

Disaster Preparedness and Recovery Checklist for a Catholic School

General Preparedness

1. Risk Assessment

- Identify potential disasters (natural and man-made): What could shut down your campus or town for more than a day? Storm? Fires? Floods? Earthquake? Gas leaks?
- Assess vulnerabilities of school facilities and infrastructure. Is your particular school more or less vulnerable to some of the risks you identified above? (Older construction? Lower ground?)

2. Emergency Plan Development

- Do you have an emergency plan in place?
- Have you discussed your plan with your diocese and with neighboring schools?
- If school is open when disaster strikes, what are your evacuation procedures, communication protocols, and designated safe zones?
- If school is closed when disaster strikes, what is your plan to reopen?
 - What is your distance learning plan?
 - Do you have an alternate physical site?
- Can you communicate a citywide evacuation plan and order to your community?

3. Training and Drills

- Conduct regular staff training on emergency procedures.
- Schedule and practice evacuation drills (fire, earthquake, lockdown).
- Schedule and practice shifting to virtual instruction, with at least 1 virtual day per year.

4. Communication Plan

- Establish a system for notifying emergency services, staff, students, and parents in emergencies.
- Create a contact list of local emergency services.
- Share a written plan for how school reopens (virtually or at an alternate site) if the campus is unavailable.
- Ensure that every member of the community is aware of and has access to that plan.

5. Emergency Contacts

- Compile and distribute a list of emergency contacts (local authorities, healthcare providers).
- Have a system for communicating with all members of the community in the case of evacuation.

Recovery Planning

1. Post-Disaster Assessment

- Establish a team for damage assessment and recovery planning.
- Evaluate the effectiveness of emergency responses after drills and real incidents.

2. Counseling and Support

- Provide access to faith and mental health resources for students and staff after a disaster.
- Plan for faith-based community support and outreach programs.

3. Communication with Families

- Keep families informed about recovery efforts and available resources.
- Provide regular updates through various communication channels - daily contact is critical.

4. Resource Inventory

- Maintain an updated inventory of available resources for recovery (funds, supplies, etc.).
- Create and maintain a disaster recovery fund.
- Identify local organizations for assistance and partnership.

Community Involvement

1. Engage Stakeholders

- Involve parents, local churches, and community organizations in preparedness efforts.
- Organize community training sessions on disaster preparedness.
- Host community gatherings to foster resilience and unity post-disaster.

2. Be prepared to ask for help

- Be prepared to ask for, and receive, donations to support the school and families in need.
- Create an advancement plan for a disaster recovery fund if you don't have one already.