



Emergency Planning: Addressing the Needs of Students with Disabilities in NWT Schools

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This document has been prepared by the On Thin Ice project team to assist schools in the Northwest Territories in creating inclusive emergency plans. It also contains information about facilities management, staff training, assistive equipment and supplies, and assisting students with disabilities.

This document provides guidelines for the development of personal emergency response plans (PERPs) for students with disabilities and other students who require extra assistance in an emergency situation. The creation of a PERP should be part of the individualized education plan (IEP) and/or student support plan (SSP) process, when deemed necessary.

As with SSPs and IEPs, students and their parents or guardians must be included in the development of emergency response plans as they are in the best position to provide information about capabilities, limitations, and needs. In order to be effective, PERPs must be kept up to date. They must also be practiced on a regular basis, so students and staff know what to do during an actual emergency. Lastly, the content of PERPs needs to be communicated to substitute teachers and school volunteers, where appropriate.

This document is primarily concerned with the needs of students with disabilities. However, there may be other people at the school that have a disability, including staff and visitors (e.g. participants in elders programs, parent volunteers). There may also be people on site who have a temporary disability, such as a broken leg, or who may require extra assistance, including women who are pregnant. The school's plan should take into account people with a variety of functional needs who may not be familiar with the school's emergency procedures, although every effort should be made to educate those spending time in the school.

Acknowledgements

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Emergency Planning:

Addressing the Needs of Students with Disabilities in NWT Schools



Section

01

Inclusive Emergency Planning

1.1 Inclusive Emergency Planning

Every student with a disability has unique needs and abilities. In an emergency, some students with disabilities will be able to effectively communicate their needs and respond to the situation. However, some students, including those who are self-sufficient under regular circumstances, will require guidance and assistance in functional areas, including but not limited to communication, sheltering-in-place, evacuation, transportation, and re-establishing independence.

School emergency plans should consider the needs of all students, including students with disabilities.

1.2 Emergency Response

Different kinds of emergency situations require different responses.

The four most common responses to emergency situations are evacuation, lockdown, hold and secure, and shelter-in-place. Personal emergency response plans (PERPs) should include procedures for all four possible responses.

1.2.1 Evacuation

Evacuation is the orderly and rapid movement of people out of the school building and away from the threat (e.g. fire, gas leak, structural collapse). It is the most common emergency response.

Each student with a disability should have at least two ways of exiting the school that are accessible to them; a student with a mobility disability may require different routes than a student with a vision disability. Evacuation route planning should take into account the student's whereabouts throughout the day. These routes should be clearly identified in the student's PERP. A colour-coded map may be helpful for the student and staff.

1.2.2 Lockdown

Lockdown is typically initiated in response to a situation that prevents the safe evacuation of the school building, such as an armed intruder or a wild animal. The threat is either in the building or on the school property. During lockdown, the halls are cleared, lights are turned off, windows are covered, and classroom doors are locked. Students are encouraged to hide and be quiet. Exterior doors are kept open to allow the entry of emergency personnel.

Lockdowns are stressful for all students. They can be particularly

unsettling for students with cognitive disabilities (e.g. autism spectrum, FASD, learning disabilities, etc.). These students may require extra training and practice in order to safely and confidently participate in a simulation or a real lockdown.

1.2.3 Hold and Secure

Hold and Secure is used when the threat is further away from the school building, such as emergency activity in the area or a robbery at a nearby store. Staff and students are to remain in the school building with the exterior doors locked and windows closed. In some cases, exterior doors are monitored to allow the safe entry of students. Regular classroom activities can usually continue during hold and secure.

1.2.4 Shelter-in-Place

"Shelter-in-place" means to take immediate shelter where you are and to remain there unless given instructions to evacuate. Shelter-in-place can be an effective emergency response strategy, so long as the students are not threatened by the hazard and emergency personnel are aware of their location. For example, a shelter-in-place order may be given in response to a blizzard or an environmental hazard, such as a dump fire. Typically regular classroom routines are able to continue, but individuals are unable to enter or exit the school.

1.3 Staff & Visitors with Disabilities/People with Temporary Disabilities

This document is primarily concerned with the needs of students with disabilities. However, there may be other people at the school that have a disability, including staff and visitors (e.g. participants in elders programs, parent volunteers). There may also be people on site who have a temporary disability, such as a broken leg, or who may require extra assistance, including women who are pregnant.

The school's plan should take into account people with a variety of functional needs who may not be familiar with the school's emergency procedures. In the case of elders, consider that they may be unilingual and in low traffic areas of the school, such as the kitchen.

The school's plan should take into account people with a variety of functional needs who may not be familiar with the school's emergency procedures (e.g. visitors, community users, etc.).

Visitors to the school should be informed of the school's emergency procedures. Principals may wish to post signs at school entrances asking visitors to speak to office staff about emergency procedures. If visitors will require assistance during an emergency or evacuation, ensure that there is a written record of their location and the type of assistance they require and that this information is communicated to relevant staff. Regular visitors to the school should participate in emergency drills and simulations.

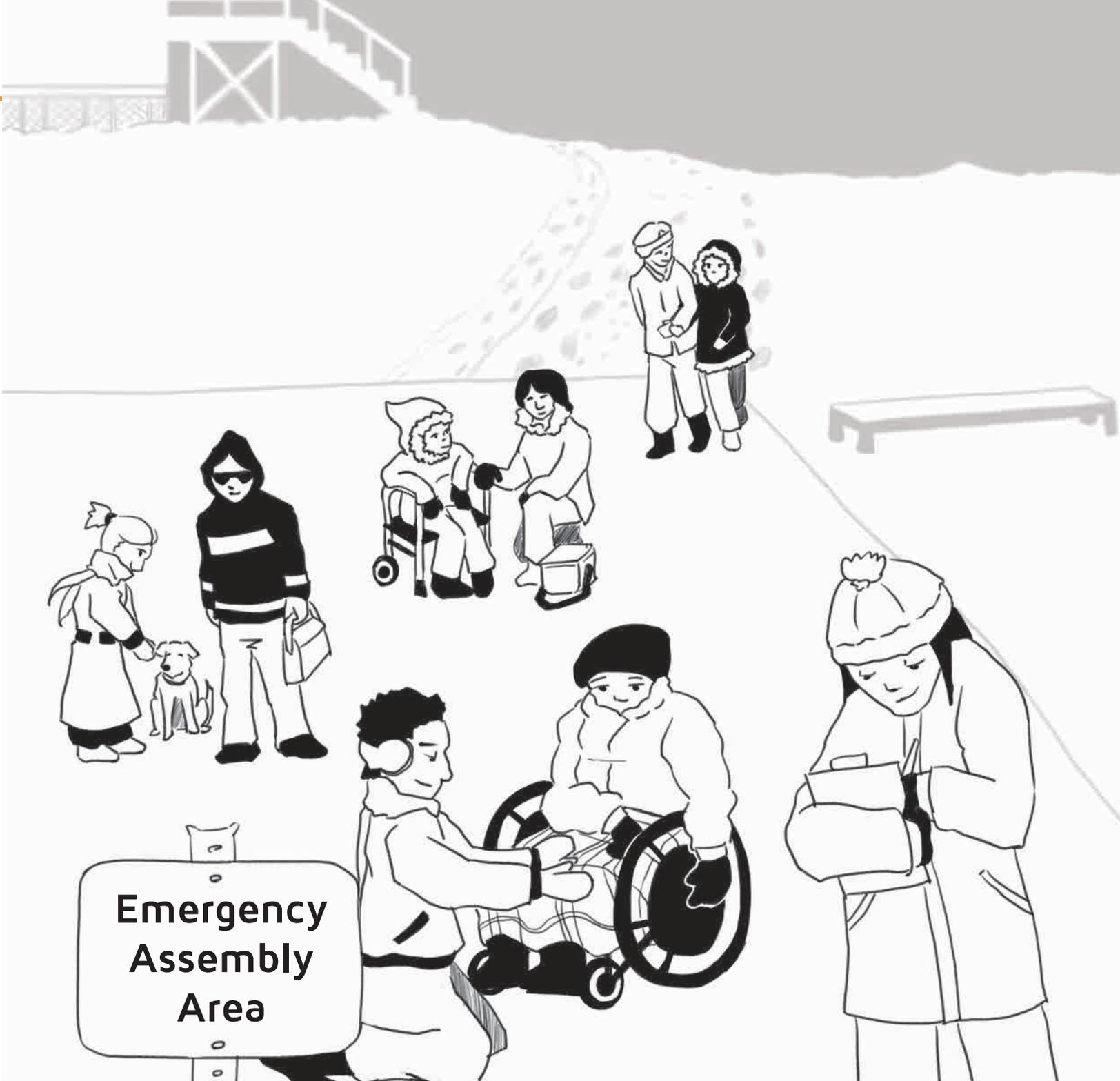
Schools are community spaces as much as they are educational ones. In different communities schools are used for daycare programming, after school programs, and by community groups for evening and week-end activities. It is important to share emergency procedures with other users so they can effectively respond should an emergency situation arise while they are in the building. Consider including information in rental agreements about emergency procedures.

1.4 School Emergency Plan

An inclusive school emergency plan should include:

- An accessible communication plan;
- Emergency procedures for evacuations, lockdown, hold and secure, and shelter-in-place;
- A map of the school building and environs indicating:
 - Standard evacuation routes;
 - Accessible evacuation routes (if different);
 - Areas of rescue assistance (if applicable);
 - Fire alarm pull stations;
 - First aid kits and AEDs; and
 - Specialized emergency equipment, such as evacuation chairs.
- Outdoor assembly area(s);
- A list indicating which classes should be at which assembly area;
- A master list of students and staff who require evacuation assistance and their daily schedules (an example of a master list can be found in Appendix V: Sample Master List); and
- PERPs for each student requiring extra assistance.

We have included a checklist to assist school staff in developing an inclusive emergency plan in Appendix III: School Emergency Planning Checklist.



Emergency
Assembly
Area

Section

02

Facilities
Management

2.1 Facilities Management

Emergency plans will be unique to each school, in part because of the different student populations, but also because of different physical circumstances, including the school building and the local environment.

While staff are encouraged to adapt the recommendations in this document to fit their school, emergency preparedness may require changes to the school building in order to make the structure safe for all students, including students with disabilities.

2.2 Communication Systems

2.2.1 Visual Alarms

Most schools use bells and horns to alert students and staff of an emergency situation. In addition to audible alarms, it is important to have visual strobe alarms to notify persons who are deaf or have a hearing disability.

Visual alarms are especially important in areas where a student could be alone or miss the visual cues of a mass evacuation. These include washrooms, libraries, and change rooms.

2.2.2 Written/Visual Instructions

Some students, including students with hearing and cognitive disabilities, may require emergency instructions in writing or in a visual format (i.e. diagrams or pictures). Teachers and staff may wish to prepare pre-printed instruction cards before an emergency.

Emergency notification systems must be functional and accessible to everyone.

2.3 Use of Stair Lifts & Elevating Devices

Unless the elevator or stair lift was designed to operate during emergency situations, it should not be used during an evacuation.

Most elevators are programmed to return to a default location, usually the main floor, and cannot be called to a specific floor once an alarm has sounded. Some stair lifts also return automatically to a default starting position during a power outage.

This could be a hazard if the lift were to change direction while in use and take a person toward instead of away from a fire or other hazard.

Review the operating instructions for lifts and elevators before an emergency happens. These devices should be tested during a drill so students and staff know what to expect during a real emergency.

2.4 Areas of Rescue Assistance

In the event that an evacuation is called in a multi-story school and a student is unable to safely exit the building, they may be able to use an area of rescue assistance.

Areas of rescue assistance are designated safe areas, usually near or in an exit stairwell, where a student with a disability can wait for assistance from emergency first responders without obstructing the evacuation of others.

Ideally, the area of rescue assistance should: have positive pressure (to ensure that smoke does not enter the stairwell); have direct access to outside; have a means of communication (radio, cell phone, etc.); be clearly identified as an area of rescue assistance; and not obstruct or delay traffic flow during evacuations.

Areas of rescue assistance, if they are an appropriate option, should be developed in consultation with the local fire department and identified on the building fire safety plan.

2.5 Designated Assembling Areas

Following an evacuation, students will be directed to a pre-determined assembly area. Assembly areas should be accessible to everyone, including students who use mobility aids, and be in a clear area that is at least 100 metres away from the affected building. Plans should be in place to house all evacuees, including students with disabilities, should the weather or situational conditions require it.

In addition to indicating the appropriate evacuation routes, PERPs should specify the primary and alternate assembly areas to which the student is to proceed following an evacuation.

It is important that students with disabilities and others who require extra assistance are taken to one of the standard assembly areas. This enables staff to ensure that everyone is accounted for. It also allows students to be with their peers during what can be a stressful situation.

2.5.1 Fire Route Access

Whenever possible, students should not be required to cross a designated fire route or public road to reach an assembly area as this can impede the arrival and operation of emergency vehicles.

Assembly areas should be accessible to everyone, including students who use mobility aids.

2.6 Transportation

In the event that students must be transported from the school premises to an alternate location (e.g. another school, a community shelter, etc.), students with mobility disabilities will require accessible vehicles equipped with lifts or ramps. Before an emergency happens, establish pre-determined staging areas and develop a list of accessible school-owned, staff, parent, and community vehicles that can be available in an emergency. If necessary, make prior arrangements with local transportation providers or partner agencies.

In some situations or communities, it will not be possible to arrange for accessible transportation. In this case, it is important to consider how you will move students using other forms of transportation. For example, you may arrange for a snowmobile with a sled or you may need to transfer a student from their wheelchair to a regular car. Regardless of the method of transportation, it is important to ensure that the mobility aid travels with the student.



Section

03

Assistive Equipment & Supplies

3.1 Assistive Technologies & Aids

People with a wide variety of physical and sensory disabilities use assistive technologies and aids.

Students with mobility disabilities may rely on wheelchairs, walkers, and canes. Students with communication disabilities (e.g. cerebral palsy, paralysis, and speech disabilities) may use augmentative communicative devices. These range from low-tech tools, such as communication boards featuring the alphabet and images, to high-tech communication aids, such as voice dictation technologies and tablets (e.g. iPads). Other assistive technologies include hearing aids and cochlear implants for students with hearing disabilities, screen readers and devices that enlarge print for students with vision disabilities, and mouth sticks for students with paralysis or limited dexterity.

The loss of an assistive device equals a loss of independence.

If a student is reliant upon an aid for communication or for mobility, it is important that the device remains with them at all times, but especially during an evacuation. The loss of an assistive device equals a loss of independence.

In some cases, being separated from an aid can be more traumatizing than the actual emergency event because of the impact on the student's ability to move around or communicate.

3.2 Medications & Medical Supplies

Many individuals with disabilities take medications on a daily basis. If a student has to be evacuated, every effort should be made to ensure any medications they have at the school go with them. This will ensure that the student can, at least in the short term, maintain a regular medication schedule.

The school emergency plan should consider the storage requirements for student medications (i.e. do they need to remain cool or at room temperature).

3.3 Service Animals

Service animals have traditionally been used to assist people with vision disabilities. However, it is now common for people with a range of disabilities, including mobility disabilities, epilepsy, autism, hearing disabilities, and post-traumatic stress disorder (PTSD), to have service animals.

As with assistive devices, it is essential that the service animal remain with the student at all times. This will ensure the safety and independence of the student during and after an evacuation or once the emergency situation has ended.

Service animals should be included in all regularly scheduled emergency drills, including evacuations, lockdowns, and hold and secure situations, so they are familiar with procedures and evacuation routes should an emergency arise.

3.4 Evacuation Devices

Emergency evacuation equipment is used to assist in the evacuation of people with disabilities (typically people with mobility disabilities) down stairs, in the event of a fire or other emergency.

There are many different kinds of evacuation devices. Some are simple sling chairs with wheels that are manually operated. Others are battery operated and use tracks that enable a single person to evacuate another person regardless of the size or weight differential.

The selection of appropriate evacuation devices should happen in consultation with the student, their parents or guardians, and relevant teachers and staff as part of the PERP development process.

It is important to consider the balance, strength, and agility of the person requiring assistance weighed against the ability of available personnel.

As with other aspects of emergency response, staff should practice evacuating the student with the device before an emergency happens. Only those with the proper training should operate evacuation devices.

See Section 4.4 for more information about transferring students to and from evacuation devices.



Section

04

Staff Training

4.1 Assisting During an Emergency

Proper training for teachers and support staff is critical to ensuring that students with disabilities receive the assistance they need during an emergency. Training may include appropriate communication techniques, strategies for sheltering-in-place, and safe evacuation procedures.

Specialized training should be identified and provided to staff that have routine contact with the student. However, alternates should also be identified and provided with training in the event that the primary teacher and support staff are away from the school or unavailable during an emergency.

4.2 Administering First Aid

If a student with a disability requires first aid, it is important to ask them whether they have any allergies. Individuals with disabilities who have had extensive and/or ongoing medical treatments often develop allergies to latex (gloves) and topical applications, such as Polysporin, band-aid adhesive, and surgical tape, as a result of overexposure.

During an emergency evacuation, it is imperative that the safety of evacuees be established before stopping to administer first aid.

4.3 Communicating During an Emergency

It is important to consider the communication needs of students with disabilities in emergency situations, but especially students with cognitive or communication-related disabilities (e.g. hearing, speech). In any emergency situation, information is best delivered in small doses using plain language. Some students will require information in alternate formats (e.g. visual aids, written instructions, etc.).

As with the general population, students with disabilities may become anxious and stressed during an emergency situation. They may require additional time and patience to understand the situation and to be clearly understood.

Proper training for teachers and support staff is critical to ensuring that students with disabilities receive the assistance they need during an emergency.

See Section 6: Assisting Students With Disabilities for more specific information about appropriate and effective communication strategies for students with a range of disabilities.

4.4 Guiding a Student with a Vision Disability



Begin by introducing yourself to the student. Ask if they need assistance. If they say “yes,” offer them your arm by touching the back of your hand to theirs. Never grab the student’s arm or try to direct them by pushing or pulling.

Stay one step ahead of the student as you walk, except at the top and bottom of stairs and to cross streets. As you move, provide the student with detailed verbal instructions. For example, as you are approaching a set of stairs, tell the student: “We’ve arrived at a set of stairs. We are going up three steps. Step up.”

If you are helping a student to sit down, guide their hand to the back of the chair and then allow them to feel their way into the seat.

If you have to leave the student, tell them and ensure they are well oriented to their surroundings. You may also wish to have someone stay with the student so they are not alone.

See the Resources page for more information about sighted guide training.

4.5 Transfers & Carries

In some situations, it may be necessary to manually transfer or carry a student with a mobility disability. There are a variety of one- and two-person techniques that can be used to safely move these students.

If it is part of a student's plan that they be transferred or carried during the evacuation process – either to be evacuated or to be moved to an evacuation device – the type of transfer or carry should be identified in advance of an emergency situation in consultation with the student and their parents or guardians.

Only those with the proper training should attempt to transfer or carry a student with a disability in an emergency situation, as transfers and carries can be physically demanding. Proper training will ensure the safety of the carriers and the student.

Parents, support workers, health centre staff, and disability organizations are all good resources when training school staff on transfers and carries.

Regardless of the technique chosen, transfers and carries must be practiced on a regular basis to ensure the student and staff are familiar and comfortable with the process.

Lastly, it is extremely important to have someone bring along the student's mobility aid. Otherwise they will be stranded.

4.5.1 One-Person Transfers & Carries

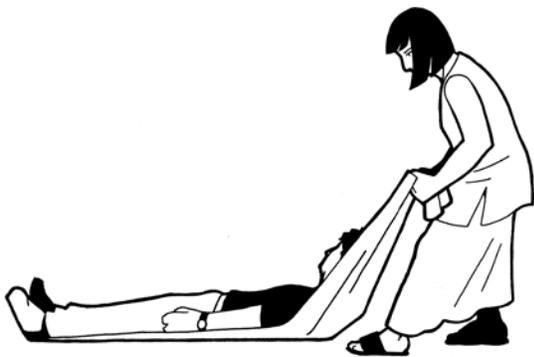
One-person transfers and carries should only be used in a serious emergency, as they have the potential to injure the student with a disability and the person providing assistance. Of course, in some cases, they may be the only option available.



Cradle Lift: This carry is best suited to transferring or transporting small or very light people. It is often favoured during evacuations because it is quick, but it can be difficult and risky for the rescuer. It can also be painful and potentially hazardous for people with paraplegia and other spinal conditions.



Piggyback: This carry is an appropriate option for students with arm strength, as they will need to hold onto the person carrying them. A piggyback carry is done most easily at the top of stairs where a handrail can be used for support. This carry causes less restriction to breathing than some other techniques.



Blanket Pull: This carry is used when there is limited help available and the student must be moved quickly. It is not a preferred method of transfer as it has a greater potential to injure the person being dragged. This carry should only be used on level surfaces (i.e. not on stairs).



Bumping Down Stairs: This is a form of self-rescue that should only be used in an emergency requiring a quick escape from an area of danger. This technique is most often used when there is little or no assistance available and the person's life is in danger. It is most commonly used by people with minimal leg function, but significant upper body strength.

4.5.2 Two-Person Transfers & Carries

Two-person transfers and carries are often preferable because they allow those providing assistance to share the weight, reducing the risk of injury to all involved.



Carrier B Carrier A

Fore-and-Aft Carry: This carry is easier if the taller of the two people providing assistance positions themselves at the student's head (Carrier A). Carrier A reaches under the student's arms and across their chest, grasping the student's wrists to ensure they do not slip. Carrier B then positions themselves facing away from the student with one leg held under each arm. Carrier A is responsible for ensuring the student's airway remains open. See the resources page for a link to a video demonstration of this carry.



Two-Person Chair Carry: For this carry, the people providing assistance link hands and lift the student under their legs and arms, forming a seat with a backrest. The rescuers have to walk sideways. A chair carry cannot be used with someone who is unable to sit up on their own (e.g. a person with quadriplegia or some people with cerebral palsy).

4.6 Use of Evacuation Devices



An evacuation device or chair can be helpful for carrying someone who is heavy. Two people are generally required to operate an evacuation device (see Section 3.4 for more information about evacuation devices). Typically, the student will transfer or be transferred into the evacuation device and then be wheeled or carried down the stairs.

Only those with the proper training should attempt to move a student using an evacuation device.

cal location where the student will b

uesday

Wednesday

Student Information

Name	Miranda Catholique
Age	13
Support Person	Ms. Gargan

Abilities and Needs

Student Strengths	Miranda is comfortable with i
Medical Needs	an emergency, she should prim
Communication Needs	worker (Ms. Gargan) or Ms. No
Sensory Needs	
Other Critical Information	
Emergency Kit Contents	

Emergency Procedures

Evacuation

Section 05

Personal Emergency Response Plans (PERPs)

Parent / ... understood the inform

5.1 Developing a PERP

Every student that requires extra assistance in safely and effectively responding to an emergency should have a personal emergency response plan (PERP). PERPs should be created in consultation with the student, their parents/guardian, teachers, support staff, and, where necessary, medical professionals as part of the student support plan (SSP) or individualized education plan (IEP) development process.

Every student that requires extra assistance in safely and effectively responding to an emergency should have a personal emergency response plan (PERP).

The development phase of the PERP should begin with the identification of the student's abilities and needs related to communication, sheltering-in-place, lockdown, hold and secure, evacuation, transportation, and re-establishing independence. Consider also any assistive devices (including evacuation devices) and medications that the student requires.

Next, identify potential emergencies (e.g. fire, intruder, etc.) and develop an appropriate response for each. In each case, consider the student's whereabouts throughout the day from the time they arrive to the school until they leave (i.e. class time, lunch time, before and after school activities), the layout of the school, staffing, and institutional fire safety and emergency plans.

A PERP template can be found in Appendix I: Personal Emergency Response Plan Template. You will notice signature lines at the bottom of the PERP. These should be completed by parents/guardians and staff who will be involved in the student's plan in some way. You may need to add additional signature lines.

5.1.1 Emergency Contact Form

The PERP should include contact information for the student's parents/guardians and their primary care provider(s). It should also include, where relevant, contact information

for the health centre or pharmacy where their prescriptions are filled, their transportation service provider, and alternative care providers (e.g. personal support workers, etc.).

An example of an emergency contact form can be found in Appendix IV: Sample Emergency Contact Form.

5.2 Updating & Practicing the Plan

Plans need to be updated regularly to ensure they are effective. Updated plans should reflect any changes in the student's abilities or needs, their schedule, location in the school, and staffing.

Whenever the school has an emergency drill, PERPs should be practiced. Drills need to involve the student, teacher(s), support staff, and alternates to ensure the plan is effective in the event of an actual emergency.

Some students with disabilities, including those with cognitive disabilities, may require extra training and practice. Emergency preparedness exercises can be incorporated into the educational program outlined in the SSP or IEP. See section 6.2 for more information.

Whenever the school has an emergency drill, PERPs should be practiced.

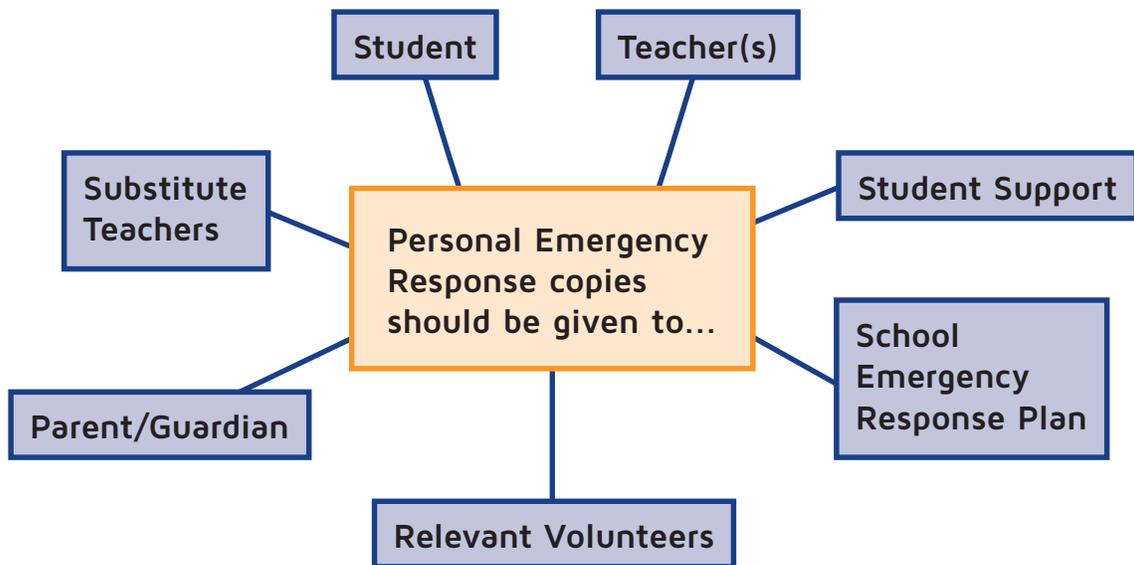
5.3 Information Sharing

Develop a policy that includes a consent form allowing medical information to be given to first responders and other people responsible for assisting during emergencies.

Copies of the student’s final PERP should be provided to the student, their parents or guardians, and relevant teacher(s) and support staff. Copies should be included in the school’s emergency plan and given to substitute teachers and relevant volunteers so they are aware of procedures should an emergency happen while they are at the school.

Students may also benefit from having a copy of the plan in their backpack/support pack.

The most important thing is that copies of the PERP are readily available should they be required during an emergency.





Section

06

**Assisting Students
with Disabilities**

6.1 General Guidelines

Tips:

- Develop communication strategies (i.e. emergency alerts and messaging) that are accessible to all students.
- Ensure evacuation routes, areas of rescue assistance, and assembly areas are accessible and clearly marked.
- Develop clear and concise response plans for all students who require assistance during an emergency.
- To avoid confusion during an actual emergency, ensure other students in the school, especially those in younger grades, are aware that some people will have different plans.
- Some students may require additional items, such as fidget toys, snacks, a hoodie, etc., to effectively respond to an emergency situation. These can be assembled ahead of time and kept in a fanny pack or backpack. If you have multiple students with disabilities in your class, you may want to create a classroom emergency kit.
- Organize regular practice drills. This will increase the confidence of everyone involved and help to identify gaps in emergency plans.
- During an emergency, offer assistance to students with disabilities, but let them explain what help is needed.
- Do not carry a student except in the most extreme of circumstances. Only those with the proper training should carry or transfer students.
- During an evacuation, do not abandon the student after exiting the building. Lead them to the assembly areas where they can be with others.

6.2 Students with Cognitive, Developmental, or Learning Disabilities



This is a very broad category that includes students with a variety of neurological disabilities. Depending on their disability, students may not recognize there is an emergency. They may have difficulty understanding instructions or they may not be motivated to respond. To ensure their safety, students with cognitive, developmental, and learning disabilities are likely to require more practice time.

Some students with cognitive disabilities are very sensitive to changes in their routine and their environment. Such changes can disrupt their feelings of safety and security causing them to act out, and, in some cases, to become violent. Alarms and sirens associated with emergencies can increase their anxiety. Assisting students with cognitive and developmental disabilities during an emergency will centre on keeping them calm and informed regardless of the situation.

Sheltering-in-place, hold and secure, and lockdown situations can be particularly stressful for students with cognitive and developmental disabilities because their movements are restricted. This is especially true for lockdowns where students have to be quiet and out of sight in a darkened room. Some students with cognitive and developmental disabilities may struggle with remaining quiet and still. Practice these procedures on a regular basis.

During an evacuation, students with cognitive and developmental disabilities will usually be able to use the same evacuation routes as the other students. The challenge is to keep them calm while exiting the school. If it is not possible for the student to use the primary evacuation route, an alternate must be identified.

Students with cognitive and developmental disabilities may require more preparation for emergency procedures and may not be able to participate in school-wide drills right away. Consider using a staged approach to practice their responses, beginning with a quiet environment and then gradually introducing trigger elements, such as alarms, bells, sirens, or horns. Students with cognitive and developmental disabilities may also need to practice their plan more frequently than other students.

Working with the student to develop an effective emergency response can be part of their learning goals and routines. Social stories can be a useful tool in preparing students with cognitive disabilities for emergencies. (See the Resources page for more information about social stories.) The use of key words (e.g. "surprise") may also help initiate an appropriate response.

Tips:

- Be prepared. Work ahead of time and on an ongoing basis with students to ensure they understand what the different type of emergencies are and how to respond.
- Don't just talk about emergency response with the student, walk them through the process and practice their plans for evacuations, lockdowns, hold and secure, and sheltering-in-place often.
- Be patient.
- Be aware that students with cognitive and developmental disabilities may be unable to understand the urgency of an emergency situation. They may also become disoriented, confused, agitated, or violent during an emergency event.
- Some students benefit from having a key word, such as "surprise," that indicates a change in their routine. This word needs to be taught and used on a regular basis, not just during emergency drills.
- Regardless of the situation, keep the student informed and reassured. This will help to reduce stress.
- Give instructions slowly and clearly. One instruction at a time is ideal so the student is not overwhelmed.
- Visual cues, where appropriate, can provide quick and easily understood instructions.
- Evacuation:
 - Wait until the rush of people has passed before beginning an evacuation.
 - Do not leave the student alone, as their sense of direction may be limited.
- Shelter-in-Place/Lockdown/Hold and Secure: Identify sensory supports that can help the student to remain calm. For example, in addition to personal tools, such as fidget toys, consider having a blanket, screen, or curtain in each classroom that can function as a temporary sensory escape room.

6.3 Students with Mental Health Disabilities



Students with mental health disabilities may have difficulty concentrating, handling stress, and initiating personal contact. Remaining calm is the most important thing you can do while assisting these students.

Tips:

- Work to reduce the student's stress:
 - Speak softly and calmly to the student.
 - Reassure the student.
 - Keep the student informed about what is happening.
- Give simple, clear, and direct instructions.
- If an evacuation is required:
 - Have a familiar staff member escort the student.
 - Wait until the rush of people has passed before beginning the student's evacuation.
- Consider having a quiet place where students with mental health disabilities can go following an evacuation.

6.4 Students Who Are Deaf or Have a Hearing Disability



The most important challenges facing students with hearing disabilities are awareness of the emergency and the appropriate response. Staff can communicate with the student using a notepad and pen, simple speech, or sign language. Regardless of the method of communication, make clear there is an emergency and indicate the appropriate response.

Tips:

- Get the attention of the student before you begin speaking to them.
- Look directly at the student when speaking.
- Use facial expressions and hand gestures to communicate.
- Use short sentences.
- Use written notes to indicate emergency instructions. For example, "Fire! Go out back door! Now!" Consider preparing cards with appropriate phrases ahead of time.
- Pictorial representations, where appropriate, can provide quick and easily understood instructions.
- Technological aids, such as tablets and smartphones, can be also be used for communication purposes.
- Check with the student to be sure they understood.
- Be patient. The student may have difficulty understanding the urgency of your message.
- Remember the student may not be able to hear oral commands issued by authorities. Ensuring they are informed throughout the emergency event is important.

6.5 Students with Mobility Disabilities



Personal emergency response plans for students with mobility disabilities will likely focus on evacuation. Typically they will have few if any additional requirements for shelter-in-place, hold and secure, or lockdowns.

Students with mobility disabilities will require an alternate route if the primary evacuation routes are not accessible. They may also require extra assistance during evacuations, especially if they attend a multi-story school.

Tips:

- Identify evacuation routes that are accessible to students who rely on mobility aids. Ensure that each student has at least two accessible evacuation routes.
- Familiarize yourself with the designated areas of rescue assistance and the location of evacuation equipment for students with mobility disabilities (if applicable).
- Only people with the appropriate training should attempt to transfer or carry the student with a disability.
- To avoid injuries to all involved, it is recommended to have two people assist in lifting, transferring, or carrying a student.
- Multiple people should be trained in the appropriate transfers and carries to ensure students are safely evacuated from the building.
- Before transferring a student, check for life-support equipment and steps for moving or disconnecting equipment.
- Do not evacuate a student up/down stairs, unless you can do so safely. Instead:
 - Position the student in the safest place possible under the circumstances with a staff person.
 - Alert staff and emergency personnel of the student's location.
- In some cases, mobility aids, such as wheelchairs, can be used as an evacuation device. However, using them in this way requires special training as wheelchairs have parts not designed to handle the stress of lifting.
- Make arrangements in advance for accessible transportation or an appropriate alternative should the student need to be moved to a location away from the school.

6.6 Students Who Are Blind or Have a Vision Disability



Students who are blind or have a vision disability will receive audible messages, such as fire alarms and spoken instructions. Usually, they can evacuate using the same route as the other students, but they may need some assistance in doing so. Because visual cues may not be available to them, they may require extra verbal information about the emergency situation and the appropriate response.

Tips:

- Always announce your presence so the student knows you are near them.
- If an evacuation is required, ask the student if they require assistance before attempting to help.
- Ask the student if they prefer to be guided in a particular way. If not, offer your elbow so they can hang on to you. Do not grab the student's arm or hand. See section 4.6 for more detailed instructions on guiding.
- Communicate with the student throughout the evacuation. Clearly describe where you are going and any obstacles that will require a change in your walking path or pattern. Be sure to describe in advance physical barriers or action to be taken, such as "Take two steps down."
- Wait until the rush of people has passed before beginning their evacuation.

6.7 Students with Medical Conditions & Limited Mobility (Non-Wheelchair Users)



There may be students in your school with any number of permanent or temporary medical conditions that could result in limited mobility, such as diabetes, pregnancy, broken legs, and surgical recovery. As with students who use mobility aids, their greatest challenge will be evacuation.

Tips:

- Do not interfere with the student's movement, but be available to provide support if necessary.
- Offer assistance when they need to walk up/down stairs. If the stairs are crowded, use your body as a buffer.
- Allow rest periods during evacuations, if possible.
- Find ways to reduce the student's stress, exertion, and exposure to dust or smoke.

6.8 Students with Service Animals



During emergency situations, including evacuations, it is critical that service animals remain with their handler at all times.

Tips:

- Be aware that service animals, like humans, may become disoriented or agitated during an emergency.
- Plan for the service animal to be evacuated with their owner.
- Refrain from touching and distracting service animals.
- In the event that staff are asked to provide assistance with the service animal, they should be trained to hold the leash and not the harness. This will signal to the dog that it is no longer “on duty.”

Appendix



Personal Emergency Response Plan Template

Date: _____

Student Information			
Name		Teacher(s)	
Age			
Support Person			

Abilities and Needs	
Student Strengths	
Medical Needs	
Communication Needs	
Sensory Needs	
Other Critical Information	
Emergency Kit Contents	

Emergency Procedures	
Evacuation	
Lockdown	
Hold and Secure	
Shelter-in-Place	

I have read and understood the information contained in this personal emergency response plan.

Parent/Guardian: _____ **Date:** _____

Student Support: _____ **Date:** _____

Teacher: _____ **Date:** _____

Teacher: _____ **Date:** _____

Teacher: _____ **Date:** _____

Teacher: _____ **Date:** _____

Substitute Teacher: _____ **Date:** _____

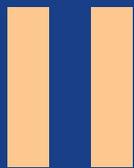


Student Schedule (Include the physical location where the student will be at these times)

	Monday	Tuesday	Wednesday	Thursday	Friday
Before School					
Period 1					
Period 2					
Lunch					
Period 3					
Period 4					
After School					



Appendix



**Example of a Completed
Personal Emergency
Response Plan**

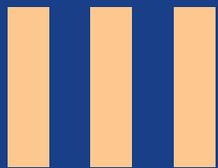
Date: September 8, 2014

Student Information			
Name	Miranda Catholique	Teacher(s)	Mr. Kochon Ms. Nakimayak
Age	13		
Support Person	Ms. Gargan		

Abilities and Needs	
Student Strengths	Miranda is comfortable with most adults and children. However, during an emergency, she should primarily receive assistance from her support worker (Ms. Gargan) or Ms. Norwegian (guidance counsellor).
Medical Needs	Miranda has been diagnosed with autism and diabetes. Her insulin is kept in the staff room kitchen fridge. There are snacks in all of the classrooms she uses. Miranda rarely lets people know when she is not feeling well.
Communication Needs	Miranda rarely speaks. She typically uses a word and picture board to communicate. She uses a picture schedule to organize her day. More recently, Miranda has begun experimenting with an iPad for communication.
Sensory Needs	Miranda seeks tactile pressure (bear hugs), especially when she is feeling stressed. She will vocalize her need for pressure. Fidget toys (e.g. Rubik's Cube, Silly Putty) can quiet Miranda's vocalizations for a short period of time.
Other Critical Information	Miranda is scared of loud alarms. She may run away from the noise.
Emergency Kit Contents	Word and picture board, social stories, iPad, fidget toys, snacks. Insulin.

Emergency Procedures	
Evacuation	Use the code word “special” to indicate to Miranda that there will be a change in schedule. Show her the picture story for evacuation. Wait for the rush of students to pass, then begin Miranda’s evacuation using one of the routes on her school map. Miranda should be taken to the quiet assembly area in the SW corner of the yard. Mr. Muise, the school’s admin assistant, will place Miranda’s insulin and an ice pack from the freezer in the blue cooler bag kept in the medication cupboard and bring it to Ms. Gargan.
Lockdown	Use the code word “special” to indicate to Miranda that there will be a change in schedule. Show her the picture story for lockdown. Indicate that she is to take shelter under the teacher’s desk and be quiet. Miranda may require a bear hug to stay quiet or she may be able to remain calm with her fidget toys.
Hold and Secure	Use the code word “special” to indicate to Miranda that there will be a change in schedule. Show her the picture story for hold and secure.
Shelter-in-Place	Use the code word “special” to indicate to Miranda that there will be a change in schedule. Show her the picture story for shelter-in-place.

Appendix



**Inclusive
School Emergency
Planning Checklist**

	Yes	No
Have you developed personal emergency response plans (PERPs) for each student with a disability?		
Do PERPs address all of the different kinds of emergency situations (evacuation, lockdown, hold and secure, and shelter-in-place)?		
Have staff received the appropriate training to carry out PERPs (e.g. communication, transfers and carries, evacuation devices)?		
Are PERPs practiced with teachers, support staff, and alternates on a regular basis?		
Are PERPs updated regularly?		
Have you reviewed student PERPs with first responders?		
Are copies of the PERP easily available for distribution to substitute teachers?		
Have you identified the medical needs of students and staff and their medication schedule?		
Have you developed a plan for storing and dispensing medications during and after an emergency event?		
Do you have a roster of students with disabilities and others (staff, regular volunteers, etc.) who may require extra assistance during an emergency?		
Do you have a plan in place to determine if visitors to the school will require extra assistance in the event of an emergency?		
Do you have a plan in place for students with temporary disabilities, such as a broken leg?		
How do you alert people in the school of an emergency (alarms, intercom, etc.)? Are these alerts accessible to everyone, including people with hearing and vision disabilities?		
Are fire pulls accessible to everyone (at a maximum height from the floor of 1.2 m)?		



	Yes	No
Are visual strobe alarms integrated into the audible alarm system? Are there visual strobe alarms in places where people might be alone (e.g. washrooms, changing rooms, kitchen)?		
Have you identified primary and alternate evacuation routes?		
Are your evacuation routes accessible? Have you walked the evacuation routes looking for potential obstacles?		
Have you posted diagrams around the school clearly indicating the primary, alternate, and accessible evacuation routes?		
Are plans in place to avoid the use of lifts and elevators (where applicable)?		
Are there evacuation devices available for students who require them?		
Are staff trained in the use of evacuation devices?		
If a PERP requires that the student be lifted and/or transferred, have staff been trained in and practiced the appropriate lifts and transfers with the student?		
Does your school have designated areas of rescue assistance developed in consultation with the local fire department? If so, are these clearly marked? Do they appear in the fire plan?		
Do your emergency plans make clear the importance of keeping assistive equipment, including service animals, with students?		
Have you identified assembling areas? Are these accessible to all students?		
If students need to be transported away from the school premises, are there accessible vehicles available for students with mobility disabilities or an appropriate alternative?		
If students need to be transported away from the school premises, is the designated shelter accessible to students and staff with a wide range of functional and access needs?		
Does your emergency plan consider the seasons, but particularly extreme cold?		

Appendix

IV

**Sample Emergency
Contact Form**

Name: _____

Birthdate: _____

Address: _____

Phone Number: _____

Parent/Guardian: _____

Phone Number: _____

Parent/Guardian: _____

Phone Number: _____

Emergency Contact: _____

Relationship: _____

Home Phone Number: _____

Cell Number: _____

Physician: _____

Phone Number: _____

Alternate Care Provider: _____

Phone Number: _____

Pharmacy/Health Centre: _____

Phone Number: _____



Medication	Dosage	Purpose

Allergies: _____

Assistive Devices: _____

I, _____, parent/guardian of
_____ consent to sharing the information
in this form with first responders in the event of an
emergency.

Signature: _____

Date: _____



Appendix

V

**Sample
Master List**

Resources

Sighted Guide Training

The CNIB has created a how-to manual for guiding someone who is blind or partially sighted

http://www.cnib.ca/en/about/Publications/vision-health/Documents/CNIB_STEP_BY_STEP_2012_ENG_FINAL-s.pdf

A video introduction to sighted guide training is available through VisionAware.

<http://www.visionaware.org/info/everyday-living/essential-skills/an-introduction-to-orientation-and-mobility-skills/sighted-guide-video/1235>

Carries

This video demonstrates an effective Fore and Aft Carry.

https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=ab_QVDMDHxE

Social Stories

The Miss Hey Miss blog offers more information about social stories, including how they can be used for emergency preparedness.

<http://missheymiss.blogspot.ca/2014/06/e-is-for-emergency.html>

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