

EMERGENCY PREPAREDNESS RESPONSE DRILLS

FIRE DRILLS

Each school in Alexandria City Public Schools (ACPS) holds at least two fire drills during the first twenty school days of the school year, in order that students and staff members may be prepared in case of a fire emergency. During the remainder of the school year, fire drills are held at least monthly.

The principal/designee sends a copy of the Drill Form to Safety and Security Services within five (5) days of holding a fire drill.

An emergency operations and procedures plan is developed for each ACPS building. Each teacher must be acquainted with the emergency safety plan that has been developed as it applies to each room in which he/she teaches.

Placards describing the nearest exits, evacuation routes for students and important instructions are posted prominently in each room. A plan for evacuation of any student with physical disabilities is developed and reviewed annually. Parents/guardians of such students are notified of the evacuation plans for their child.

THREAT RESPONSE DRILLS

In every ACPS school there is at least one lockdown and/or “Secure the Building” drill during the first twenty school days, in order that students and staff members may be prepared in the case of a lockdown situation.

In keeping with the model *School Crisis, Emergency Management, and Medical Emergency Response Plan* developed by the Virginia Board of Education and the Virginia Center for School Safety, ACPS uses the following terms:

- “**Lockdown**” is used in response to immediate threats of violence **inside** a school facility.
- “**Secure the building**” is used when preventing unauthorized entry or exit if there is an **external** threat in proximity to a school facility.

Each school holds at least one additional lockdown and/or “Secure the Building” drill after the first 60 days of the school year. Each school provides the parents/guardians of enrolled students with at least 24 hours' notice before the school conducts any lockdown and/or “Secure the Building” drill. The notice is not required to include the exact date and time of the drill.

Pre-kindergarten and kindergarten students are exempt from mandatory participation in lockdown and/or “Secure the Building” drills during the first 60 days of the school year. The Superintendent develops procedures to implement this exemption. Pre-kindergarten and kindergarten students participate in each lockdown and/or “Secure the Building” drill after the first 60 days of the school year.

I. Active Threat/Violent Encounter Response Protocol

ACPS provides an “options-based” training approach for staff and students to be applied to the specific circumstances at the time of the incident. Staff members dealing with these events may need to consider different response methods, including lockdown (to include the decision to stay and barricade or evacuate if able to safely do so), immediate evacuation, or related life-saving actions.

TORNADO DRILLS AND EARTHQUAKE DRILLS

There will be at least one tornado drill and one earthquake drill each school year in every ACPS school.

SCHOOL BUS EMERGENCY DRILLS

Each school holds a drill in leaving school buses under emergency circumstances at least once during the first ninety calendar days of each school year and more often if necessary.

ALL DRILLS

No emergency preparedness drills will be conducted during periods of mandatory testing required by the Virginia Board of Education.

SAFETY TRAINING

In addition to the drills mentioned above, ACPS provides training to each student and employee at least once each school year on safety procedures in the event of an emergency situation on school division-controlled property.

- Adopted: June 11, 2015
- Amended: September 15, 2016
- Amended: September 28, 2017
- Amended: September 10, 2020
- Amended: October 21, 2021

Legal Refs.: Code of Virginia, §§ 22.1-137, 22.1-137.1, 22.1-137.2, 22.1-137.3, 22.1-184.

Acts 2006, c. 164.

8 VAC 20-131-260.

School Crisis, Emergency Management, and Medical Emergency Response Plan, Virginia Board of Education and the Virginia Center for School Safety, 2016.

Cross Ref.: EB School Crisis, Emergency Management and Medical Emergency Response Plan

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Commented [1]: I'm interested to hear more about this. How are parents notified?

Commented [2R1]: These plans and details how they will be followed are school specific. Safety & Security Services works with Office of Specialized Instruction if there is a question about procedure. Each school handles notifications to parents when a drill will take place. If a parent has specific questions or concerns that cannot be resolved by the school and Specialized Instruction, they will bring in Safety & Security to assist.

Commented [3]: How are they made exempt? Are Pre-K and K parents notified of the date/time so they can keep their student home?

Commented [4R3]: I'm wondering why they are exempt?

Commented [5R3]: Same, I'm wondering the rationale and how this is implemented

Commented [6R3]: This "exemption" phrase comes directly from the Code of Virginia 22.1-137.2. In Safety & Security Services guidance to our schools, the rationale is that it takes this age group longer to train. We always encourage all staff to practice when they can, without students, in order to maintain their proficiency. "Secure the Building" can be done with all grades, maybe we should clarify or reword. It is the "active threat" evacuation and evacuation to a safe place that is more of a challenge (with students of this age). This is only for active threat "lockdown" type drills. Fire Drills are still required.

45 year.

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89 *School Crisis, Emergency Management, and Medical Emergency Response Plan,*
90 Virginia Board of Education and the Virginia Center for School Safety, 2016.

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