

## Black Gold School Division's Hour Zero Emergency Response Program - Family Summary

**SCHOOLS ARE CONSIDERED TO BE ONE OF THE SAFEST PLACES IN OUR COMMUNITIES. HOWEVER, IN REALITY, AN EMERGENCY CAN OCCUR ANYWHERE AT ANY TIME.**

---

**DURING ANY EMERGENCY, OUR FIRST PRIORITY is the safety of our students and staff.**

In order to provide an effective response to any school crisis or emergency, Black Gold School Division uses the Hour-Zero School Emergency Program in conjunction with other local emergency plans and is also guided by the [Leduc and Area Community Violence Threat Risk Assessment \(VTRA\) and Intervention Protocol](#).

Our Hour Zero program has individual school emergency plans as well as a Division Plan. There is an on-site **S**chool/**S**ite **E**mergency **R**esponse **T**eam (SERT) at each school, along with a Division-based **A**dministrative **C**ommand **T**eam (ACT) for emergency responses that provides support and aid to schools at time of an emergency.

### Training and Drills

All staff are regularly trained on emergency protocols. **THROUGHOUT THE YEAR, SCHOOLS CONDUCT TRAINING AND DRILLS** to rehearse emergency procedures and help better prepare students and staff for possible emergency situations. These exercises prepare students and staff to act quickly and help to minimize a child's fear during a real emergency.

### Collaboration

Although standardized protocols and procedures provide the basis for our response, the way in which we respond to an emergency is greatly influenced by the specifics of an incident. We are driven foremost by our concern of ensuring student and staff safety.

Our Division collaborates closely with local emergency personnel to ensure plans are coordinated with appropriate agencies. The Division's plans do not replace the authority of law enforcement, fire or EMS – staff members work in full cooperation with these agencies.

## Key Protocols

**Families should familiarize themselves with some of the common protocols and terms we use during an emergency.**

Listed below are a few of the most common protocols and drills that are practiced and families should be familiar with. When a school is confronted with an emergency, staff will assess the situation and then decide on a course of action. In addition to the procedures described below, schools also practice protocols such as “Drop-Cover-Hold,” a method of protecting vital body parts during some natural disasters, and conduct fire drills.

### Lock Down

Lock-Downs are usually in response to acts or threats of violence to students and/or staff directly impacting the school. During a Lock-Down students and staff must respond very quickly to get to a safe location before doors are locked. No one is permitted in or out of any area once it has been locked. No one, other than law enforcement, is permitted access to the building until the Lock-Down is over.

### Hold and Secure

Hold and Secure is used in response to security threats or criminal activity outside the school. During a Hold and Secure, all entrance doors to the school are locked, with no one permitted in or out of the building. No one, other than law enforcement, is permitted access to the building until the Hold and Secure has been cleared.

### Shelter-in-Place

Generally, Shelter-in-Place is used during an environmental emergency, such as severe storms or chemical spills. During a Shelter-in-Place, students and staff retreat to safe zones to seek shelter. This includes having students or staff who are outdoors come back into the school. Each school's emergency response plan identifies the safest location for its occupants and how to seal a room from hazardous conditions. Students will not be released or dismissed until the situation has been resolved.

### Evacuation

An Evacuation requires all students and staff to leave the school and go to an alternate location. This may mean only going outside and away from the building until it is safe to re-enter the school. In other cases, students and staff may need to go to an evacuation center. Families will be informed of the alternate location through the school's Crisis Notification Network.

### Dismissal

Under some circumstances it may be determined that it is best to dismiss students to their homes and families as expeditiously as possible. Should this be the case, every attempt will be made to alert the emergency contact for each student of the situation and to ensure young students are not left unsupervised.



## Reuniting with your Child

We recognize that when an emergency occurs, families will be worried and want to be reunited with their child as quickly as possible. It is our intention to make this happen. However, to ensure every child's safety and the safety of staff, specific procedures have been established for releasing students.

These procedures may be modified depending on the circumstance. Families are asked to adhere to the parent-child reunification procedures listed below.

Staff will work hard to ensure these procedures take place without delay. However, please understand the process will take some time: we ask for your patience when you arrive at the Parent-Child Reunion Area.

## Parent-Child Reunion Procedures

1. **A Parent-Child Reunion Area will be established.** Parents will be notified at the time of the emergency of the Reunion Area's location. The location may not be at the school — the location will depend on the specifics of the emergency.
2. **Students will only be released to an individual designated as legal guardian or emergency contact** on the student's Emergency Form, which is completed at time of school registration. Please be sure to keep this information current with your school, as the school will only release a child to someone listed as an Emergency Contact — there will be no exceptions.
3. **Valid identification is required to pick up your child.** This is required to protect your child from any unauthorized individuals attempting to pick up students. Even if school personnel know you, you must still present I.D. as the school may be receiving assistance from other schools or outside agencies.
4. **You will be required to sign for the release of your child.** This is extremely important, as it ensures your child, along with other students, is accounted for at all times. Please do not just take your child from the school or evacuation center without signing for his/her release.
5. **Once you have been reunited with your child, please leave the area immediately.** This is for your own safety and that of your child.

**If you are unable to pick up your child,** he/she will be kept at the Parent-Child Reunion Center until alternate arrangements can be made. Your child will be supervised at all times.



## Communicating During an Emergency

When an emergency occurs, **please do not come to the school to pick up your child unless requested to do so.** Doing so could impede the response to the situation and also interfere with emergency crews' and school personnel's efforts to deal with the emergency. Extra vehicles and people at the site make the task more difficult. Please follow the instructions provided to you through the communications channels outlined below.

If you arrive at the school in the midst of an emergency, please respect the protocol in progress. While we understand personal circumstances or initial reactions might move you to do something contrary to the school's established procedures, we cannot compromise the safety of students or staff to accommodate individual requests that could put anyone at risk.

### **Do not call the school. Do not call your child's cell phone.**

- Phone systems need to remain available for handling the actual emergency.
- Overloading the system may mean the school cannot communicate with first responders.
- Calling your child's cell phone during an emergency may be putting them at higher risk by disclosing their location or drawing attention to them during a lock-down.

## Keeping You Informed

During an emergency, our FIRST PRIORITY is to protect students and staff. Next, we will do everything in our power to keep you informed. Specific procedures must be followed prior to releasing information. We will communicate with you once it is safe and we are able.

### Emergency Communication Channels

We will use the following communication tools to communicate with you when we are able.

- In an emergency, we will use *SchoolMessenger* using communication classified as "emergency" to contact all phone numbers and email addresses families have provided.  
If you have opted-in for text messaging, we will also contact you using that method.  
It is important to note: after an emergency is resolved, further notifications will be classified as "general". Therefore, if you have not selected a contact method for general notifications, you will not receive those updates.
- Division Website Alerts- [www.blackgold.ca](http://www.blackgold.ca)
- Community Hotline - 780.979.0980

During an emergency, the Division may (but not always) use social media as a means to get communication out to families and to reach a larger audience.

- Facebook - [@BlackGoldRegionalDivision](https://www.facebook.com/BlackGoldRegionalDivision)
- Twitter - [@BGRD18](https://twitter.com/BGRD18)

**PLEASE rely on the Division and our schools for accurate, dependable, firsthand details and updates. We are the credible source.**

### Sharing Information

In the event of an emergency situation, families are asked to share only official information provided by the Division or school and shared in official Division or school messages such as email, web alerts, news releases, etc. This information originates with the Emergency Operations Centre and is to be considered official public information.

Information from unofficial or unverified sources should not be shared. Sharing official information helps keep everyone safe.