



# COLUMBUS ACADEMY AND COLUMBUS ACADEMY SCHOOL EMERGENCY PLANNING GUIDE FOR PARENTS

## GENERAL INFORMATION

The Columbus Academy and Columbus Academy School have established emergency and safety plans for the campus. Each of these plans is coordinated with police, fire, and other officials in county or statewide agencies. There are many areas that the plan addresses. They include:

**Natural hazards such as severe weather, tornadoes, and winter storm/ice storm.**

**Environmental hazards such as chemical accident, explosions, fire, flood, gas leak, power outage, and water outage.**

**Medical emergencies such as an accident, exposure to biohazards, handling blood borne pathogens, and a pandemic (COVID-19).**

**Criminal Offenses such as active assailant, bomb threat, civil disturbance, hostage, kidnapping, and terrorism.**

**Bullying, death, serious injury, sexual assault, and a lost child.**

## WHAT CAN I DO TO PLAN AHEAD?

The two most important things you as a parent can do are to make certain your child's school has up-to-date emergency contact information, and to periodically review with your child alternative arrangements you have made in case an emergency prevents you from being at home.

Being prepared for emergencies is not only a requirement of the State, but is also taken very seriously by the administration, faculty, and staff of the Columbus Academy and Columbus Academy School. The Columbus Academy and Columbus Academy School maintains an emergency management plan for the campus, a plan that is reviewed and revised annually and after each emergency. This plan addresses an enormous range of issues, ranging from the mundane to dealing with the onset of a crisis, to addressing the social, emotional, and psychological needs of students, faculty, and staff in its aftermath.

The purpose of this guide is to assist in answering some of the basic questions that parents frequently ask about during and after a crisis. Questions like: where do I get information; what should I do during a crisis; and, whom can I contact for help?

When disaster strikes, the first consideration for every Columbus Academy and Columbus Academy School staff member is the safety of the children in our care. This guide provides a brief description of how the Columbus Academy and Columbus Academy School will manage an emergency and how parents can support our efforts during an emergency.

Questions about the information contained in this guide should be directed to your Head of School.

## **SCHOOL TELEPHONE NUMBERS**

<b>OFFICE</b>	<b>PHONE NUMBER</b>
Main Number for Schools	614.475.2311
Lower School	614.509.2258
Middle School	614.509.2264
Upper School	614.509.2281
Athletics	614.509.2253
School Nurse	614.509.2234
Director of Campus Safety and Security	614.509.2260
Security	614.394.3403

## **WEBSITE**

<http://www.columbusacademy.org>

## **WHERE CAN I GET INFORMATION DURING AN EMERGENCY?**

Chances are that you may not be able to reach the school by telephone in a real emergency. Experience shows that staff must react to the emergency first. The Columbus Academy's and Columbus Academy School's telephone lines will be busy with personnel who need to communicate to emergency services. We will, however, be making every effort to contact parents, using the Everbridge Emergency Communications system. Each Head of School has a separate copy of children's emergency contact information that they will keep with them during an emergency.

The Columbus Academy and Columbus Academy School's website, <http://www.columbusacademy.org> will post updates throughout the course of an emergency. The local news media will be contacted and kept up to date on all developments and will be asked to broadcast important information needed by parents, just as they do when inclement weather forces school closings. Other sources of providing information will be the Everbridge Emergency Communications system and the Columbus Academy and Columbus Academy School's intranet. The Head of School may ask parent organizations to assist in disseminating information.

## **ARE THERE EMERGENCY PLANNING DRILLS?**

Every year, each school will conduct 8 fire drills, 2 tornado drills, and 4 safety drills. The fire, tornado and safety drills will be conducted at various times during the school day in order to give students, faculty, and staff practice in what to do if they are not in their regular classroom. Transportation and communication tests are part of each drill. Additional drills and simulations will be conducted by the school's Incident Command team – at the discretion of the Director of Campus safety and Security – several times throughout the year. The Columbus Academy and Columbus Academy School believes that response is best when everybody knows their role and has an opportunity to practice.

## **HOW WILL THE SCHOOL RESPOND TO AN EMERGENCY?**

When the Head of School determines that an emergency has occurred, there are three possible plans of action:

### **Go-Home Plan**

Returns students to their homes and family as expeditiously as possible. Each school maintains names and contacts of emergency contacts for each child. That is why it is important to advise the Head of School if the name or number of an emergency contact person changes.

### **Shelter Plan**

Keeps students in their buildings when it is safer to stay inside than to go out. Ordinarily, sheltering is considered a short-term solution, but each school is prepared to shelter students overnight if necessary. Specific areas of each building are identified as the safest for occupants. A part of the shelter plan will be a Stay-Put plan.

In this instance, all students will remain in their current classroom until otherwise notified. Students in school buildings who are not in classrooms will be escorted by faculty/staff to a supervised area and remain there until otherwise notified.

### **Evacuation Plan**

Requires that all building occupants leave and go to an alternate location. Evacuation may mean only going outside and away from the building until an all-clear signal is given. In some circumstances, students, faculty, and staff may need to be transported and housed temporarily in another location.

## **IF THERE IS AN EVACUATION, WHERE WILL STUDENTS GO?**

In the event that students must be moved to an alternate location, the school will attempt to reach all parents to advise them of the alternate location. The Columbus Academy and Columbus

Academy School have several alternatives, depending upon the severity of the emergency and the number of students involved. Police, fire, and county and state authorities know of the alternate locations, but for security reasons it would be counterproductive to advise of any alternate location until an actual emergency occurs.

### **SHOULD I PICK UP MY CHILD AT SCHOOL DURING AN EMERGENCY?**

**We strongly encourage parents NOT to come to the school during an emergency unless directed to do so.**

While every person's natural instinct in an emergency is to go to the school to safeguard his/her child, please understand that doing so may significantly degrade the school's ability to respond to the situation. In addition, going to the school may interfere with police or other emergency workers whose sole purpose is to ensure the safety and well-being of students, faculty, and staff. Vehicles driving to the school, for example, will restrict access of emergency vehicles or school buses that are loading children for evacuation to take them to another location. The Academy's staff will always be actively working to ensure the safety of all students. While it may seem logical that every student taken home by a parent reduces the workload of the staff, in a fast-moving situation that requires careful coordination and communication, extra vehicles and visitors to the school actually make the task of keeping track of all students more difficult.

### **WHAT PROVISIONS ARE MADE FOR STUDENTS WITH DISABILITIES?**

Each school has a detailed plan of action that includes evacuation of students, faculty, or staff who have special needs.