

Media Release



FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE

October 14, 2011

RE: It's National School Safety Week October 17 - 23, 2011

A quick scan of news headlines reinforces the need for schools to be increasingly concerned about their emergency plans. Being a "safe and caring" school is not just part of a mission statement, but is part of today's regulatory environment. Now more than ever, schools need to be prepared for any crisis they may face.

Each emergency is different. What a school will do in response to an emergency depends on the incident and should be based on best practices and well-researched protocols. Rocky View Schools follow protocols developed by Hour-Zero, an Edmonton-based firm that specializes in school emergency preparedness and works with schools and first responders throughout North America.

By law all schools are required to conduct evacuation (fire) drills. Increasingly, schools are also doing Lock-Down, Shelter-In-Place and Drop-Cover-Hold drills. These drills are conducted so schools can practice their emergency procedures and be better prepared should an emergency occur.

Parents play an important role in school emergencies; however, many parents aren't sure about how they can best help when an emergency occurs at their child's school.

Here are some tips for parents...

1. Prepare your child. Talk with your child about potential disasters that can happen and why it's necessary to prepare. Learn the specific steps your child has been taught to take when an emergency protocol is issued at their school and discuss these with your child.
2. Keep your child's emergency contact information up-to-date. When an emergency occurs, the school may need to contact you right away. Annually update your child's emergency contact information with the school, including cell phone numbers and email addresses for people who are authorized to pick-up your child.
3. Do not call or text your child during a school emergency. While your first instinct may be to contact your child, these actions tie up communication networks and may place your child in harm's way. Your child needs to focus on their teacher's instructions and not be distracted by a cell phone. Keep your phone lines clear so the school can contact you with information.
4. Do not go to the school unless instructed to do so. Emergency scenes can be chaotic. Extra people and vehicles only add to the commotion. Wait for the school to contact you with information about where and when you can pick up your child.
5. Create a Family Emergency Plan. Creating a family emergency plan with your children helps prepare them to deal with emergencies that could occur at home or school, and will make real situations less stressful.
6. Practice the Plan. As the saying goes, practice makes perfect. Practicing your plan will help your family to take appropriate action should an emergency occur. It also allows you to see how your child might react to an emergency and give you an opportunity to discuss their fears with them, which in turn helps reduce anxieties.

Learn more about Rocky View School's Emergency Response Plan by visiting its website for a copy of RVS' Emergency Response Plan Parent Summary at: http://www.rockyview.ab.ca/parents/assets_parents/RVS-Parent-Summary.pdf

-30-

Further information contact:

Angela Spanier, Director of Communications 403.945.4012