



Threat to School Safety: Evacuation

#400.27

Adopted:	September 23, 2025
Last Reviewed/Revised:	New
Responsibility:	Superintendent of Education
Next Scheduled Review:	September 2029

PURPOSE:

The Brant Haldimand Norfolk Catholic District School Board ("the Board") recognizes the importance of emergency planning and its responsibility to provide immediate care and assistance to students and staff during emergency situations, to mitigate the impact of the emergency, control the situation and resume normal operations as soon as possible. The purpose of this administrative procedure is to establish consistency across the Brant Haldimand Norfolk Catholic District School Board regarding a site evacuation.

APPLICATION AND SCOPE:

The Board is committed to enacting a measured response to emergencies with the foremost commitment to preserving the life and the safety of all staff, students, and volunteers, as well as protecting property, and restoring operations as quickly as possible. This administrative procedure applies to all Board staff and sets out their obligation to support the implementation of an Evacuation.

REFERENCES:

- [Education Act](#)
- Board Policy Emergency Preparedness and Response OPS 400.04
- Board Emergency Response Manual
- School Emergency Response Manual
- School Board Police Protocol

FORMS:

- N/A

APPENDICES:

- N/A

DEFINITIONS:

Evacuation: refers to the organized and immediate removal of students, staff, and visitors from school buildings to a designated safe area in response to a fire alarm or other emergencies. The goal is to ensure maximum safety and rapid clearance of the premises, minimizing the risk of injury or loss of life.



ADMINISTRATIVE PROCEDURES

1.0 Responsibilities

All school staff shall follow this administrative procedure adhering to the specific directions for principals, teachers and support staff.

- 1.1 **Principal/Supervisor** - is responsible for the overall safety of staff and students and for ensuring that all staff and students are aware of the evacuation procedures. The principal is also responsible for inviting Police, fire, and emergency medical services (EMS) to participate in plan development and making them aware of planning and drills. The principal ensures the training of staff and students.
- 1.2 **Staff** - are responsible for the safety and well-being of students and for assisting in the training of students.
- 1.3 **Students** - have a responsibility to be familiar with the school's evacuation plan and to respond quickly to the direction of staff an evacuation.
- 1.4 **Police** - are responsible for supporting the schools in terms of the safety of students and staff.
- 1.5 **Emergency Medical Services (EMS)** - will provide urgent medical care in the event of an incident.
- 1.6 **Fire Department** - can provide fire suppression operations and rescue operations.
- 1.7 **Parents/Guardians** - are responsible for reinforcing their children's responsibility to follow directions during a crisis situation at school.

2.0 Mandatory Requirements

- 2.1 All publicly funded school boards in Ontario must establish an evacuation policy to ensure the development and implementation of individual school plans.
- 2.2 Each board must ensure that its staff, students, and other partners are aware of their obligations/responsibilities within the individual school plans.
- 2.3 Fire evacuation drills are to be conducted six times per school year.

3.0 School Plans

- 3.1 Principals/supervisors must maintain updated Fire Safety Plans that are stored at the school in the Fire Safety Box and centrally on the Board's Online Platform.
- 3.2 Fire Safety Plans must be accessible to the Police and other first responders.
- 3.3 Evacuation plan will include specific accommodations and plans for identified staff and students who require additional support evacuating.
- 3.4 **Floor Plans**
 - 3.4.1 Accurate, up-to-date floor plans are a key component of efficient evacuations.
 - 3.4.2 Floor plans should be posted throughout the school, at least in every classroom and at every entry point to the school.
 - 3.4.3 Floor plans clearly identify entrances and exits as well as routes that staff and students are to take during an evacuation.
 - 3.4.4 Command post locations and off-site evacuation locations should not be identified on posted or publicly circulated copies of the floor plans.
 - 3.4.5 Floor plans should be available to all emergency service responders when they arrive on the scene.

4.0 Evacuation

- 4.1 The evacuation process typically begins with the activation of the fire alarm system (manually or automatically via smoke detectors or sprinkler systems).
- 4.2 In some cases, it may be triggered by staff making an announcement over the public address system.



- 4.3 The principal will gather and refer to the Emergency Measures Supply Kit.
- 4.4 Staff will ensure students and all occupants leave the building quickly, safely, and calmly using predetermined evacuation routes and exit doors.
- 4.5 Teachers and support staff will check nearby washrooms, offices, changerooms and other spaces and gather and assist students in those areas in evacuating.
- 4.6 Unless the evacuation is due to a bomb threat, occupants must not stop and gather belongings.
- 4.7 Occupants will not use elevators.
- 4.8 Staff will close but not lock doors once rooms are cleared.
- 4.9 Designated staff roles (e.g., sweepers, fire marshals) are activated to assist.
- 4.10 Teachers bring class attendance lists and lead students to the designated muster point or safe zone outside.
- 4.11 Once at the safe location, roll call is taken to ensure all individuals are accounted for and attendance is submitted to the principal. Any missing persons are reported immediately to emergency services.
- 4.12 Staff and students will follow the direction of the Fire department and other first responders.
- 4.13 Occupants do not re-enter the building until it has been deemed safe by fire or other officials and communicated by the principal.

5.0 Communication During an Evacuation

- 5.1 The principal/supervisor will communicate with all occupants, tenants, and visitors (permit holders, daycare centres, etc.).

6.0 School Bus Considerations

- 6.1 Notify the Brant Haldimand Norfolk's Catholic District School Board's Transportation Services that the school has been evacuated. The Transportation Department in consultation with Police and Emergency Services will provide direction depending on the specific circumstance.

7.0 Follow-Up

- 7.1 In consultation with Communications Services the school may:
 - Update the school answering system message.
 - Prepare a scripted response to be given to callers.
 - Amend auto-attend message.
 - Prepare a letter for the school community to communicate the details of the incident and response.
- 7.2 Debrief the incident and response with staff and students as needed.

8.0 Communication with Parents/Guardians/Community

8.1 General

- 8.1.1 School Principals will communicate general information regarding school emergency measures.
- 8.1.2 Schools will provide regular emergency procedure reminders for parents including the emergency off-site location for staff and students should the need arise to relocate students in an emergency.
- 8.1.3 Parents are encouraged to ensure their contact information at the school is up to date so they can easily be reached by staff in the event of an emergency.



8.2 During an Evacuation

- 8.2.1 Depending upon the circumstances, it is not always possible to provide instant public notification during an emergency at a school. While all efforts will be made to provide timely information regarding any ongoing emergency to parents/guardians, the primary concern of the school board in such instances is to ensure the safety and security of students, staff and property.
- 8.2.2 Parents and guardians must not contact their children in the school via cell phone.
- 8.2.3 Communication Services will facilitate all communication, in consultation with Police Services.
- 8.2.4 Regular updates will be provided if the situation is prolonged.
- 8.2.5 The Board and/or school will send home communication regarding the incident at the earliest possible opportunity.
- 8.2.6 Police Services may determine that a parent, guardian or caregiver staging area needs to be established where parents, guardians or caregivers can go to learn the most up-to-date information about the situation at the school. This site will be an area away from the immediate emergency threat.