

School Emergencies - How Parents Can Help

In a school emergency, the first instinct as a parent is to pick up the telephone and start calling the school or rush up to the school and get your child/children. The truth is, this only complicates matters from a safety standpoint and students will NOT be released during an emergency.

Parents too close to an incident often hinder the rescue attempts of police and fire officials on the scene. In addition, if an actual emergency has taken place, students will be moved to another location for reunification with parents. The best action parents can take in an emergency is to stay close to their phone and email and to monitor local radio and TV reports for regular updates and instructions.

The district uses a callout system to notify parents of emergencies. Therefore, ensure that your child's emergency contact information is accurate and current.

Although your first reaction would be to call or rush to your child's school, please follow the tips below.

DO tune into local media outlets.

DO check the District Website,
<http://www.putnamschools.org/>

DO check the District Facebook Page,
<https://www.facebook.com/PutnamCountySchoolsFL/>

DO keep your telephone line open for district callouts providing further information.

DO NOT call or rush to your child's school. Your presence could interfere with emergency responders and no one will be allowed on campus.

DO NOT phone your child or school. Staff and students are discouraged from using cell phone communication for safety reasons.

When and Why Are Students and Staff Asked to Lockdown, Shelter-in-Place, or Evacuate?

A school crisis can take a number of forms including an environmental event, such as a chemical spill or gas leak; a weather emergency, such as a tornado warning; or an intruder in or near the school. The nature of a school crisis dictates whether school officials will put in place a lockdown, shelter-in-place, evacuation or any combination of these protocols, as a means to ensure the safety of students and staff.

How Can I Be Reunited with My Child?

Ongoing communication and updates will be provided via the school district's Public Information Officer, local media outlets, social media, and callout/email systems. If a facility needs to be evacuated, the relocation site will be communicated with the community. Parents will be directed to the relocation area for reunification. Students may not be released until authorization from law enforcement or fire officials. Students will be released ONLY to parents/guardians who are documented as emergency contacts and who present a picture ID such as a driver's license, military ID or passport. The reunification process can be time-consuming so parents are urged to be patient.