

Approved by K-12 Board Action #26-06E, October 7, 2026

PURPOSE AND SCOPE:

The BC Conference Seventh-day Adventist Office of Education is committed to maintaining a safe, caring, and prepared learning environment for students, families, staff, and members of the school community.

Emergency management is organized around four interconnected phases:

- **Mitigation** – identifying hazards and taking steps to reduce or eliminate risks;
- **Preparedness** – developing plans, assigning responsibilities, preparing resources, and providing training and practice;
- **Response** – taking appropriate action during an emergency to protect life, safety, and well-being; and
- **Recovery** – restoring safe school operations, supporting emotional and psychological well-being, maintaining continuity of learning, and incorporating lessons learned.

This policy is informed by the *B.C. Ministry of Education and Child Care Safety and Emergency Management Planning Guide for Schools, Districts and Authorities* and is intended to be adapted to the context, location, facilities, student population, and identified risks of each school.

Each school will maintain a site-specific School Emergency Management Plan (SEMP) consistent with this policy and applicable Ministry guidance, legislation, regulations, and local emergency procedures.

ROLES AND RESPONSIBILITIES:

The Principal or designate is responsible for overseeing emergency management at the school, including:

- maintaining and annually reviewing the school's SEMP and related procedures
- identifying and reviewing hazards and risks relevant to the school;
- establishing an emergency command structure consistent with Incident Command System (ICS) principles, including pre-assigned staff and alternate emergency roles appropriate to the size and context of the school;
- ensuring staff are familiar with emergency procedures and receive appropriate training;
- coordinating emergency preparedness activities and drills;
- coordinating emergency communication;
- maintaining procedures for student accountability and reunification;
- ensuring appropriate follow-up and documentation after significant incidents; and
- working with the Superintendent/Office of Education, first responders, local authorities, and other agencies as required.

School staff are responsible for:

- being familiar with the SEMP and their assigned emergency responsibilities;
- participating in required training, drills, and preparedness activities;
- responding promptly to concerns involving student or staff safety;

- calling 911 where immediate emergency assistance is required;
- maintaining appropriate supervision and accountability for students during an emergency;
- supporting students who require additional assistance during an emergency;
- notifying the Principal or designate of significant incidents; and
- documenting significant incidents in accordance with school procedures.

Parents and guardians are encouraged to:

maintain current emergency contact, medical, and authorized student-release information with the school;

- inform the school of individual needs that may affect their child's safety during an emergency;
- become familiar with school emergency communication and reunification procedures;
- reinforce age-appropriate emergency preparedness with their children; and
- follow school and emergency-authority directions during an emergency.

SCHOOL EMERGENCY MANAGEMENT PLAN:

The SEMP will address, as applicable:

- hazard and risk assessment that considers, as applicable, natural, human-caused, technological, and biological hazards, including geographic and location-specific hazards such as wildfire, flood, tsunami, avalanche, or other locally identified risks, and identifies appropriate mitigation measures;
- an Emergency Planning Committee or designated school emergency planning team appropriate to the size and context of the school;
- emergency roles and responsibilities;
- emergency contact information;
- evacuation routes and assembly locations;
- an emergency command structure and pre-assigned staff and alternate roles consistent with ICS principles;
- primary and alternate reunification locations and procedures;
- emergency communication procedures;
- student and staff accountability;
- emergency equipment and supplies appropriate to the school's identified risks and sufficient to support students and staff for a minimum of 72 hours, in accordance with current provincial guidance;
- medical and individual emergency support needs;
- coordination with child care and early learning programs operating on school grounds, including emergency communication, drills, accountability, response, and reunification procedures, as applicable;
- procedures to ensure visitors, volunteers, temporary staff, contractors, and other groups using the school site are informed of relevant emergency procedures and included in emergency notification and accountability processes, as appropriate;
- school-sponsored off-site activities;
- continuity of school operations and learning; and
- recovery and post-incident procedures.

Sensitive emergency information, including information concerning school vulnerabilities, detailed floor plans, or identifiable student and staff information, will be securely maintained and shared only as appropriate.

INCLUSIVE EMERGENCY PLANNING:

Emergency planning will consider the individual needs and capabilities of students and staff throughout mitigation, preparedness, response, and recovery.

Considerations may include:

- mobility or physical support needs;
- medical needs, medications, and medical equipment;
- sensory needs;
- communication or language needs;
- cognitive, behavioural, or emotional support needs;
- accessibility requirements; and
- other circumstances that may affect an individual's ability to safely understand or follow emergency procedures.

Where additional support is required, the school will work with the student, parent/guardian, staff member, and appropriate support personnel to develop an individual emergency safety plan or incorporate emergency safety provisions into an existing individual plan.

Individual emergency supports will be considered during drills and preparedness activities and reviewed regularly to ensure they remain current and effective.

MEDICAL ALERTS, ANAPHYLAXIS, AND HEALTH EMERGENCIES:

Schools will maintain current medical alert and anaphylaxis information for students identified as being at risk, in accordance with applicable policies and procedures.

Parents or guardians are responsible for:

- providing current medical and emergency information;
- providing required medication and emergency equipment, including epinephrine auto-injectors where applicable; and
- notifying the school of significant changes to the student's condition or emergency plan.

Schools will maintain procedures for responding to unexpected health emergencies and will call 911 where immediate emergency medical assistance is required.

Emergency medical equipment and supplies required by applicable legislation, regulation, Ministry policy, or school authority procedures will be readily accessible and appropriately maintained.

STANDARDIZED EMERGENCY RESPONSE PROTOCOLS:

Schools will use the following standardized emergency response protocols, as appropriate to the nature and circumstances of an emergency:

- **Drop-Cover-Hold On:** Used primarily during earthquakes or other events involving structural instability. Students and staff will drop to the ground, take cover where possible, and hold on until the immediate hazard has passed.
- **Evacuate:** Used when it is safer to move students and staff from a building or affected area to a designated assembly area or alternate location.
- **Lockdown:** Used when an immediate threat inside or directly affecting the school requires students and staff to secure themselves in designated locations and remain out of sight until an authorized all-clear is provided.
- **Hold and Secure:** Used when a threat or emergency is occurring outside the school but does not require normal activities inside the building to cease. Exterior access to the school is restricted until the threat has passed.
- **Shelter-in-Place:** Used when conditions outside the school make remaining indoors safer than evacuation, including certain hazardous-material, severe-weather, environmental, or air-quality emergencies.

Schools will use clear, plain language when initiating emergency response protocols.

EMERGENCY PREPAREDNESS, TRAINING, AND DRILLS:

Each school will conduct emergency preparedness activities, training, and drills appropriate to its site, student population, identified hazards, and applicable requirements. Emergency preparedness will include:

- annual staff review of the SEMP and emergency procedures;
- annual emergency preparedness communication to families;
- orientation for new staff and others with assigned emergency responsibilities;
- staff acknowledgement or declaration of relevant emergency and anaphylaxis procedures;
- age- and developmentally appropriate instruction for students;
- six fire evacuation drills annually, as required by the BC Fire Code;
- three earthquake drills annually, including Drop-Cover-Hold On practice, with participation in the Great BC ShakeOut encouraged;
- two lockdown and/or Hold and Secure drills annually, conducted in collaboration with police partners where practicable;
- one tsunami preparedness and evacuation drill annually for schools located within tsunami hazard zones or low-lying coastal areas, as appropriate;
- other hazard-specific preparedness activities appropriate to the school's location;
- training for staff assigned emergency and student reunification responsibilities; and
- appropriate consideration of accessibility and individual emergency support needs during drills.

Drills will be conducted in a manner that is developmentally appropriate and trauma-informed. Schools should vary drill conditions where appropriate and review the effectiveness of procedures following drills.

Schools will maintain appropriate records of emergency preparedness activities and drills.

EMERGENCY RESPONSE:

Where a serious safety threat or emergency affects a student, staff member, or school activity, staff will, as appropriate to the circumstances:

- initiate or follow the emergency response protocol appropriate to the nature and location of the emergency;
- direct students and others under their supervision to follow emergency instructions;
- call 911 where immediate police, fire, or medical assistance is required;
- maintain appropriate supervision and accountability for students;
- notify the Principal or designate as soon as practicable;
- communicate with parents or guardians as appropriate and in accordance with the school's emergency communication and reunification procedures;
- remain with and support affected students where appropriate and safe to do so until additional assistance is available; and
- document significant incidents in accordance with school procedures.

Where local authorities, first responders, or the operator of a facility being used for a school-sponsored activity issue an evacuation, lockdown, Hold and Secure, Shelter-in-Place, or other emergency direction, students and staff will comply with those directions.

For school-sponsored activities occurring away from the school site, the emergency procedures applicable to that location will be followed in conjunction with school emergency and field-trip procedures.

SCHOOL-SPONSORED OFF-SITE ACTIVITIES:

Emergency planning for field trips, extracurricular activities, athletics, outdoor education, transportation, and other school-sponsored off-site or in-transit activities will be addressed through applicable school or BC Conference Seventh-day Adventist Office of Education policies and procedures. Planning will include, as appropriate:

- supervision;
- parental consent;
- emergency contact and medical information;
- emergency communication;
- medication and medical devices;
- individual support needs;
- transportation;
- local hazards and emergency services; and
- procedures for student accountability and reunification.

STUDENT ACCOUNTABILITY AND REUNIFICATION:

Each school will maintain procedures for the safe and orderly reunification of students with parents, guardians, or other authorized caregivers following an emergency.

Reunification procedures will include, as appropriate:

- current emergency contact and authorized pick-up information;
- consideration of applicable custody or legal restrictions;
- primary and alternate reunification locations;
- procedures for verifying the identity and authorization of individuals receiving students;
- documentation of student release;
- procedures for maintaining student supervision and accountability until release;
- accessible reunification arrangements for individuals requiring additional support; and
- communication with families regarding when, where, and how reunification will occur.

Parents and guardians should not attend the school or emergency site unless directed to do so, as uncontrolled arrival may interfere with emergency response operations.

BEHAVIOURAL AND DIGITAL THREAT ASSESSMENT:

Schools will respond to concerning, threatening, or violent behaviour in accordance with current Ministry and the BC Conference Seventh-day Adventist Office of Education Behavioural and Digital Threat Assessment procedures.

The Principal or designated personnel will maintain training appropriate to their role and coordinate, as required, with the Superintendent/Office of Education, appropriate school personnel, mental health professionals, law enforcement, and community partners.

Threats and behaviours that raise a safety concern will be taken seriously, documented, and screened or assessed using the appropriate threat assessment process.

SEVERE WEATHER, NATURAL HAZARDS, AND LOCAL EMERGENCIES:

Schools will monitor and respond appropriately to emergencies that may affect their local community, including severe weather, wildfire, flooding, tsunami, hazardous air quality, earthquakes, power disruptions, evacuation orders, and other natural or community emergencies.

Where an emergency affects a school or school community:

- personal safety will take priority over normal school operations;
- schools will comply with directions from emergency authorities;
- the Principal or designate may modify, suspend, or relocate school programming as appropriate;
- families will be informed of significant changes to school operations; and
- the school will work with the Superintendent/Office of Education and local authorities as required.

POWER, COMMUNICATION, AND TECHNOLOGY DISRUPTIONS:

Schools will maintain procedures for responding to disruptions involving electricity, telecommunications, internet access, information systems, or other infrastructure necessary for school operations.

Where significant disruptions occur, the Principal or designate may modify or suspend programming, implement alternate communication methods, or make other temporary arrangements necessary to maintain student safety and continuity of learning.

EMERGENCY COMMUNICATION:

The Principal or designate will coordinate emergency communication with staff, students, families, the Superintendent/Office of Education, first responders, and external agencies as appropriate.

Emergency communication will be:

- factual, timely, and coordinated;
- provided in clear and plain language;
- accessible and culturally appropriate;
- provided through multiple communication channels where practicable; and
- translated or supported through alternative communication formats where reasonably required.

Schools will identify primary and alternate methods of emergency communication. Where normal communication systems are unavailable, alternate methods will be used where practicable.

Only designated individuals will communicate with media on behalf of the school or school authority. Public information will be coordinated with the Superintendent/Office of Education, emergency services, or other agencies as appropriate.

RECOVERY AND POST-INCIDENT FOLLOW-UP:

Following a significant emergency or critical incident, the Principal or designate will coordinate appropriate recovery and follow-up. Recovery may include:

- confirming the immediate safety and well-being of affected students and staff;
- completing required incident reports and other documentation;
- notifying the Superintendent/Office of Education and other authorities as required;
- providing or arranging appropriate emotional, psychological, or practical support for affected students, families, and staff;
- supporting continuity or restoration of learning and school operations, including temporary adjustments to programming or learning environments where required;
- addressing physical or facility-related recovery needs;
- conducting an operational debrief to identify strengths, concerns, and needed changes to procedures; and
- incorporating lessons learned into future emergency planning, training, and preparedness.

Post-incident support and operational debriefing will be conducted in a trauma-informed manner. Operational debriefing will focus on procedures, actions, supports, and opportunities for improvement rather than requiring individuals to recount or emotionally process traumatic experiences in a group setting.

ANNUAL REVIEW AND CONTINUOUS IMPROVEMENT:

Each school will review its SEMP and emergency procedures at least annually and update them as required. The annual review will consider:

- changes to the school population, staffing, facilities, programs, and surrounding community;
- hazards and risks relevant to the school;
- individual and accessibility needs;
- lessons learned from drills, incidents, and operational debriefs;
- changes to legislation, Ministry guidance, or BC Conference Seventh-day Adventist Office of Education procedures; and
- recommendations from emergency services and community partners.

Staff will review emergency procedures each school year and receive appropriate training for their assigned responsibilities.

RELATED POLICIES AND PROCEDURES:

This policy should be read together with applicable school and BC Conference Seventh-day Adventist Office of Education policies and procedures, including, as applicable:

- Anaphylaxis and Medical Alert Policy
- Behavioural and Digital Threat Assessment Procedures
- Harassment and Bullying Prevention Policy
- Child Abuse and Neglect Policy
- Student Records and Privacy Policy
- Field Trip/Off-Site Activities Policy
- Critical Incident Response Procedures
- Occupational Health and Safety Procedures
- Student Supervision and Release Procedures
- Child Care Emergency Procedures, where applicable
- Other emergency, safety, and student support procedures

ADOPTION AND LOCAL IMPLEMENTATION:

This policy provides a common emergency-management framework for schools within BC Conference Seventh-day Adventist Office of Education. Each school is responsible for adopting or adapting site-specific procedures consistent with this policy and maintaining a current School Emergency Management Plan appropriate to its individual context.