

Emergency Preparedness for Support Staff

Empowering Support Personnel to Respond Confidently in Any Emergency

Emergency preparedness is not just the responsibility of teachers and administrators; it is a whole-campus effort. Custodians, office staff, cafeteria teams, bus drivers, paraprofessionals, and all support personnel play important roles in school safety.

Why Non-Classroom Staff Are Essential to Emergency Readiness

Non-instructional staff cover the hallways, cafeterias, buses, playgrounds, and front offices, the places where emergencies often begin. Their visibility and relationships with students make them critical to early detection and rapid response.

Key reasons your role matters:

- You see patterns teachers may not: changes in student behavior, unsafe conditions, or escalating conflicts.
- You often supervise large, unstructured spaces where incidents can unfold quickly.
- Your calm presence can stabilize a situation before it becomes an emergency.



Know Your Role in Each Emergency

Every staff member should know what to do during:

- Evacuations (fire, gas leak, environmental hazard)
- Shelter-in-Place (weather, air quality, nearby police activity)
- Lockdown / Secure situations
- Medical emergencies
- Behavioral or emotional crises

For each scenario, your district should provide:

- Where you report
- Who you communicate with
- How you assist students
- What equipment or keys you need
- What not to do

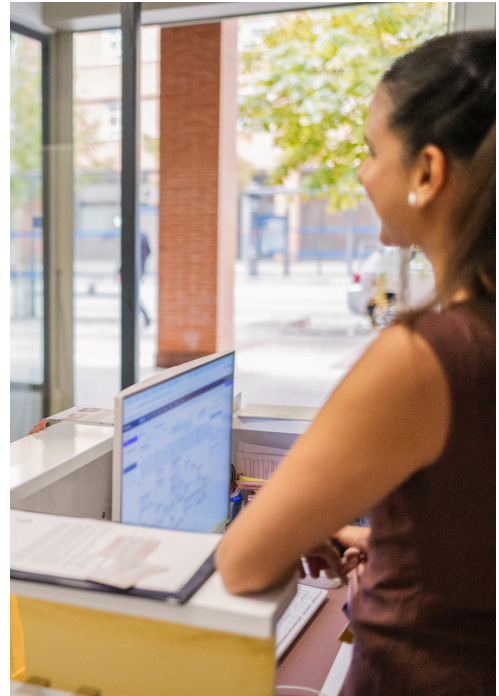
Teams

Front Office Staff

Front office teams are the first point of contact for visitors and often the first to receive emergency calls.

Key responsibilities include:

- Verifying visitor identity and following check-in protocols
- Knowing how to initiate emergency notifications
- Staying calm during parent inquiries or high-stress moments
- Maintaining updated emergency contact lists
- Understanding how to discreetly alert administrators if something feels unsafe



Custodial Teams

Custodians are essential for both prevention and response.

Your emergency readiness includes:

- Identifying hazards (blocked exits, spills, broken equipment)
- Knowing shut-off locations for water, gas, and electricity
- Assisting with building evacuation routes
- Supporting first responders during real emergencies
- Ensuring emergency equipment (extinguishers, AEDs) is accessible

Custodians often know the building better than anyone. Your knowledge saves time when seconds matter.



Teams

Cafeteria Staff

The cafeteria is one of the busiest, loudest spaces on campus.

Your preparedness includes:

- Knowing evacuation routes from the kitchen and cafeteria
- Recognizing early signs of conflict or distress
- Keeping pathways clear for quick movement
- Understanding how to secure food prep equipment during emergencies
- Supporting students who panic or freeze during drills



Transportation Teams

Bus drivers and transportation staff face unique challenges.

Critical skills include:

- Conducting quick bus evacuations
- Managing student behavior in confined spaces
- Communicating with dispatch during incidents
- Handling medical issues while in transit
- Knowing how to respond to accidents or road hazards

Teams

Paraprofessionals & Aides

The cafeteria is one of the busiest, loudest spaces on campus.

Your preparedness includes:

- Knowing evacuation routes from the kitchen and cafeteria
- Recognizing early signs of conflict or distress
- Keeping pathways clear for quick movement
- Understanding how to secure food prep equipment during emergencies
- Supporting students who panic or freeze during drills



Non-classroom staff are essential for keeping schools safe. When you know your role, practice your procedures, and stay observant, you make the entire campus safer.

