



April 18, 2016

District-Wide Emergency Preparedness and Student Release Drill **Wednesday, May 4, 2016 (2:00 pm)**

Good afternoon Porter Parents and Guardians,

Just before Spring Break I emailed all of our families and we sent home a hardcopy of our upcoming district-wide Emergency Preparedness Student Release Practice scheduled for Wed May 4, 2016 at 2:00 pm at Porter.

Please read this additional information as a reminder. In addition, please take the time to talk with and prepare your children.

What happens if "**The Big One**" happens while the children are at school?

We will be sending you additional reminders as we approach the Wed May 4 Emergency Student Release Drill. I thought I would, once again, remind everyone that the district-wide event is coming! Our school community will practice our emergency release procedures. In short, we need to pretend that a large scale earthquake has occurred and parents (or their authorized designate) are prepared to pick up their child. This drill will involve students, staff and parents.

Generally, it will look like this:

- We will simulate a natural disaster on the afternoon of Wed May 4, 2016. The exact time has will likely be around 2:00 pm
- Once we evacuate to the east end of our grass field, we will send out an emergency announcement via email and post on to our public website and intranet website (your child's username and password will be required for access to the intranet; if you do not have these two pieces of information please ask your child's teacher)
- Parents (or their designate) will come to the school as quickly as possible. We will be on the lower field and parents will follow the release procedure to pick up their child. We want to practice a safe and orderly release.

Key reminders for parents and guardians:

- In the event of a real disaster, it's unlikely that I will be able to access email or the school phone.
- This is an important reminder to keep your emergency contact information up to date. It's also a good reminder to keep your voice mail activated and ready to receive messages. (hint: many times we try to call parents to find a deactivated cell phone or a full voice-mail box.)
- It is important to note that the following instructions for parents have been established on a province-wide basis:
 - Do **not** phone the school, as we may be trying to reach emergency response services or school district personnel
 - Children will **not** use the phone to call out; school staff will make all necessary calls
 - When safe to travel, go to the school to collect your child. Your child will be cared for until such time as he/she can be picked up.
- Ideally, you and your designated people listed to pick up your child be within walking distance of Porter

Detailed process for release of each student:

- Students may be released in response to a number of different emergencies
- The decision to release will be based on a number of variables including: safety, condition of school and/or grounds, weather
- Classroom teacher only releases student to someone listed in the Emergency Contact information found in the Orange Emergency Bag
- If the parent/guardian/alternate is known to the Classroom Teacher: Classroom Teacher MUST have the parent/guardian/alternate place their signature in the appropriate location on the form found in the Emergency Contact sheet
- If the parent/guardian/alternate is NOT known to Classroom Teacher: the Classroom Teacher MUST confirm the identity of the person by checking picture I.D. AND by conferring with the student before releasing the student; have parent/guardian/alternate place their signature in the appropriate location on the form
- If the Emergency Contact Sheet is not available, the Classroom Teacher MUST record the following information when releasing a student:
 - Student Name
 - Person student released to
 - Identification used
 - Date and time of release
 - Location students is being taken to (home, office, etc)
- Once all of your students are released, each Classroom Teacher MUST report to the Command Centre and provide documentation related to both student release and attendance
- The decision to release a student to someone who is not listed as parent/guardian/alternate is to be made by the principal or designate
- In the event of an emergency, all staff are to remain on site unless directed otherwise by the principal or designate.

Parents or their designates will need to come to the school and pick up their child. There will be release process that we will use to ensure that children are handed off to the proper adult. Please note that the drill ends at 2:53pm, which is at the end of the school day. Any children remaining will be dismissed from the west end of our grass field.

So what can you do to prepare?

1. Make sure the school has your updated contact information. Parents should have verified this information a few months ago. Please let us know of any changes.
2. If you cannot come to the school early on Wed May 4, please communicate this with your emergency contact. This is a good time to review the process with your friends.
3. Make sure your child knows who the emergency contacts are so he/she can anticipate who may pick them up in an emergency.
4. Review your child's medical needs, if any. Does the school have the proper medication for your child in the event of an emergency and he/she cannot be picked up right away?
5. Make sure you know the name of your child's teacher and the division number! Make sure your emergency contact has this information!

7. Although not directly connected with the school emergency drill, this is a good time to review your own family's emergency preparedness. I have provided a few links below.

- <http://www.getprepared.qc.ca/index-eng.aspx>
- <https://www.getprepared.qc.ca/cnt/rsrscs/pblctns/yprrdnssgd/yprrdnssgd-eng.pdf>
- <http://www.redcross.ca/how-we-help/emergencies-and-disasters-in-canada/for-home-and-family>
- <https://products.redcross.ca/product/459/canadian-red-cross-disaster-preparedness-kit>
- <http://www2.gov.bc.ca/gov/content/safety/emergency-preparedness-response-recovery/preparedbc/build-an-emergency-kit>

I do think it's important for families to have the mindset that if "The Big One" happens, you may be on your own for days, if not weeks. It's good to have a plan.