

Parent Letter

Dear Parents and Guardians:

The safety and well-being of our students are among our highest priorities. In the event of an emergency or disaster occurring in our area while school is in session, Wharton Independent School District (WISD) has established emergency procedures designed to protect students and staff and to respond effectively to a variety of situations.

Should a major emergency occur during school hours, your child(ren) will remain at school and be cared for by school personnel until it is safe for them to be released. The District maintains a comprehensive Emergency Operations Plan to guide our response to major emergencies and disasters.

Your Cooperation Is Essential During an Emergency

To help us respond quickly and safely, please follow these guidelines:

1. **Do not call the school.** Telephone lines may be needed for emergency communications. Please avoid calling the school unless specifically instructed to do so.
2. **Emergency procedures will be implemented as necessary.** In the event of a serious emergency, WISD will activate the appropriate emergency protocols based on the nature and severity of the situation.
3. **Students will be released only to authorized individuals.** Students may be picked up only by a parent/guardian or another responsible adult listed on the District Emergency Card completed during registration. Please carefully consider the following when designating an individual to pick up your child:
 - The individual is **18 years of age or older**.
 - The individual is typically available during the day.
 - The individual could walk to the school, if necessary.
 - The individual is known to your child.
 - The individual is aware of and able to assume responsibility for your child.
4. Please ensure that your child's emergency contact information is kept current throughout the school year.
5. **Monitor official WISD communications.** Follow **WISD's official Facebook page and website** for emergency announcements and updates. If students are required to remain at school, these will be primary sources of communication. Information regarding day-to-day school operations will also be available by contacting the District Office.

6. **Remind your children to follow directions.** Please emphasize to your child the importance of remaining calm and following the instructions of school personnel during any emergency.

Student Release and Reunification

Students will be released only to parents/guardians or individuals authorized on the **School District Emergency Card**. During an extreme emergency, students may be released through designated reunification gates located on school campuses or at other approved reunification locations.

Please instruct your child to remain at school until you or an authorized designee arrives. For the safety and accountability of all students, children should **not leave school grounds with anyone who is not authorized on their Emergency Card**.

Transportation During an Emergency

The decision to keep students at school will be based on current conditions, including geographic circumstances and whether roads in the area are safe and accessible. When appropriate, local radio stations will be notified of significant changes to school operations.

If a natural disaster occurs while students are being transported:

- **Students on a school bus:** Students will remain on the bus, and the driver will request assistance through radio communication with District personnel as needed.
- **Students waiting at home for the bus:** If roads are impassable or conditions prevent transportation, the bus may not be able to pick up students. In such circumstances, the student remains the responsibility of the parent or guardian.
- **Students being transported home:** If an emergency occurs during afternoon transportation, the driver will make every reasonable effort to continue transporting students to their homes.
- **Students unable to reach their destination:** If road conditions prevent the driver from delivering students safely to their homes or to school, students may be transported to the nearest available school site. That school will communicate with the student's home campus to ensure the student's whereabouts are known.

Shelter-in-Place Procedures

In the event of a hazardous materials release, such as a chemical spill near a school, **Shelter-in-Place procedures** may be implemented to protect students and staff from exposure to potentially dangerous substances.

During a Shelter-in-Place event:

- Students and staff will leave outdoor areas and report to their assigned classrooms or designated locations.
- Every reasonable effort will be made to prevent outside air from entering classrooms during the emergency.
- Shelter-in-Place signs may be displayed in classroom windows or outside classroom doors during drills or actual emergencies.
- Students arriving at school during a Shelter-in-Place drill or emergency should report to the school office or another designated location, as classrooms may be inaccessible.
- Students and staff will remain in the designated areas until an **all-clear signal** is issued by school officials.

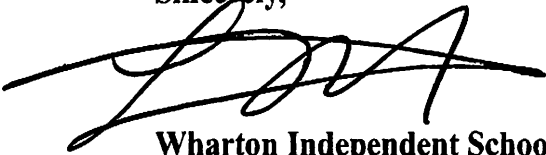
Plan Ahead

Please take a few moments to discuss these emergency procedures with your family. Make sure your child's emergency contact information is accurate and up to date, and ensure that your child understands the importance of following directions from school personnel during an emergency.

Planning ahead and knowing what to expect can help reduce anxiety and allow our schools and families to respond more effectively during an emergency.

Thank you for your cooperation and continued partnership in keeping our students safe.

Sincerely,



Wharton Independent School District