

# 2024-2025 Parent Emergency Guide



**The Cornwall Central School District takes emergency preparedness very seriously. We have a comprehensive district-wide safety plan that assists our staff and public safety partners to respond swiftly should an emergency occur. We provide ongoing training to school administrators and other key staff members throughout the district.**

## **Safety is Our PRIORITY**

The Cornwall Central School District is committed to making school safe for students and staff. Please know that should an emergency occur; we will do what is necessary to protect children first and then inform you as accurately and fully as we can. Communication with parents during an emergency is an important priority for the school district. Please be patient and understand if we are unable to respond to you as completely or quickly as you would wish. Our priority is always the safety of your child and the other children and staff in the school.

## **By Definition...**

An emergency involves unexpected events and rapidly changing conditions. We train to deal with distinct kinds of problems, whether caused by natural forces or humans in general, you should know that we will do what is necessary to protect children first and then to inform you as accurately and fully as we can. If a situation is serious enough to require you to leave your home or workplace, we will either ask you to pick up your child or will direct you to do so.

## **How to Prepare for a School Emergency**

- Keep your child's emergency information up to date, including alternate phone numbers for you and family/friends you have authorized as your back up. Notify the school promptly if this information changes.
- Talk with your children about the importance of following instructions in the event of an emergency.
- Tell your children NOT to use cell phones unless permitted. Unauthorized cell phone use could put people at risk during an emergency and may distract students from listening to important safety instructions.
- Have a plan for an emergency, and make sure your children are familiar with the plan.

## **School Emergency Drills**

As per recent updates to the Regulations of the Commissioner of Education school safety plan requirements, notification to parent/guardians of an upcoming school drill will take place within one week prior to each drill. New York State School district drills are required to be conducted in a trauma-informed, developmentally and age-appropriate manner. Drills are to be conducted on different dates as well as days of the week and times of the day. Evacuation drills shall be conducted with students at least eight times in each school year, six of which shall be held between September 1 and December 31 of each such year. Drills shall be conducted at different times of the school day. At least two additional drills shall be held during summer school in buildings where summer school is conducted, and one such drill shall be held during the first week of summer school. Lockdown drills shall be conducted with students at least four times in each school year, two of which shall be held between September 1 and December 31 of each such year. One Emergency Dismissal drill shall be conducted to test emergency response procedures that require early dismissal, at a time not to occur more than 15 minutes earlier than the normal dismissal time.

## **Terms That May be Used During an Emergency**

### **Shelter-in-Place**

A course of action when students and staff must remain indoors, perhaps for an extended period of time, because it is safer inside the building or a room than outside. Depending on the threat or hazard, students and staff may have to move to rooms that can be sealed or without windows. As an example, a "shelter in place" may be called in the event of a severe weather emergency.

## Hold-in-Place

A “Hold-in-Place” may be initiated to limit movement of students and staff when dealing with short term emergencies. This is intended to keep students and staff out of the affected area until the situation can be rectified. In general, students and staff will remain in their current classes until a hold in place has been lifted. As an example, a “hold in place” may be called in the event there is an altercation in a hallway, a maintenance issue in the building, or a medical emergency.

## Evacuation

An “evacuation” is called to evacuate students and staff from the building. Each school has procedures for an evacuation, typically we drill evacuations as a fire drill. If the need arises students will be transported to a designated safe location. If students are to be released from the designated safe off-site location, parents will be directed where to pick up their children. A formal reunification process will be utilized to ensure students are released to an authorized parent or emergency contact.

## Secure Lockout

This is the response to an actual or potential threat from outside the school building. An example of such a threat might be an escaped fugitive, criminal activity occurring nearby, or a wild animal outside of the school. Students and staff follow the normal school schedule during a lockout, except that no one is to be allowed outdoors, and no unknown persons are allowed to enter the school.

## Lockdown

A lockdown is initiated when a school administrator, faculty or staff member has become aware of an actual or imminent incident that poses an immediate threat in or around the school. The primary objective of a lockdown is to quickly ensure school staff, students and visitors are secured in rooms away from immediate danger. Individuals will be kept within locked rooms until the incident is brought to a close by emergency responders or law enforcement personnel.

## Reunification

“Reunification” is a formal process that is initiated after a major incident has occurred. The goal of this process is to reunite students with their parents or legal guardians in a systematic way. This process may take a long period of time, but helps staff and safety personnel account for all persons during this process. Students will be released ONLY to parents/guardians who are documented as emergency contacts and who present a picture ID such as a driver's license, military identification, or passport. The reunification process can be time-consuming so parents are urged to be patient.

## What to do During a School Emergency

- Please do not go to the school or scene of an emergency unless school or law officials ask you to, even though a child may ask you to come. Although this may be your first instinct as a parent, your presence may interfere with the emergency response.
- Check the district website at [cornwallschools.com](http://cornwallschools.com)
- Tune into local radio.
- Please do not listen to rumors. If your child does contact you, remember that he or she may only know pieces of the larger picture.
- Remain as calm as you can if your child contacts you. They are looking to you for reassurance.

## How You Can Help

- Ensure your child’s emergency contact information in School Tools is accurate and correct.
- The District uses School Messenger to notify parents of inclement weather and emergencies. Please become familiar with our school’s emergency communication procedures.
- Each school is committed to providing accurate and timely information in the event of an emergency.

We want to assure you we take safety very seriously. Building level emergency response plans are in place at each school. A building-based safety committee oversees the plan for each school and committee members have assigned roles and responsibilities should an emergency occur. These committees meet regularly to review procedures and conduct annual training and drills so that students and staff are aware of the most effective and safe emergency responses.