



MINISTRY OF EDUCATION  
TE TĀHUHU O TE MĀTAURANGA

# Planning and preparing for emergencies and traumatic incidents

PRACTICAL INFORMATION  
AND GUIDANCE FOR SCHOOLS  
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# 1. Introduction

All schools need to be prepared and know how to manage an emergency or traumatic incident before it occurs. The way an incident is managed influences people's recovery and can reduce further risk.

## 1.1 Purpose of guidance and practical information

This document is designed to help schools and school leaders by providing some practical guidance and information to help prepare for emergencies, traumatic incidents and lockdown situations in their unique contexts. It should be read with the Ministry of Education's (the Ministry) *Emergency Management Plan and Traumatic Incidents: Managing Student and Staff Wellbeing; A Guide for School Crisis Management Teams* which are both on this page <http://www.education.govt.nz/school/student-support/emergencies>.

### **Scope of guidance**

This guidance and practical information focuses primarily on the planning stage for dealing with an emergency or traumatic event. Responding to emergencies and traumatic incidents is covered only briefly in this document and the recovery stage from an emergency is not included.

## 1.2 Responsibilities of Boards of Trustees

Under the National Administration Guidelines (NAGs), specifically NAG 5, boards of trustees are required "to provide a safe physical and emotional environment for students" (NAG 5a) and "to comply in full with any legislation currently in force or that may be developed to ensure the safety of students and employees" (NAG 5c).

The Health and Safety at Work Act 2015 (HSWA) took effect on 4 April 2016. Boards of Trustees (Boards) as the Person Conducting a Business (PCBU) must ensure, so far as is reasonably practicable, the health and safety of their workers and that other people are not put at risk by their work.

The board is required under HSWA to ensure there is an emergency plan for the workplace. The emergency plan must provide emergency procedures, including an effective response to an emergency, evacuation procedures, procedures for notifying emergency service organisations at the earliest opportunity and medical treatment and assistance procedures. The Board is required to maintain and keep the emergency plan up to date to ensure that it remains effective.

While the board holds the primary duty of care to ensure the health and safety of everybody involved with the school so far as is reasonably practicable, implementation of health and safety policy is usually delegated to the principal, who develops appropriate procedures and practices to ensure obligations and expectations are met.

## 2. Planning

Planning and preparation are critical steps to ensure your school/kura is equipped to deal with an emergency or traumatic incident. Policies, plans and procedures need to ensure people's activities are coordinated. They need to clarify roles and responsibilities, including the roles of agencies that support a school/kura.

### 2.1 Readiness

You will need to ensure emergency response readiness by developing operational systems and capability before an emergency happens. These systems and procedures need to be embedded and regularly reviewed.

### 2.2 What should be included in a typical plan

The following section explores what could be included in a typical emergency or traumatic incident plan.

Plan	Consider including the following in your plan
Risk Definition	Identify possible types of emergencies and traumatic incidents
Planning	<p>The plan should include:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"><li>» the members of the school Incident Management Team (IMT) who will manage the emergency procedures; training for the IMT</li><li>» evacuation procedures</li><li>» the actions to be taken immediately and who is responsible for those actions; key activities for day one, day two and following days</li><li>» notifying emergency services at the earliest opportunity</li><li>» communication with staff, parents/families/whānau and the community</li><li>» medical treatment and assistance procedures, eg, when a teacher or student is injured</li><li>» information on how key resources will be accessed, ie, keys, site plans, medical kits, contact information for staff, students and other key contacts</li><li>» testing of the emergency procedures, eg, fire drills, including the frequency of testing</li><li>» review of the emergency plan</li></ul>

The Ministry has provided an emergency management plan template to help you as you develop your own emergency plan *Emergency Management Plan* which is on this page <http://www.education.govt.nz/school/student-support/emergencies>. This can be tailored to suit your school's particular risk scenarios.

## 2.3 Environmental considerations

How you plan or prepare for emergencies or traumatic events will vary depending on your school's unique context and will need to take into account risk factors for your school. Your planning should consider:

- » location: whether your school is urban or rural, located near a motorway or at the end of a road, or situated in a coastal setting
- » for schools in a coastal setting, a tsunami evacuation plan may be very important
- » schools in areas such as the Central North Island might want to consider a volcanic ash lockdown and evacuation plan.
- » a school located near a prison may have a lockdown plan
- » roads leading into and away from the school
- » school building(s) and facilities: whether your school is single-level or multi-level, a new or older building; has multiple buildings across the school site; has a hostel associated with the school, has sports fields or gymnasiums
- » staffing: whether there is a senior leadership team to provide support or your school is sole charge
- » student population: the number of students at your school, their age, ethnicity, language proficiency and any additional support needs.

You may wish to conduct an assessment of your school environment every three years and identify any new or additional risks or hazards in your environment and make any changes needed in your plan to reflect these.

### 2.3.1 Other facilities

It is a good idea to evaluate other facilities which could be used in an emergency in the event of evacuation and/or being unable to return to the school. What other options are in your area for relocating to or for using as alternative teaching spaces? For example:

- › gymnasium
- › church
- › marae
- › other schools
- › community hall
- › community centre etc.

If your evacuation point is some distance away who could you contact to assist with transport, eg, school transport providers etc to support or assist with moving people?

## 2.4 Roles and responsibilities

Clarifying roles and responsibilities will help ensure school staff respond to an emergency or traumatic incident in an appropriate way. Roles and responsibilities are usually determined by the principal.

Your school will need to think about:

- » Who are the key people required to manage the emergency response or traumatic incident?
- » What are the core skills required?
- » Who are the key people required to keep the essential parts of the organisation running?
- » Is there sufficient backup for such people and skills if there is a high level of absence (due to an incident such as a pandemic)?
- » Are there other people (including volunteers and retirees) who could be drawn upon if necessary? Is it possible to coordinate them remotely by telephone and email?
- » Are there any systems that rely on monitoring by key individuals to keep them operating?

## 2.5 School Incident Management Team

It is a good idea for schools to have an Incident Management Team (IMT), who can come together in the event of an emergency or incident and manage and coordinate the response. The IMT should include the principal, members of senior management and board members. The team's first action should be to review and understand the emergency management plan and their roles and responsibilities in an emergency or incident.

IMT members should be resilient and the face of calm in an emergency and able to lead the staff and students through the event. Emergencies can affect people differently and impact on decision making and problem solving, so it is important to identify appropriate people for key roles in the IMT.

Identify board members with the appropriate skill set to help the Principal and staff plan for and manage an emergency, including oversight of the wellbeing of the IMT members throughout the emergency response. Consider which other members of staff could be part of the team. You will also need to consider back up support in case some of your IMT are away from school on the day that an emergency or traumatic incident happens.

## 2.6 Key roles

There are some key roles outlined below that you may want to consider assigning to members of your school's Incident Management Team. The roles are scalable depending on resources, the nature of the incident and the size and location of the school. You may also want to assign other staff to support these roles.

### 2.6.1 Incident Controller

The Incident Controller has overall control of the emergency/incident. The Incident Controller makes key decisions based on information from their Incident Management Team.

### 2.6.2 Operations Manager

The key focus of this role is to manage the operational procedures and processes relating to the response including evacuation procedures.

The Operations Manager's key tasks include:

- › taking responsibility for directing response operations
- › ensuring the emergency management plan is implemented and actions undertaken
- › preparing the communications plan with the Communications Manager
- › managing and supervising operations at the emergency/incident
- › appointing, briefing and tasking staff
- › recording relevant decisions, actions and other activities
- › resolving operational problems.

### 2.6.3 Logistics Manager

This role supports the response to the emergency or incident by providing and maintaining facilities, services and materials.

The Logistics Manager's key tasks include:

- › planning for and identifying supplies and equipment that might be needed to provide service and support, such as communication systems to address large groups, providing food and drinks, emergency lighting (torches, lights etc)
- › ensuring sufficient phones and staff are available to handle incoming media and public calls and identifying locations that could serve as media interview sites
- › assigning the role of closing off electricity, water and gas if needed
- › securing site records as appropriate.



#### 2.6.4 Planning/Intelligence Officer

The Planning/Intelligence Officer is responsible for monitoring the situation and making any future plans.

Key tasks for this role include:

- › collecting and analysing information and making forward plans
- › liaising with emergency services
- › providing management support. Be able to advise resources that may be required and make suggestions on what can reasonably be expected to occur and what should be planned for
- › preparing an Incident Action Plan – how things are going to move forward
- › conducting planning meetings if required.

#### 2.6.5 Communications Manager

The Communications Manager is responsible for preparing the Communications Plan for the incident with the Operations Manager.

The key focus of this role is to manage media inquiries and coordinate the release of information. While this role focuses primarily on media liaison, ie, establishing the policies and procedures needed to work with journalists and the media, communication is also needed with parents/families/whānau and should include the Ministry and other external groups. Information on communicating with parents/families/whānau and other key groups can be found in the section on Communication (pg 13).

#### 2.6.6 Media liaison role

Identifying the person who takes responsibility for speaking directly to the media will depend on the size of the school. In small schools, it is often the principal. In larger schools, this task may be better delegated to the board chair or staff with other media responsibilities.

Planning phase for the media liaison role	Main planning tasks include: <ul style="list-style-type: none"><li>» organise media training for the media spokesperson, including role plays and media interviews</li><li>» develop a policy for responding to media inquiries</li><li>» maintain a media contact list and establish professional relationships with local media, including your local radio station. You may need to make a radio announcement.</li><li>» prepare a mobile communication kit for use and store the kit in an easily accessible place. List everything in the kit.</li></ul>
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The media are interested in traumatic incidents and school incident management teams should always expect and be prepared for interest from the media. After a traumatic incident occurs, the media liaison person assists with or manages the media coverage, with the aim of discussing how the media can aid, not hinder, the way children, young people and the wider community respond to the incident.

### 2.6.7 Special needs liaison role

This role is responsible for ensuring those students with special or high health needs are catered for in the event of an emergency or traumatic incident.

Planning phase for the special needs liaison role	Key planning tasks include: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>» conducting needs assessments of individuals and developing safety care plans around each student with special or high health needs with the family, school and administration staff</li> <li>» engaging with students with special or high health needs and involving them in planning</li> <li>» adding disability-specific procedures to emergency/traumatic incident response plans.</li> </ul>
	Ensure every staff member is familiar with: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>» carrying out evacuation plans and attending to the specific needs of children and young people with special or high health needs</li> <li>» asking people to say if they need assistance</li> <li>» avoiding interference with the person's movement unless asked to do so or the nature of the emergency is such that absolute speed is the primary concern. If this is the case, tell the person what is needed and why</li> <li>» supporting a person in situ if required until they are able to be assisted down the stairs to the evacuation point.</li> </ul>
Hearing impairment	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>» Consider what alert systems are in place for students with hearing difficulties.</li> <li>» You may need to assign a buddy to alert them. Have pen and paper in case the student gets separated from a teacher or friends that can sign.</li> </ul>
Sight impairment	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>» Be aware that animals, eg, guide dogs may become confused or disoriented in an emergency.</li> </ul>
Physical disability or mobility impairment	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>» In the event of an earthquake the ground shaking may make it difficult or impossible for the student/staff member to move any distance. If they cannot safely get under a table, move near an inside wall of the building away from windows and tall items that could fall over; cover their head and shoulders.</li> <li>» Lock the wheels if the student/staff member is in a wheelchair.</li> <li>» You may need to assign a dedicated person/people to locate each student/staff member with mobility issues and help to get them to a designated place in an evacuation/lockdown.</li> <li>» Be familiar with any special transport needs. If the student receives Special Education School Transport Assistance (SESTA) then the transport provider can be contacted to arrange for early pick-up and transport home.</li> </ul>
Asthma and respiratory problems	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>» Students may be more susceptible to dust, volcanic ash or the stress of an emergency. Make sure there are dust masks and sufficient personal medicines available and that these are easily accessible.</li> </ul>
Special food requirements	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>» Make sure there are sufficient stocks of foods to cater for the special dietary needs of your students.</li> </ul>
High health needs	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>» Schools should have three days supply of any essential medication and/or dietary needs for any child with high health needs. The staff/school nurse should be trained to administer medications.</li> </ul>

## 2.7 Education Outside the Classroom

Education Outside the Classroom (EOTC) is a generic term used to describe curriculum-based learning and teaching that extends outside of the four walls of the classroom.

Schools can prepare themselves for responding to an emergency during an EOTC event by having robust planning in place to deal with significant, foreseeable risks and by utilising appropriately trained and qualified personnel.

Emergency plans should include:

- » specific incident management plans for each identified risk associated with an EOTC activity
- » incident recording, reporting and analysis procedures
- » a school-wide traumatic incident response plan that includes a communication plan.

If an emergency or traumatic incident happens at the school, you will need to think about how you will notify staff who are participating in an EOTC event away from the school.

For more information on planning for emergencies for EOTC events see the EOTC Guidelines 2016 <http://eotc.tki.org.nz/EOTC-home/EOTC-Guidelines>

## 2.8 Transport

Transport management involves the development and coordination of procedures that support bus safety, traffic flow, emergency services and public access prior to, during and/or following a traumatic incident or emergency. This may involve contact with outside groups such as the local Police, Victim Support or Civil Defence, as well as other community groups.

For a number of schools nationwide the administration of school bus safety is outsourced to school transport agencies. For those schools and students that receive Ministry contracted services, transport providers may have one generic traumatic incident management plan that is focused around its operations, but adjusted for local service runs and school services. Schools should liaise with the transport provider to familiarise themselves with each plan. Schools and the Ministry are responsible for supporting transport operators to respond to and manage emergency situations.

An additional number of schools are directly resourced to provide school transport assistance. Schools have the choice of either contracting directly with a transport provider or providing the transport themselves with vehicles owned and operated by the school. In either of these cases, schools will need to ensure that they have their own emergency transport procedures in place.

When planning for transport management take into account the following:

Vehicle access and parking	Suggestions for transport management: <ul style="list-style-type: none"><li>» assign staff to student parking areas during arrival and dismissal times</li><li>» develop appropriate signs and phone messages regarding visitor parking</li><li>» provide clear ways through the school if emergency vehicles need access to classrooms or other sites</li><li>» keep the school entrance area and driveways free for emergency vehicle access and restrict student parking around bus loading areas.</li></ul>
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*Table contuned over page...*

Vehicle fleets/bus transport	<ul style="list-style-type: none"><li>» establish and use a vehicle identification system</li><li>» maintain contact details for your local fleet operators. Can they operate outside their usual hours in the event of an emergency?</li><li>» If the vehicles are owned by the school, set up regular safety checks of vehicles (ie, buses, vans and cars)</li><li>» maintain systems for checking staff, children and young people on and off transport during activities</li><li>» maintain passenger lists (on site, on transport) and route descriptions at the site for all bus routes (including those used for field trips) and have hard copies available. This will help if you need to make decisions about alternative routes to school or home and can help the Police.</li><li>» require staff and students to carry identification with them on field trips</li><li>» locate emergency landing sites for rescue helicopters if needed</li><li>» consult with local police and fire service to support traffic management plans.</li><li>» consider what other routes or roads could be used to get your students to school or home safely in the event of a storm, flooding, road closure, police cordons etc. For example, for some schools the only alternative may be across private land, so you will need to contact local farm/land owners to discuss this beforehand.</li></ul>
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### 2.8.1 Responding to a vehicle fleet/bus transport incident

Serious crashes and incidents involving school transport vehicles are rare. However, in the event of a crash or incident, the following actions need to be taken:

- › the driver/operator obtains medical aid and contacts emergency services, the school(s) serviced by the route and the local Ministry school transport service agent
- › the Police notify caregivers or next of kin as soon as possible where there has been serious injury or death
- › for less serious injuries, the principal(s) or bus controller(s) immediately notifies caregivers of any students who have sustained injuries
- › the service agent immediately notifies the Ministry's national office, and if applicable ensures that WorkSafe New Zealand is advised.

For more information check: <http://www.education.govt.nz/school/running-a-school/school-transport/accidents/>

The principal will need to bring together the school's Incident Management Team to provide any assistance required.

## 2.9 Record keeping

It is important to keep up-to-date and accurate information on students. Make sure that in an emergency, staff and students have access to the information they need.

Have a backup system in place so that information is securely stored in more than one place in case records are damaged by fire, flood or unreachable following an earthquake.

## 2.10 Backup systems

You will need to consider having backup systems in place in your school in the event of a power failure or cell phone tower outage. The following are some suggestions that may work in your school setting.

Backup systems	<p>Suggestions for backup systems:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"><li>» Have backup systems in place such as<ul style="list-style-type: none"><li>› walkie talkie/2 way radio</li><li>› air horns to signal fire/lockdown procedures</li><li>› landlines that plug the phone into a jack in the wall and don't require electricity (analog phones)</li><li>› telephone trees</li></ul></li><li>» A hard copy as a backup to electronic filing is important in the event of an emergency. Consider using a system such as large alphabetical folders with information on each child with a photograph on the card to be kept in the school office in case of such an event. This could include other carers' details.</li><li>» Primary schools need a backup hard copy of current class (room) lists. For secondary schools the backup hard copy will usually be lists of form-class groups.</li><li>» You could keep the emergency class rolls in a wall mounted plastic folder or you could use velcro or blue-tack. Keep them in a handy position in the classroom ready to pick up if you need to evacuate or give to the Police if some children are missing.</li><li>» Have battery powered alternatives to communication equipment on hand. Batteries can become corroded in less than six months, so it is important to check them regularly, perhaps once a term.</li></ul>
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## 3. Communication

### 3.1 Development of Communication Plan

There are a number of key stakeholders that you may have to communicate with in the event of an emergency. We suggest you develop a communication plan that identifies who you need to be in contact with and how you will communicate with them. It is a good idea to make contact with them before an emergency arises.

NB: This can be as easy as a simple table (see below):

#### *Example Communication plan*

Who needs to be contacted	How they will be contacted	What information they may need
Police	012 345 678	Type of assistance required at “Main School”
Parents	Text/email	Update on current situation/action required
Teachers, contractors and visitors who come to the school on a regular basis	Text/email	Update on current situation and advised not to come to school

#### **Governance**

State Integrated schools will need to ensure that they notify their proprietors as appropriate.

### 3.2 Communication with staff

In an emergency you will need to activate your communication plan with your staff. Communication is critical in managing the response to an emergency or traumatic incident.

Keep ‘emergency preparedness’ present in your school by having it as an agenda item, along with health and safety, at staff meetings.

Planning for communication with your staff	<p>Key considerations:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>» keep up-to-date contact details for staff so you can implement text or telephone trees</li> <li>» ensure staff have saved the school’s main office phone number and those of other key staff in their phones</li> <li>» consider the following scenarios: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>› having some of your staff off-site, such as at an EOTC event and how you will notify and communicate with them in an emergency/traumatic event situation; or</li> <li>› having employees from another organisation onsite, eg, if you have teachers in your school providing an itinerant service, you should ensure they know the school’s emergency management procedures.</li> <li>› keeping a register handy of teachers, contractors and visitors who come to the school on a regular basis so that they can be advised if the school goes into an emergency situation.</li> </ul> </li> </ul>
Communication methods	<p>Considerations:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>» If your school has a Public Address (PA) system, ensure you know where this is located.</li> <li>» Does your PA system allow you to broadcast a code word or phrases, or can you raise alert by using an internal email notification system</li> <li>» Classrooms that are not part of the main building should have a signal/alert system, for example, you may use air horns. The signals/code should be the same as the electronic ones (three beeps = three toots etc).</li> <li>» Cell phones can be useful to find staff and to contact them in emergencies.</li> <li>» Sometimes a runner may be the best/fastest option. Remember to keep safety in mind.</li> </ul>

### 3.3 Communicating with parents/families/whānau

Ensure parents/caregivers are aware of your emergency management plan and processes. This means they know your school is prepared, how they will be communicated with, what to expect in an emergency, and what your school's evacuation and lockdown procedures are.

It will reassure them if they know you have a plan in place to take care of their children, know when and where they can collect them, and any other relevant information. If parents know your plan and they have practised it, they will know what to do in an emergency and what your school will be doing.

Communication methods	<p>Parents can be kept informed through various channels, such as:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>» the school website, Facebook, Twitter, text alerts and telephone trees <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>› be aware that not all families will have smartphones or cell coverage. Many homes no longer have landlines (or these may be cut in a storm) so it is important to have a range of communication methods.</li> </ul> </li> <li>» Cellphone use among school students may mean students are quickly in contact with their parents. Document school protocols about the use of cellphones in an emergency and make sure students know they are to advise their teacher if they have made contact with their parents or caregivers. NB: This is particularly important if the child/student is going to be uplifted by their parent or caregiver.</li> <li>» It is a good idea to: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>› develop a policy of limiting student use of devices such as cellphones to restrict students (and others) from posting potentially misleading or incorrect messages on public facing sites, ie, Facebook and Twitter etc. This also reduces the load on the mobile network during emergencies.</li> </ul> </li> <li>» If you are having an EOTC event, ask parents beforehand to provide the school with their contact details for that day in case of an emergency.</li> </ul>
Reuniting students with parents and caregivers	<p>Prior to an emergency event parents and caregivers need to know that your school has a well documented and practised reunification process. This will mean that parents and caregivers know what you will be doing and what is required of them. <i>(see section on reuniting students, page 16)</i></p>

### 3.4 Communicating with families of international students

If you have international students in your school or in your boarding facility/hostel, you may need to contact their families in the event of an emergency. Keep in mind there may be language barriers and you may require an interpreter. There is also likely to be media interest from New Zealand and overseas if an international student is involved.

Communication with families of international students	<p>Suggestions for managing communication:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>» have a plan in place for each international student identifying next of kin and contact details</li> <li>» keep a list of interpreters who can cater for residents and their families in their first language</li> <li>» identify students who can't return home in case of hostel closure and make alternative arrangements (through local care, billeting, hostel arrangements or agencies such as CYF)</li> <li>» remind international students and their caregivers about responsibilities under the Education (Pastoral Care of International Students) Code of Practice 2016.</li> </ul>
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### 3.5 External communication

It is important to manage the content and flow of information to and from the school and the wider community throughout an emergency or traumatic incident.

Informing and establishing links with your local community beforehand will mean these can be drawn on for support in the event of an emergency. By knowing what's going on in your community, you may be able to link with other services.

<p>Planning phase for managing communication</p>	<p>Key considerations:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>» Establish relationships with groups locally such as Civil Defence and Emergency Management, Police, New Zealand Fire Service, Lifeline, District Health Boards (DHBs), and CYF, which could help your school in the event of an incident or emergency</li> <li>» Consider how you could work with the Emergency Services to formulate an emergency plan and be prepared to share information about your site plan</li> <li>» Think about the roles groups such as Victim Support and Lifeline might play and how to use their resources</li> <li>» Make contact with other local schools to establish processes that could be used in an emergency including transport and shelter contingency plans. For example you might agree to send regular update emails or urgent “flash” emails to your local schools with updates during an event.</li> <li>» Establish a relationship with your local Iwi; their kaumatua or kuia may be able to provide support to your Māori students following an incident.</li> <li>» Establish relationships with community mental health and Māori mental health agencies for referrals of children and young people if needed.</li> <li>» Identify language or interpreter services within the community.</li> <li>» Identify who in the community should be notified in the case of an incident, eg, volunteers' families, other members of the community involved in the school etc.</li> </ul>
<p>Communication channels</p>	<p>Ensure your community is aware of your Emergency Management Plan and the communication channels that you plan to use. Communication channels could include:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>» Facebook/other social media presence</li> <li>» website</li> <li>» newsletter</li> <li>» meetings with Pasifika communities through the Minister of their church or a key person in the community where English isn't the parents' first language</li> <li>» liaison with local iwi/whānau</li> <li>» mobile applications (Apps); Police Alert on phone Apps and Twitter can help to keep informed of developing incidents.</li> <li>» notices on community notice boards or other locations such as your local shopping centre.</li> </ul>



### 3.6 Communicating with the Ministry of Education

In the event of an emergency the Ministry can provide additional support:

- » It is a good idea to keep the phone number of your local Ministry office and your school's Education Advisor handy.
- » Your regional Director of Education should be informed of a traumatic incident as soon as possible.
- » Each Ministry special education district has a traumatic incident coordinator with a small team of trained staff, who can support schools after a traumatic incident has occurred. The team can support schools through the establishment of effective systems to help minimise risk to the physical and emotional well-being of students, teachers and parent communities.
- » In the event of a large scale incident affecting multiple sites, the Ministry has a range of avenues for communication, eg, Twitter, texts, email, updates on the Ministry's website **[www.education.govt.nz](http://www.education.govt.nz)** Facebook, and traditional media methods (radio, television, etc) to keep schools updated. It will also set up a phoneline that schools can call for updates and advice.

## 4. Reuniting students with families

In any emergency event, parents and caregivers need to be advised of the situation, and if the emergency reunification plan is being implemented.

This requires schools to record who has uplifted each child or young person. Each child or young person can only be released to a person identified by the parent or usual caregiver as approved to uplift that child or young person. For this to work, everyone needs to know the process and where the evacuation and reunification points are.

Children and young people will need to have been organised into class groups and moved to an assigned area in advance.

Schools will need to think about how children and young people can be picked up by parents and caregivers, with regard to vehicle parking and location to minimise any further disruption.

In a civil defence emergency any child or young person who cannot be reunited with their parent/ usual caregiver or approved emergency contact within a reasonable time will need to be registered as unaccompanied and the school, along with Police and/or CYF, will determine a plan to care for that child or young person.

It is a good idea to consider testing the reunification process during your emergency plan testing (see *section 8, pg 20*).

## 5. Training

Training will help develop the capability of your school's Incident Management Team and provide the opportunity to validate/test the school's emergency plan.

Ministry Special Education traumatic incident coordinators and experienced traumatic incident staff can provide training in incident management to school leaders.

### 5.1 Drills

Fire drills are required at least once a term. Schools are encouraged to do other practice drills as appropriate for their own risk environment. Carrying out drills will help you to evaluate procedures and make any necessary changes. Drills help staff and students learn more about the importance of a quick response.

Try to do drills and other practice-type events for a range of scenarios and at different times, eg, class time, lunchtime or at assembly. Ideas and guidance on simulation and practice activities are available online at: [www.whatstheplanstan.govt.nz](http://www.whatstheplanstan.govt.nz)

Drills on what to do in violent situations should be practised but at a time that children/young people are not on site, as the drills may cause undue fear and anxiety.

## 6. Emergency Responses

Schools will need to make a decision to **evacuate** or **stay in place** in the event of an emergency or traumatic incident. Schools should have procedures in place for both.

### 6.1 Warning systems

You will need to have two separate and distinct alert signals or warning systems which can be heard both inside and outside. One warning system for evacuating out of the building if you are inside (eg, fire) and another system for returning to or remaining in the building (eg, chemical incident, wasp alert).

During some emergencies you might want to consider turning off automatic school bells to avoid confusion among students and staff, for example, once students are inside during a “stay in place” event. However you will need to ensure the teachers/adults do not assume the situation has been resolved.

### 6.2 Evacuation

A range of events may require evacuating children and staff from one location to another.

If it is deemed necessary for children and staff to evacuate, you will need to ensure that everyone in the building gets out and makes their way to a pre-arranged location. Have a back up location identified in case the original location is unsuitable because of the nature of the event.

Consider which locations would be suitable or unsuitable for particular events. For example, the school gym may be unsuitable in a fire but an appropriate location if there's a chemical spill. The playground would be unsuitable for a tsunami or volcanic eruption but may be suitable if there is a fire.

If you do have to evacuate:

- » make sure you know your evacuation routes
- » take your emergency kit with you
- » know which radio stations to listen to during an event for announcements and regular updates from your local emergency management officials
- » Do you have a way to remotely access to the school's computer network to identify which staff/ students are in which locations, their cell phone numbers etc in real time?
- » Can you access the school's email/e-text systems to communicate directly with parents/ caregivers and staff as may be required?

### 6.3 Evacuation equipment/kit

If you have to leave the school for any reason, listed below are some useful items and equipment to have on hand.

School evacuation equipment kit	<p>Useful items to include in your school's evacuation equipment kit:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>» a copy of your school's evacuation plan</li> <li>» school site map, master keys, codes, school floor plan, staff lists, pre-printed class rolls and photos</li> <li>» contact details for staff, students, parents and emergency contacts</li> <li>» passenger lists for transport operators and bus routes</li> <li>» visitor book so you can account for everyone that was on-site that day</li> <li>» individual student health care plans including medication</li> <li>» student and home emergency phone numbers</li> <li>» FirstAid kit</li> <li>» whistle</li> <li>» pens and paper</li> <li>» torch and batteries</li> <li>» school mobile phone and charger including car charger</li> <li>» megaphone.</li> <li>» tarpaulins/emergency blankets etc</li> </ul>
<b>Useful tip</b>	<b>Schools may like to keep some of their emergency supplies in a wheelie bin outside for easy access in an evacuation.</b>

It is important prior to an evacuation to consider what might assist emergency services at the time of an emergency. Measures might include providing:

- » a master key/or information on how to gain access
- » detailed floor plans of the site (showing entrances, windows, roof hatches and ventilation systems)
- » the estimated number of staff, children and young people on site and the location.

Planning for evacuations	<p>Key considerations:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>» contact emergency services and practise evacuations in consultation with appropriate services</li> <li>» record practice evacuations</li> <li>» set up procedures for signing people in or out</li> <li>» have a system in place for issuing visitors with identification badges (and a system for their return)</li> <li>» have signs that direct visitors to the school reception</li> <li>» determine safety/danger signals</li> <li>» develop a site plan and liaise locally with police about information they may require.</li> </ul>
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## 6.4 Lockdown (or stay in place)

There may be some situations where it is safer to keep the staff and students inside, for example, trespassers and violent intruders (on Police advice), natural threats, ie, swarm of bees, wasps, chemical spill, Police incident in the community etc.

Police manage a lockdown situation when this has been caused by an offender or it is a particularly or potentially dangerous situation. The Police will inform you when the lockdown is over.

## 6.5 Lockdown/Shelter-in-place Equipment

Outlined below are some suggestions your school might like to consider in planning for a lockdown situation as it is unknown at the time how long a lockdown situation may have to be in place:

You may want to consider the following:

- » are classroom doors lockable and who can lock them?
- » can windows be rapidly covered? Consider using sacking and curtains to block windows
- » is each classroom equipped with an emergency lockdown kit
- » the toileting needs of students
- » having a supply of containers/lunch boxes that could be kept in the classroom with water and muesli bars and spare medication (inhaler/Epi-pen).
- » keeping blankets and supplies accessible to the classroom/block of classrooms in the event of a lockdown or shelter-in-place
- » having a supply of games, cards in the classroom to keep students/children occupied until they are collected.

## 6.6 Signal to lockdown

You will need to consider how you will signal to staff that a lockdown has been initiated. Remember, in some cases it may not be appropriate to sound an audible alarm (violent intruder).

If an audible alarm is used consider whether the signal can be heard clearly from all locations in the school, including non-classroom situations such as the gymnasium or swimming pool.

If the signal cannot be heard, for example, for classes that take place on outside playing fields, then you will need to think of alternative ways and options to communicate with staff.

## 7. Other

### 7.1 Civil Defence Emergency

During a civil defence emergency, advice and direction is provided by the Ministry of Civil Defence and Emergency Management, coordinated by your local territorial authority. Remember to make contact with your local civil defence group through your local Council/Territorial Authority prior to an emergency. They will also help you evaluate your plan.

### 7.2 Visitors on site

During business as usual there needs to be a robust process for managing any visitors to the school. This enables you to know exactly who is on the grounds during an emergency. This process should include information for challenging anyone who is not signed into the visitor system.

During an emergency any unauthorised visitors need to be 'challenged' to identify the reason for being on site. If appropriate they should be accompanied to an administration area for sign in and given an identification badge to wear.

## 8. Validating and testing your plan

Validating or testing your emergency plan is an important way for schools to assess, check and understand their emergency and traumatic incident policy and procedures. It provides a way to determine if a specific approach is the most appropriate one to use to achieve outcomes.

An effective validation of your plan might involve carrying out a drill or readiness check before an incident occurs. A typical example is a fire drill.

Once you have developed your plan, practise and review it to see how long it takes to get all students and staff out of the building or into the building.

You can also learn from gaps identified during the drills and update your plan to include additional procedures that may be needed in future. Ensure your procedures are displayed throughout the school so that visitors, contractors or new staff can find out what they need to do and where they need to go.

### 8.1 Debriefing

Following your practice drill or an event, you will need to evaluate the effectiveness of your plan. This can be done by holding a debriefing session.

A debriefing session can help people assess the effectiveness of their procedures and actions and in doing so help restore team functioning and relieve stress.

Post-incident evaluation has been found to work well when it is led or coordinated by people not directly involved in the incident. If Ministry Traumatic Incident teams have been involved in the response, they could be invited to attend the debriefing session.

Your local Police may be able to help you assess your procedures.

Make sure you communicate the findings from the review and evaluation of your emergency plan to your local Emergency Services.

## 9. Further Planning support/resources

Further planning support is available from:

- » Ministry of Education Traumatic Incident Team
- » New Zealand Police
- » New Zealand Fire Service
- » Ministry of Civil Defence and Emergency Management

## 10. Sources of information

### Sources of information for Planning and Preparing for Emergencies and Traumatic Incidents; Practical information and guidance for schools

- » *Emergency Management Plan*; November 2011; Ministry of Education, New Zealand:  
**<http://www.education.govt.nz/school/student-support/emergencies>**
- » *Traumatic Incidents: Managing Student and Staff Wellbeing: A Guide for School Incident Management Teams*; 2016; Ministry of Education; New Zealand:  
**<http://www.education.govt.nz/school/student-support/emergencies>**
- » *Managing Emergencies and traumatic incidents; Nine Step Checklist*; Ministry of Education; New Zealand **<http://www.education.govt.nz/school/student-support/emergencies>**
- » *Ministry of Education New Zealand website: Preparing and dealing with emergencies and traumatic incidents*; **<http://www.education.govt.nz/school/student-support/emergencies>**
- » Get ready get thru, **[www.getthru.govt.nz](http://www.getthru.govt.nz)** Ministry of Civil Defence and Emergency Management; New Zealand
- » *What's the Plan STAN* **<http://www.whatstheplanstan.govt.nz/>** Ministry of Civil Defence and Emergency Management; New Zealand
- » *How to be a safer school*; Safety and Security Directorate, Department of Education and Training, New South Wales; Australia
- » *Emergency and Critical Incident Management Plan*; 2011 Department of Education, Western Australia; Australia

## 11. Appendix 1:

### Example Checklist: Planning and Preparing for Emergencies and Traumatic Incidents

CHECKLIST Consider using this checklist to help you in your planning and preparation for an emergency or traumatic incident	YES	NO
1. Has our school prepared an emergency management plan?		
2. Have we selected an Incident Management Team (IMT) and assigned key roles to staff?		
3. Have we ensured our Incident Management Team have had training?		
4. Have we developed a communication plan, which identifies who we need to communicate with and how: eg, <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>» school staff</li> <li>» parents/families/whānau</li> <li>» families of international students</li> <li>» external communication, such as emergency services</li> </ul> What communication methods will we use?		
5. Have we developed an emergency reunification procedure to reunite students and families?		
6. Have we included transport management in our planning?		
7. Are we conducting an assessment of our school environment on a regular basis to identify and assess new risks?		
8. Are backup systems in place so that information is securely stored in more than one place in case of damage in an emergency?		
9. Do we have emergency response warning systems in place to alert staff and students when evacuation or lockdown is required?		
10. Is our school evacuation equipment kit up to date and readily accessible?		
11. Are we carrying out practice drills on a regular basis appropriate for our risk environment?		
12. Have we reviewed our plan and assessed the effectiveness of our procedures and actions?		
13. Is emergency preparedness a standing agenda item along with health and safety at meetings?		



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