



School Safety Advocacy

- It is important that all students are safe in school. Many students have vision, hearing, mobility, sensory, learning, and developmental or intellectual disabilities.
- Ask students and their families their safety concerns and if they need any assistance in an emergency. Offer individualized plans based on each students' needs. The National Fire Protection Association and other organizations provide a Personal School Emergency Evacuation Planning Checklists to assist in assist in this preparation.
- Identify students who need assistance during an emergency. Be sure to incorporate these needs within school safety plans and within each student's IEP. Identify everyone who should be part of a student's plan including parents, service providers, personal assistants, physicians, therapists, and others. Talk with students with disabilities and their families in advance to identify considerations and accommodations.
- It is important for teachers and administrators to observe the responses and reactions of students and staff to identify any accommodations that may be needed in a real fire emergency. Be sure to assess the school environment for hazards and barriers to safe evacuations for all students – with and without disabilities. Consider classroom locations for students with physical impairments to ensure they have a safe exit out of the building. Identify and communicate pre-determined evacuation locations a safe distance away from the school building and away from traffic areas that may be used by emergency responders.

- Within your school's safety plan, keep a current list of all students' equipment and support needs and how a fire, disaster, or other emergency might affect their use. Some of these include communication devices, wheelchairs and other mobility aids, as well as other supportive equipment. Include emergency responders in the education, training, and drills as much as possible. Plan for additional considerations during times of bad weather when students might need additional accommodations to protect themselves, including the need for transportation to medical facilities or other indoor evacuation locations.
- Familiarize all staff and students with fire safety and fire evacuation procedures at the beginning of the school year. Reinforce this information with education and drills throughout the school year. It is important that all safety education, resources, and alerts are understandable and relatable for all students, including those with learning differences, developmental disabilities, vision and hearing impairments, and other disabilities. Involve and empower students in lessons about prevention and response.
- Be sure that all alerts and notifications are accessible and effective for all students. Incorporate both sounds and visual alerts and alarms in all areas of the school. Practice drills regularly including the sounds of smoke alarms and any other visual or auditory notifications and alerts. It is important to let everyone be familiar with all sounds and sights that can be expected. Use short instructions in plain language, accompanied by pictures. Some of these statements can include – "This is an emergency." "Exit the building at door number 5." "Do not use the elevator." "Go down the stairs."

Let's live safely together.

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