of the campus emergency;
- ❑ ENABLE the Incident Commander to determine whether immediate assistance is needed;
- ❑ INFORM the Incident Commander of problems (e.g., that a staff member may be missing or a class has not yet evacuated the school).

A secondary population assessment provides a more specific overview of the location and condition of the student and staff population. This may be done five or ten minutes later, after reports are received from outlying areas (e.g., bathrooms, offices, etc.) and the physical location and medical condition of missing students are further confirmed.

If an emergency occurs after the initial assessment (e.g., a student goes into shock or a building hazard occurs), the red card should be held up until acknowledgment of the message is received from the Incident Commander.

STUDENT RELEASE POLICIES.

- ❑ No student will be released from school early unless a parent, guardian or authorized adult comes for the child.
- ❑ **No student will be allowed to leave with another person, even a relative, unless the school has prior written permission from the parent/guardian or the individual is designated on the student's Emergency/Evacuation Card.**
- ❑ Parents should come to school as soon as it is safe to pick up the child and others for whom he or she is authorized.
- ❑ Parents must leave the driveway and parking areas clear for emergency vehicles.
- ❑ All parents or designated adults who come to pick up students must show a photo ID.
- ❑ Parents will not be able pick up their children directly from the Student Assembly Area. They must sign out the student at the school office or designated Student Release Gate before the child will be released from the campus.
- ❑ Adults and students should leave the campus as quickly as possible after being reunited

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STUDENT RELEASE OVERVIEW.

Release of students may be advised by public safety officials or authorized by the principal or superintendent whenever a condition exists warranting such action. Such conditions include earthquake, flood, severe winter storm, etc.

Parents should be advised of release criteria and procedures, in writing, at the beginning of each school year. Guidelines may be modified for the release of students as long as they are released in a safe and orderly manner.

When the decision has been made to release students, local Fire and Police Departments will be notified, along with the Sutter County Office of Education. School closure and reopening will also be reported to radio stations by the school administrator.

- φ All students will remain under the supervision and care of the school until released to a parent or authorized designee.
- φ **Students will only be released to a parent, guardian or authorized adult listed on the Student Emergency/Evacuation Card.**
- φ Students must be signed out by a parent, guardian or authorized representative.
- φ Students who are not picked up or who are unable to proceed home will be kept at the school or at the designated alternative shelter.
- φ Parents should notify the persons designated as emergency contacts for their children so that they are aware that such authorization has been given and are aware of any medical needs of the child.

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STAFF ASSIGNMENTS.

Operations Section

STUDENT RELEASE TEAM process and assists staff with the release of students to parents and designated adults. May include student (runners) and parent (traffic control) volunteers.

STUDENT REQUEST GATE (also called PARENT CHECK-IN TABLE)

Minimum of two staff members (number of staff depends on size of campus)

- ❑ **CHECK** attendance roster. Pull Emergency Cards of absent students, note status on cards and file alphabetically in back of filebox. Check remaining nametags and student status sent in by teachers. Pull cards of missing and injured students, note status on cards and store separately. Send remaining nametags and injury report to Incident Commander by runner.
- ❑ **DISTRIBUTE** Student Request Forms on clipboards. Ask parents to complete a separate Request Form for each student they wish to pick up.
- ❑ **VERIFY** adult's ID and Student Emergency Card to determine if adult is authorized to pick up student. Note verification on Student Request Form.
- ❑ **SEND** parent/authorized adult to Student Release Gate after verification process. Send runner with Student Request Form to Student Assembly Area to retrieve student.

STUDENT RELEASE GATE (also called REUNION TABLE)

Minimum of two staff members

- ❑ **CHECK** that parent has signed Student Request Form, given destination and phone number.
- ❑ **RELEASE** student to parent, guardian or authorized adult, along with student's medication, if applicable. Note time released on Request Form.
- ❑ **ALPHABETIZE** signed Request Forms.
- ❑ **RESPOND** to requests for release/destination information only to authorized adults.

PARENT INFORMATION REPRESENTATIVE.

Staff member and/or trained volunteer

- ❑ **PROVIDE** information about student release procedures to parents.
- ❑ **MAINTAIN** white board with special information.
- ❑ **LEARN** which students need medical attention and attempt to locate their parents.

CRISIS INTERVENTION COUNSELOR.

Health practitioner

- ❑ **MAINTAIN** order at Student Request Gate; calm agitated parents and students.
- ❑ **FACILITATE** delivery of information to parents of students with special circumstances (e.g. missing, injured, deceased).
- ❑ **ESCORT** parents to First Aid Station to reunite with injured students.

RUNNERS.

Staff, students and/or parent volunteers (number depends on size of campus)

- ❑ **TAKE** Student Request Form to Student Assembly Area to find requested student. Alternately, a walkie-talkie may be used to request a student from the Assembly Area.
- ❑ **RETRIEVE** student and escort him/her to Student Release Gate -OR- return to Student Request Gate with status information on those who are not in the Student Assembly Area.

TRAFFIC/CROWD CONTROLLER.

Staff member(s) and/or parent volunteers

- ❑ **MAINTAIN** order in parking areas; direct cars away from areas for emergency vehicles.
- ❑ **REPORT** to Incident Command Post any crowd control issues in parking lot and on school grounds

TRAFFIC FLOW

Parking at many schools is limited. In times of an emergency, the first responders—fire officials, law enforcement and public works—need priority access to the campus for their vehicles.

- ❑ For the safety of all, traffic should be directed by signs, cones and staff.
- ❑ Spaces for emergency vehicular parking should be cordoned off with traffic cones and/or caution tape.
- ❑ Post a large site map near the main parking area with a walking path designated for parents picking up students.
- ❑ Color-coded signs are useful; e.g., yellow signs identifying the Student Request Table and yellow for student requests; green for the Student Release Table.
- ❑ Schools with no room for parent parking and turnaround may develop a student release procedure that enables students to be released directly to the authorized adult's vehicle.

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CROWD CONTROL / PARENT INFORMATION REPRESENTATIVE.

For every student, there may be at least one adult descending on the campus in an emergency.

Be prepared for the following:

- ❑ Traffic jams which block emergency vehicles;
- ❑ Crowd control problems on campus; and
- ❑ Unreasonable, agitated and demanding parents.

Designate a Parent Information Representative to:

- ❑ Answer procedural questions;
- ❑ Maintain order in lines of parents waiting to request and reunite with students;
- ❑ Manage unusual situations that may cause a bottleneck at the Student Request Gate;
- ❑ Locate and escort parents of injured students to the First Aid Station; and
- ❑ Calm anxious parents.

Set up a white message board in parking lot or main parent access area to assist with emergency communication. The white board can communicate:

- ❑ Dangerous areas on campus to avoid;
- ❑ Streets that are blocked by emergency vehicles, downed trees or other structural impediments;
- ❑ Names of parents to report to the Parent Information Station;
- ❑ School hotline number for recorded updates; and
- ❑ Directions to new site if students are relocated.

PARENTS SHOULD NOT ATTEMPT TO PICK UP THEIR CHILDREN DIRECTLY FROM THE STUDENT ASSEMBLY AREA. Students will only be released to individuals authorized by a parent or guardian on the Student Emergency/Evacuation Card. Parents and authorized adults are required to go first to the Student Request Gate and to sign out at the Student Release Gate before the child will be released from the campus.

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STAFF PROCEDURES FOR STUDENT RELEASE

REQUEST GATE (also called PARENT CHECK-IN TABLE)

- ❑ **USE** a file box of Student Emergency/Evacuation Cards for each Student Request line, with cards filed in alphabetical order.
- ❑ **CHECK** Emergency Cards against roster of absent students. NOTE absent status on students' cards and move those cards to the back of the file box (in alphabetical order).
- ❑ **CHECK** Emergency Contact Cards against nametag sheets with status noted by teachers after population assessment. NOTE on Emergency Cards which students have been taken to the First Aid Station.
- ❑ **REMOVE** nametags of absent students. Send remaining nametag sheets to ICP.
- ❑ **PROVIDE** Student Request Forms on a clipboard for parents to fill out. ASK parents to pick up all students for whom they are authorized and complete a Request Form for each.
- ❑ **VERIFY** photo ID. CHECK Emergency Card to verify adult is authorized for pickup. **WRITE** initials on Request Form to note that both ID and authorization have been checked.
- ❑ **NOTE** parent check-in time on Request Form and hand form to runner. MOVE requested student's Emergency Card to the back of the file box (in alphabetical order).

RUNNERS.

- ❑ **SHOW** Student Request Form to teacher in Student Assembly Area. Teacher calls student forward and notes student status on teacher roster.
- ❑ **ESCORT** student to Student Release Gate. Return to Student Request Gate.
- ❑ **RETURN** to Student Request Gate with student status information if student is not in area.

RELEASE GATE.

- ❑ **VERIFY** Request Form is completed with signature, destination and telephone.
- ❑ **DIRECT** parents with questions or injured children to Parent Information Station.
- ❑ **HAVE** counselor available to assuage parent and student concerns.
- ❑ **ASK** parents and students to clear the campus grounds as soon as they are reunited.
- ❑ **FILE** completed Student Request Forms alphabetically.

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SUPPLIES FOR STUDENT RELEASE.

ASSEMBLY AREA

- Bullhorn with extra batteries
- Heavy duty garbage bags (in the event of rain)
- Master roster of students, per teacher
- Minor first aid supplies
- Portable AM/FM radio with extra batteries
- Two-way radios
- Water packets
- Whistles
- Preprinted nametags for each student by class
- Yellow caution tape and duct tape
- Hats or vests to identify emergency staff and volunteers

STUDENT REQUEST/RELEASE GATES

- Folding tables (minimum two)
- Folding chairs (minimum four)
- Student Emergency Contact Cards, alphabetized in file box(es)
- Blank Student Request Forms
- File box(es) for Student Request Forms
- Master roster of students and staff – copies for Request and Release Gates
- Current Attendance roster for Request Gate
- Managing Student Release Guide
- Hats or vests to identify emergency staff and volunteers
- Clipboards (many) and pens for Student Request Forms
- Clerical supplies (pens, paper, clips, stapler, rubber bands, pencils, tape, Post-its, etc.)
- 5x7" notepads
- Alphabetical dividers for Student Emergency Contact Cards and Student Request Forms

TRAFFIC/CROWD CONTROL

- Directional signs
- Traffic cones
- Caution tape
- Site map (enlarged) with key areas highlighted: First Aid Station, Request/Release Gates
- Handouts of site map highlighted with walking area to Student Request Gate
- Blank signboard and felt pens
- Two-way radios
- 5x7" notepads
- White board for messages to parents
- Hats or vests to identify emergency staff and volunteers
- Duct tape

ACTION MATRIX (SIMULTANEOUS ACTIONS).

ADMINISTRATION / STAFF	TEACHERS	STUDENTS	PARENTS
<input type="checkbox"/> Set up ICP <input type="checkbox"/> Set up communication	<input type="checkbox"/> Evacuate students	<input type="checkbox"/> Evacuate with teacher	<input type="checkbox"/> Report to Request Gate
<input type="checkbox"/> Set-up Student Request and Release Gates <input type="checkbox"/> Place traffic cones and signs to direct parking	<input type="checkbox"/> Apply nametags to students; take roll and assess population <input type="checkbox"/> Hold up colored Assessment Card	<input type="checkbox"/> Remain at designated evacuation area until further instructions	<input type="checkbox"/> Complete Student Request Form for each student requested; hand form to Request Gate and show photo ID. <input type="checkbox"/> Wait patiently while ID and authorization are checked
<input type="checkbox"/> Check attendance roster. Pull, note cards of absent students and file in back. Remove nametags of absent students and send other nametags to EOC <input type="checkbox"/> Note cards of missing, injured students and store separately	<input type="checkbox"/> Note absent, injured students on remaining nametags and send nametags to Request Gate <input type="checkbox"/> Send injured students to First Aid station	<input type="checkbox"/> Injured students to First Aid station	
<input type="checkbox"/> Verify ID and authorization; and note on Request Form. <input type="checkbox"/> File requested student cards at back of file box	<input type="checkbox"/> Extra staff partner for other assigned duties; report to ICP	<input type="checkbox"/> Remain at designated evacuation area until requested	<input type="checkbox"/> Move to Release Gate to reunite with requested student(s)
<input type="checkbox"/> Give Request Form to runner; runner to Assembly Area to retrieve student	<input type="checkbox"/> Call requested student forward; release to runner	<input type="checkbox"/> Accompany runner to Release Gate to meet up with parent or authorized adult	<input type="checkbox"/> Wait patiently at Release Gate until called.
<input type="checkbox"/> Runner escorts student to Release Gate then returns to Request Gate	<input type="checkbox"/> Note students released on roll sheet		<input type="checkbox"/> Show photo ID at Release Gate
<input type="checkbox"/> Check parent ID again at Release Gate. Runner returns to Request Gate for next student	<input type="checkbox"/> Monitor students' medical/emotional condition at all times	<input type="checkbox"/> Reunite with adult. Leave campus together immediately	<input type="checkbox"/> Sign out at Release Gate; note time, phone and destination
<input type="checkbox"/> Medical situation: Direct parents to Parent Information Station or crisis intervention counselor	<input type="checkbox"/> As students are released, extra staff report to ICP	<input type="checkbox"/> Taken by staff to First Aid Station, if necessary	<input type="checkbox"/> Medical: Escorted to First Aid Station by crisis management staff
<input type="checkbox"/> Release Gate staff file signed Request Forms alphabetically			<input type="checkbox"/> Reunite with student. Leave immediately.
<input type="checkbox"/> Communicate with ICP to reassign teams as needed			

SITE PLAN.

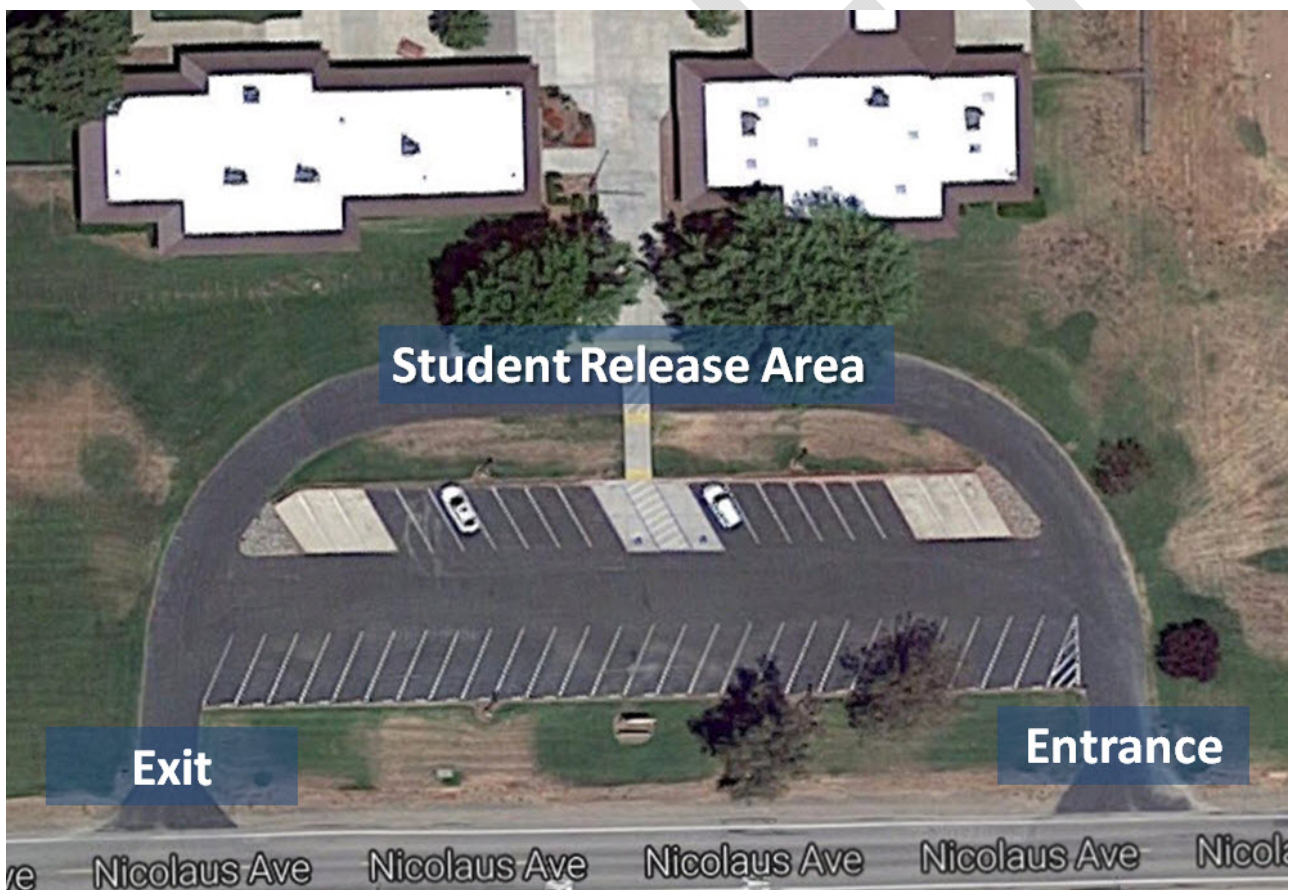
Each school should identify an interior and exterior area where students will be kept until they are released to an authorized adult.

- φ If the building is safe, schools may release students directly from their individual classrooms.
- φ If the building must be evacuated, choose an appropriate location that is safe from hazards or after shocks and secure. It should have natural or man-made barriers so that there is only one access point for maximum security. Otherwise, students may attempt to escape the campus, and parents may try to take their children without going through the check-in/sign-out process.

Post an enlarged site map in the parking area or highly visible spot, with the following areas highlighted:

- φ Student Request Gate and Student Release Gate (optional)
- φ First Aid Station
- φ Parent Information Station
- φ Emergency Vehicle Parking
- φ Parent Parking Area
- φ Incident Command Post

MARK A WALKING PATH from the parking area to the Student Request Gate, to keep parents from straying and away from potential danger or interference with other emergency response activities.



ADVICE FOR PARENTS.

1. **PREPARE YOUR CHILD.** Children who are prepared experience less fear and hysteria. Let your child know who can make the pickup at school if you are unable to do so. Reassure your child that he/she will be cared for until you arrive.
2. **KEEP YOUR CHILD'S EMERGENCY CONTACT CARD UP-TO-DATE.** The only people other than yourself who will be allowed to pick up your child are those whom you authorize on the Student Release Emergency Card. No student will be allowed to leave with another person, even a relative, unless the school has prior written permission from the parent/guardian.
3. **REMAIN CALM.** Your child is probably safer at school in the event of a disaster. School personnel are certified in CPR, First Aid and Emergency Preparedness. In the event of a disaster, school staff are designated as Disaster Service Workers and must remain with your children at all times for up to 72 hours after the emergency.
4. **DO NOT CALL THE SCHOOL AND TIE UP THE SCHOOL PHONE.** Use the designated hotline for a recorded message. Phone lines will be needed for emergency communications.
5. **WALK FROM YOUR HOME, IF POSSIBLE.** Leave the streets free for emergency vehicles. You may get to school faster by foot or bicycle.
6. **PARK ONLY IN AREAS DESIGNATED FOR PARENTS.** Leave adequate room for emergency vehicles to park and turn around.
7. **DO NOT ATTEMPT TO PICK UP YOUR CHILD DIRECTLY FROM THE STUDENT ASSEMBLY AREA.** Parents and authorized adults must first report to the Student Request Gate.
8. **BRING A PHOTO ID WITH YOU TO THE STUDENT REQUEST GATE.** Students will only be released to their parents or to an adult designated on the Student's Emergency Contact Card.
9. **PICK UP ALL STUDENTS FOR WHOM YOU ARE AUTHORIZED.**
10. **SIGN OUT AT THE STUDENT RELEASE GATE.** The staff will locate and bring your child to you. No student will be released without a parent signature, noting time of release, destination and phone number.
11. **LEAVE THE CAMPUS IMMEDIATELY AFTER BEING REUNITED WITH THE STUDENT.**
12. **TALK TO THE PARENT INFORMATION OFFICER** if you have any questions. This will help the Student Release Team avoid bottlenecks at the Student Request and Student Release Gate.
13. **KEEP EMERGENCY SUPPLIES IN YOUR CAR,** including comfortable walking shoes, water and warm jackets.