

## What to do if you hear a troubling rumor about your school?

Rumors can be easily started through misinformation or other uncertainty. Before you act upon a rumor about your child's school, consider the following:

1. **GET THE FACTS. CALL THE SCHOOL.** Tell the person who answers the phone what you have heard.
2. If you have additional concerns, please call Student Support Services at (910) 254-4207.

### **How rumors negatively impact our schools:**


- Some parents will keep students away from school.
- Instructional time is lost.
- Grades and test scores can be impacted.

Dear Parents & Guardians,

NHCS wants to dispel false rumors that can impact school operations. Rumors can be very harmful to our schools and they can result in unnecessary disruption to learning. We ask for your assistance in controlling rumors. Please contact your school to find out the facts and any important information you need to know as a concerned parent.

When there is a real emergency, NHCS has safety plans in place to act quickly to protect all students and staff. We will communicate with you in a timely manner to give you information on what has occurred and provide you with as much information as possible. We use the ALERT NOW system during emergencies to call all of your listed numbers, so please be sure to keep your phone numbers current with your child's school. We will also post information on the NHCS website and provide information to the local media. Thank you for doing your part to work with us to dispel harmful rumors regarding NHCS.

Sincerely,

  
Dr. Alfred H. Lerch,  
Superintendent

## We Are Prepared



As a parent, you should feel confident that New Hanover County Schools has an extensive emergency plan that is modeled on the National Incident Management System. Yearly trainings are conducted, both at the district level and school level, to keep our staff prepared for emergencies. In addition, every school has emergency drills throughout the school year.

We hope this guide helps you be prepared and informed about the school emergencies. Through a partnership with students, staff, parents and the community, we can all keep our schools and our children safe.



**New Hanover County Schools**  
*Great Expectations. Every School, Every Child.*

This brochure was made possible through funding from the NHCS Safe and Drug-Free Schools program.

**New Hanover County Schools**  
**School Safety Department**

1802 South 15th Street  
Wilmington, NC 28401  
Phone: (910) 254-4308  
www.nhcs.net



**New Hanover County Schools**  
www.nhcs.net

## Parents Guide to:



# EMERGENCY SITUATIONS at schools

New Hanover County Schools is committed to ensuring the safety and security of our students, staff, and visitors. This guide contains useful information that we hope every parent will become familiar with in the event of an emergency.

# Emergency Preparedness

During an emergency situation, school officials must act quickly to secure schools, safeguard students and staff, and communicate promptly. Parents can help by being prepared before an emergency happens. Here are a few critical things you can do:

- Give school officials accurate contact information. Please keep all phone numbers, including cell phone numbers, up to date for the ALERT NOW calling system.
- Talk to your children about what to do, where to meet, and how to contact you.
- Provide names and contact information for people authorized to pick up your children.
- Remain calm. Remain at home/work to be more accessible if you need to be contacted.
- Refrain from contacting students by cell phone. If numerous people are using cell phones at one location, airways can become jammed and possibly prevent emergency and school officials from using their cell phones.
- Listen to the local TV and radio stations for information and periodic updates.
- Notify school officials if you see a dangerous or suspicious situation at or near a school.
- Be sure the school has at least a 1-2 day medication supply if your child takes medicine on a daily basis.
- Remember, the schools are prepared, and the safety of the students is **PRIORITY ONE.**



## What should parents do during a school emergency?

In an emergency situation, your first reaction may be to call or come to the school. While that is a natural response, it may interfere with emergency agencies that are dealing with the situation. We ask that instead of going to the school, contact the following sources:

**Tune into local TV and radio stations for news alerts**

**Visit the NHCS Web site**  
[www.nhcs.net](http://www.nhcs.net)

**Call the New Hanover County Sheriff's Dept.**  
(910) 798-4206

**Call the NHCS Hotline**  
(910) 254-4411

**Call the NHCS Public Relations and Student Support Services Depts.**  
(910) 254-4245 or (910) 254-4207

## School Actions:

**Lockdown** secures the building and safely shelters all students, staff, and visitors inside the school building.

**Shelter-in-Place** is a modification of a lockdown which moves students, staff, and visitors away from rooms on the perimeter to safe areas within the school.

**Evacuation** requires students, staff, and visitors to exit an unsafe school building.

## What type of emergencies might impact my child's school?

All emergencies impact schools including local and national events. Here are some examples of emergencies with actions that a school may take in response:

**Severe Weather** (hail, snow, tornado, hurricane) - may result in a shelter-in-place.

**Missing Person or Student** - may result in a lockdown.

**Fire** - may result in evacuation or shelter-in-place depending on location and severity of fire.

**Weapons** - may result in an evacuation or a lockdown.

**Bomb Threat** - may result in evacuation.

**Chemical/Hazmat/Biological Materials** - may result in an evacuation or a shelter-in-place depending on the location and type of incident.

**Intruder** - may result in a lockdown or evacuation depending upon the circumstances.

**Rumors** - Please call your school to report and confirm any rumors.



**Only public safety officials will be allowed to enter a building after it has been locked down due to an emergency.**