

I. Policy Statement

The Board of Education of Howard County recognizes that there will be occasions when it is necessary to respond to situations that threaten the safety or health of students and staff or are disruptive to the operation of a school, multiple schools, or the school system and that advance preparation and planning minimize risks inherent in any emergency situation. In certain instances, it may be necessary to take protective action, which may include closing a school, multiple schools, or the entire school system as a safety or health measure.

It is the intent of the Board to resume all normal operations, including instruction, as soon as feasible following an emergency.

II. Purpose

The purpose of this policy is to define the process and establish criteria by which the school system responds to situations that threaten the safety or health of students and staff or are disruptive to the operation of a school, multiple schools, or the school system.

III. Definitions

Within the context of this policy, the following definitions apply:

- A. Crisis Intervention Team – A team of trained responders providing immediate and long-term consultation and direct support to school communities following a crisis.
- B. Continuity of Operations Plan (COOP) – Procedures to ensure that the capability exists to continue essential functions during and after an extended emergency.
- C. Crisis – A traumatic event involving a student or staff member that interrupts the normal day-to-day functioning of a school (such as an accident, death, or long-term illness).
- D. Emergency – A circumstance that happens unexpectedly and requires immediate attention.
- E. Emergency Operations Center (EOC) – A location for centralized policy direction and control of emergencies.

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- F. Extended Emergency – A severe or long-term situation that affects an individual school, multiple schools, or the entire school system.
- G. First Responder – A member of local, state, or federal law enforcement and/or the fire and rescue department.
- H. HCPSS Emergency Operations Plan (EOP) – A multi-hazard approach for the school system that addresses preparation, response, recovery, and mitigation to:
1. An emergency, including a violent or traumatic event on school grounds, during school hours, or during a school-sponsored activity.
 2. Events in the community that affect normal school operations.
- I. Howard County Emergency Operations Plan – An emergency management system incorporating all aspects of pre-emergency preparedness and post-emergency response, recovery, and mitigation.
- J. Parent – Any one of the following, recognized as the adult(s) legally responsible for the child or vulnerable adult:
1. Biological parent – A natural parent whose parental rights have not been terminated.
 2. Adoptive parent – A person who has legally adopted the student and whose parental rights have not been terminated.
 3. Custodian – A person or an agency appointed by the court as the legal custodian of the student and granted parental rights and responsibilities.
 4. Guardian – A person who had been placed by the court in charge of the affairs of the student and granted parental rights and responsibilities.
 5. Caregiver – An adult resident of Howard County who exercises care, custody, or control over the student but who is neither the biological parent nor legal guardian as long as the person satisfies the requirements of the Education Article, §7-101(c) (Informal Kinship Care).
 6. Foster parent – An adult approved to care for a child who has been placed in their home by a state agency or a licensed child placement agency as provided by the Family Law Article, §5-507.
- K. Protective Action – A specific, pre-defined response used in emergency situations to ensure the safety and well-being of those involved such as school closing, lockdown, modified lockdown, sheltering in place, evacuation, closing of a facility, etc.

- L. School-Based Crisis Intervention Team – Building-level team of trained crisis responders providing immediate and long-term support to staff and students following an emergency situation or crisis.

IV. Standards

- A. In times of emergency, the first priority of the Howard County Public School System (HCPSS) will be the safety of all students, staff, and other individuals in a school system facility or on school system property.
- B. HCPSS will develop an Emergency Operations Plan (EOP) for each school and school system facility in consultation with other health and safety officials within the community. Copies of each school EOP will be kept on file at the school site and in the Office of Safety, Environment and Risk Management.
- C. HCPSS EOPs will align with the Howard County Emergency Operations Plan.
- D. HCPSS will participate with the Howard County Emergency Operations Center (EOC) if the nature of the emergency demands such participation.
- E. Emergency communications to staff, students, parents, and the community will be coordinated through the HCPSS EOC and through the Howard County EOC when the Howard County EOC is in operation.
- F. Staff will receive annual emergency training commensurate with their level of responsibility under their Emergency Operations Plan (EOP).
- G. School or building administration will assume their responsibility as incident commander and will work jointly within the command system established by first responders.
- H. Each school will have a School-Based Crisis Intervention Team that includes administrators, Student Services staff, and other members as identified by the school administrator, which will address the social-emotional needs of students and staff that result from an emergency situation or crisis.
- I. School staff will ensure that students are reunited with their parents as soon as it can be safely accomplished.
- J. When schools or the school system are closed for the day or dismiss early due to emergency situations such as inclement weather, all after-school and evening activities and all school and non-school-sponsored activities scheduled in school facilities are canceled. This does not apply to early dismissals that are scheduled as part of the academic calendar.

- K. At times when inclement weather threatens the safety of students and staff, the Superintendent/Designee may close or delay the opening of schools or the school system or dismiss early and will notify the Board of the decision.
- L. In the event that schools are closed for more days than those allocated on the academic calendar, the Superintendent may seek a waiver of the 180-day requirement by applying to the Maryland State Department of Education (MSDE).
- M. The Continuity of Operations Plan (COOP) will be used to ensure continuation of essential system operations in an extended emergency situation.

V. Responsibilities

- A. The Superintendent/Designee will ensure that Emergency Operations Plans (EOPs) and Continuity of Operations Plans (COOPs) are developed, implemented, and exercised, and that appropriate training is provided for staff at each school and central administration facility.
- B. The Superintendent/Designee will establish procedures for the dissemination of school closing and other emergency announcements and for ensuring that parents and staff are informed of emergency communication procedures at the start of each school year.
- C. The Superintendent/Designee will authorize to close a school, multiple schools, or the school system when emergency conditions warrant closure and will consult with or provide notification to the Board as appropriate.
- D. The Superintendent/Designee will ensure the continuity of operations and the coordination of recovery efforts in the event of an extended emergency situation.
- E. In the event of an early dismissal, the school-based administrator will ensure that all students are released in accordance with established school dismissal procedures. Elementary students will be released in accordance with instructions provided annually by parents on the emergency procedures form.
- F. The Director of Transportation/Designee will assess conditions in certain weather-related situations.
- G. The Director of Student Services/Designee will activate the cluster Crisis Intervention Team when needed to help support school communities following a crisis.
- H. An HCPSS employee who supervises a school-sponsored afterschool, evening, weekend or off-campus event or activity is responsible for the safety of all participants.
- I. In the event of a closure, a late opening, or an early dismissal, employees of the HCPSS will work in compliance with the provisions of their respective collective bargaining agreement, office/department supervisor, or administrative directive.

VI. Delegation of Authority

The Superintendent is authorized to develop appropriate procedures to implement this policy.

VII. References

- A. Legal
U.S.C. 20, §1400; U.S.C. 29, §794; Rehabilitation Act of 1973, §504
Annotated Code of Maryland, Education Article, §§9-104, 4-205, 6-401(d),
6-501(f), Title 9
Annotated Code of Maryland, Education Article, §7-103
- B. Other Board Policies
Policy 10020 Use of School Facilities
- C. Relevant Data Sources
- D. Other
Continuity of Operations Plan (COOP)
HCPSS Emergency Operations Plan
School-Based Emergency Operations Plans

VIII. History

ADOPTED: January 5, 1971
REVIEWED:
MODIFIED:
REVISED: August 24, 1989
January 13, 2005
April 12, 2012
EFFECTIVE: July 1, 2012

EMERGENCY PREPAREDNESS
AND RESPONSE

Effective: July 1, 2012

I. Definitions

Within the context of these implementation procedures, the following definitions apply:

- A. Duck, Cover, and Hold On – People immediately cease their activities, drop to the ground under a piece of furniture, and hold on.
- B. Incident Command System – Protocols that are implemented in time of emergency.
- C. Lockdown – An emergency protocol used in imminent danger to protect students and staff by not allowing anyone to leave or enter the building or the room.
- D. Modified Lockdown – An emergency protocol in which exterior doors of a building are locked, and main doors are monitored with restricted access.
- E. Shelter-in-Place – Process for taking protective action in a place sealed off from an emergency situation or hazardous substance.

II. Howard County Public School System (HCPSS) Emergency Preparedness

- A. The Chief Operating Officer serves as the HCPSS Incident Commander and will ensure that the school system and all school facilities develop, implement, and train staff regarding emergency response, as well as participate in Emergency Operations Plans (EOPs), crisis intervention, and Continuity of Operations Plans (COOPs), when appropriate.
- B. The Office of Safety, Environment and Risk Management will coordinate the development, implementation, and annual evaluation of system and school-level Emergency Operations Plans (EOPs) and department-level Continuity of Operations Plans (COOPs) in accordance with national, state, and local emergency standards.
- C. The Coordinator of School Security will provide training to appropriate staff on the use of two-way radios and conduct an annual evaluation of the radio communication system.

- D. The Director of Public Relations will review and publicize school system procedures for communicating emergency information to school system staff and the community on an annual basis.
- E. The Manager of Safety, Environment, and Risk Management will review the Procedures for Reporting Emergency Situations and distribute the procedures to school administrators and building administrators on an annual basis.
- F. The building administrator for each administrative facility will maintain and implement a building Emergency Operations Plan (EOP). The plan will include school site information, staff responsibilities in time of emergency, the type of training staff will receive and when training will occur, and annual plans for ten evacuation drills and four non-evacuation drills. Any prearranged agreements with adjacent businesses or facilities for the provision of emergency shelter will be contained in the plan.
- G. Each principal will maintain and implement a school Emergency Operations Plan (EOP) and Continuity of Operations Plan (COOP). The plans will be reviewed, updated and submitted to the Office of Safety, Environment and Risk Management by October 1 each year. The plan will include school site information, staff responsibilities in time of emergency, the type of training staff will receive and when training will occur, and annual plans for ten evacuation drills and four non-evacuation drills. Any prearranged agreements with adjacent businesses or facilities for the provision of emergency shelter will be contained in the plan.
- H. The HCPSS chiefs are responsible for the development, implementation, and maintenance of COOPs within their divisions.
- I. The Coordinator of School Security and the Manager of the Office of Safety, Environment and Risk Management will provide all schools with resources, such as an emergency incident kit, weather radio, walkie-talkie, and an 800 MHz radio, to ensure that communication between the HCPSS Emergency Operations Center and all schools can continue during emergency conditions.
- J. Staff will complete training commensurate with their level of responsibility in crisis/emergency situations. Individuals on the system and school incident command teams are required to complete National Incident Management System (NIMS) courses pertinent to their role in the emergency operations plan.
- K. All schools will conduct ten evacuation exercises and four non-evacuation exercises annually.
- L. The building administrator for each administrative facility will conduct four evacuation exercises per year. In addition to evacuation exercises, shelter-in-place, lockdown/modified lockdown, and "duck, cover, and hold on" exercises must be practiced at least once per year.

III. Emergency Responses

A. System-Level Emergency Response

1. In times of emergency when a system-level response is required, the Emergency Operations Center (EOC) will be activated by the Chief Operating Officer/Designee at the Department of Education. The Chief Operating Officer will assume the role of HCPSS Incident Commander and coordinate the system's response through other central administrators who have been trained to assume specific roles in times of emergency.
2. The Chief Operating Officer/Designee will convene the HCPSS Emergency Operations Center (EOC) to assist or address the emergency situation.
3. If circumstances warrant, as in the case of weather-related events, the Chief Operating Officer/Designee may activate a modified EOC response.
4. The Chief Operating Officer/Designee will inform and consult with the Superintendent throughout the response and recovery period regarding the nature of the emergency and actions taken.
5. A Crisis Intervention Team will be activated when a crisis occurs that negatively impacts students and/or staff across the school system.
6. The Superintendent will inform the Board of Education of all emergency situations and recovery actions in a timely manner.
7. In countywide emergency situations, upon request, the Chief Operating Officer/Designee will report to the Howard County EOC to facilitate the coordination and implementation of county and school system response plans.

B. School-Level Emergency Response

1. The principal/designee assumes the role of incident commander and initiates incident response in accordance with the school's Emergency Operations Plan (EOP).
2. The school will contact the Office of the Chief Operating Officer to report the emergency as soon as possible, reporting situational information.
3. The school incident commander will coordinate response actions with the Howard County Emergency responders and the Office of the Chief Operating Officer.

4. The School-Based Crisis Intervention Team will be activated when a crisis or emergency occurs in a school community that negatively impacts students and/or staff.
5. An HCPSS employee who supervises a school-sponsored afterschool, evening, weekend or off-campus event or activity is responsible for the safety of all participants.
6. A community organization that uses school facilities or campuses will have a standard procedure in case of an emergency. Leaders of these organizations are expected to be familiar with contact procedures for the police, ambulance services and the fire department. They are responsible for coordinating their emergency response with school personnel on the premises.

C. Protective Actions

1. Late opening, early dismissal, or closing of schools are all considered appropriate for, but not limited to, situations resulting from immediate, temporary, or predicted weather-related conditions or other natural events or emergency conditions that may render the school site or transportation to and from a school hazardous.
2. Modified lockdown is considered an appropriate response to violence, criminal activity, or any other situation that has the potential to affect the school site.
3. Lockdown is considered appropriate for, but not limited to, situations that involve extreme violence and/or gunfire and that immediately and directly affect the school site.
4. "Duck, cover, and hold on" is considered appropriate for, but not limited to, situations such as earthquake, explosion, terrorism, tornado, other types of severe wind, or other situations that may cause significant structural damage.
5. Shelter-in-place is considered appropriate for, but not limited to, situations such as hazardous materials releases, nearby fires, and bioterrorism. Officials from the Federal Emergency Management Agency (FEMA) and local public safety officials indicate that incidents requiring communities to "shelter in place" are viewed as short-term, measured in terms of hours, not days.
6. Evacuation, on site and off site, is considered appropriate for, but not limited to, situations such as floods, fires, hazardous materials incidents, or other situations that may render the school site unsafe.

IV. Recovery Protocols

- A. The Chief Operating Officer/Designee will direct recovery efforts through the incident command system.
- B. All heads of departments will report the status of their respective areas of responsibility to the Chief Operating Officer/Designee. Based on the condition assessment, the Chief Operating Officer/Designee will prioritize the recovery efforts, including the allocation of human and financial resources.
- C. In an extended emergency situation, the appropriate Continuity of Operations Plans (COOPs) will be implemented.
- D. The Chief Operating Officer/Designee will provide regular status reports to the Superintendent and the Board.
- E. If emergency events have activated the Howard County EOC, the Chief Operating Officer/Designee will provide regular status reports to the Howard County Incident Commander and/or act as the school system representative at the Howard County EOC.
- F. The Chief Operating Officer/Designee will conduct a post-emergency meeting(s) to review actions taken, outcomes, and areas for improvement, including the mitigation of any hazards or conditions identified.
- G. School administrators will conduct a post-emergency meeting(s) to review actions taken, outcomes, and areas for improvement, including the mitigation of any hazards or conditions identified.
- H. HCPSS will incorporate inclement weather makeup days into the annual Howard County Public School System Academic Calendar.

V. History

ADOPTED: January 5, 1971

REVIEWED:

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