Disaster Safety Education

Ideas for Disaster Risk Management

Emergency practice

Evacuation drills

for use in Schools and Camps
Simulation and Practice Activities: for camps or school

Emergency preparation

A number of activities in this booklet can be carried out during Life Competencies Camps or can be carried out in shorter sessions in the normal school environment. You can decide which suits best.

Competency

Students will identify and use safe practices and basic risk management strategies.

Competency levels

Students will be able to:

• demonstrate ways to keep themselves safe when a disaster strikes
• practise the school’s emergency plans and procedures.

If you have a Camp with a Disaster Safety theme, then you can build all of these activities into it.
Preparing the students

*Every student needs to know what to do if a disaster strikes. Here are some ideas which will provide an opportunity for teaching your students the correct responses to the types of hazards that your school faces.*

Activities for students

- Draw/cut out the items on the survival sheet which you would need to collect in case of a flood
- Glue the items you will need to survive on a sheet and write why you need each item.

Examples of things needed in survival Kits for different emergency situations:

Make copies of template or ask students to write and draw things for survival kits for:

- The family (how many people and who will carry the emergency kit)
- One person: himself or herself

Examples will include different things. Keep in mind the weight of the emergency kit, e.g.,

- water
- food (what type)
- cooking equipment, can opener
- children’s things
- clothes (give examples of type and quantity)
- rubbish bags (or other ways to dispose of rubbish, e.g., in a flood situation)
- spare batteries, torch, radio
- medicine (what things do you have in your home), first aid kit
Note to teachers: These activities are suitable for use on school camps or can be done as part of Life Competencies and Civic Education

Activity 1. Potential classroom hazards
(Students discuss in groups after looking around the classroom)

How could it affect you?
(Students make short written group reports)

Action points
(Students make posters in groups, which are then displayed around the room or school)

Activity 2. Potential school hazards
(Students discuss in groups after walking around the school)
How could it affect you?
(Students make short written group reports)

Action points
(Students make posters in groups, which are then displayed around the school)

3. Potential home hazards
(Students discuss in groups after thinking about their home situation – preferably after being asked the day before to look around the home and discussing with parents)

How could it affect you?
(Students make short written group reports)

Action points
(Students make action points in groups, which they will discuss with their parents and those at home.)
The three simulation activities suggested in this section could be used to help evaluate strengths and weaknesses in your school’s emergency preparedness, and to facilitate the effective overall planning and operation of an emergency situation.

Emergency response practice Students practise their immediate response to a specific type of disaster.

Simulations could take place at any time throughout the year, and should be repeated in different situations, such as the classroom, assembly, lunch-time, and could be used as activities in Life Competencies Camps.

1. **Evacuation exercise: Parents, caregivers or authorised people collect students from school**

This can take place at any time in the year. It could also be incorporated into, or at the end of *Life Competencies and Civic Education* or *Geography* units to encourage parents and caregivers to evaluate their own preparedness.

2. **Disaster simulation**

It would also be particularly suitable as an emergency drill simulation in school camps. Students role-play agencies, casualties and the public in the response to a disaster striking a mythical town (Seatown). This has been included in the grade 11 QL Kit but lower grades could be included under the supervision of older students.

Parts of this simulation exercise could also be carried out as a school exercise.
- in the classroom
- at assembly
- during lunch-break
- in the library
- in hallways between classes.

Students with special needs require particular consideration. It is important that these students know as much as possible what to do, and that teachers and adult carers have planned their responses in the event of an emergency.

3. **Running the emergency response practice**

- The practice should start with a clear command from the teacher, for instance, ‘Tsunami – go to high ground’

- On hearing the command, students should quickly, quietly and without panic take the required action for that type of disaster.

- Students continue their emergency response until the teacher gives the command, ‘all clear’.
• Stress the importance of students remaining quiet, so that they can hear the teacher's instructions.

• Remind students to stay calm. They could take deep breaths, or count slowly in a whispered voice. The teacher keeps talking to minimise panic. Where appropriate. This practice should include evacuation to the safe assembly area.

**After the emergency response practice**

After the practice is over, discuss with students:

• their fears and concerns about disasters
• how they could help and comfort each other during and after a disaster
• how they could help and comfort each other in a disaster if they were not with adults
• what they should do next.

**Teachers should evaluate the effectiveness of emergency response practice:**

• Was the students’ response effective?
• Did they know what to do?
• Did the procedures in the school’s emergency plan work for the situation in which the practice was held?
• Are there any new factors affecting the plan that need consideration?
• Do the students need more training?

4. **Evacuation Exercise**

During, or in the immediate aftermath of a disaster, children must not be allowed to make their own way home by themselves. In the event of an evacuation because of a disaster during the school day, it is the staff’s responsibility to look after and care for the children until they can be safely returned to their parents and caregivers.

Thus, there should be planned, prepared and tested emergency evacuation procedures in place. This is the joint responsibility of the school management committee, principal, staff and parents and caregivers.

This evacuation exercise aims to test the efficiency of these procedures to empty the whole school. It is not to be compared with a ‘normal’ evacuation drill, such as a fire drill, where children usually stay at school.

This exercise also ensures parents, caregivers and school committee know what to do if their children are at school when a disaster strikes, and it provides them with an opportunity for them to test their own household emergency plans.

**Preparing families**

Every household’s emergency plan should include how and where to meet after a disaster. This plan should include who is responsible for collecting the children from school if an emergency occurs during school hours.
The school needs to check that parents and caregivers have made plans for this situation, before holding the evacuation exercise.

Parents and caregivers should be asked to supply the school with a list of several people authorised to pick their children up in the event of a disaster, in case they are not in a position to do so themselves. This could be done by:

- sending a form home to be completed
- setting a homework task for students to discuss
- their plan at home
- using the school newsletter or website
- writing personal letters
- making contact in person.

This list should be updated by the school every year. Parents and caregivers are advised beforehand of the date and time for the evacuation exercise, and that they have to arrange for their children to be collected, either by themselves or an authorised person.

Preparing the school

Ensure all staff are familiar with the school’s emergency plan, are informed about the date and time of the evacuation exercise and their roles in the exercise. The principal will take the lead in this area.

During the preceding week, remind children what they need to do when a disaster strikes.

Running the evacuation exercise

- Start the evacuation exercise with an appropriate alarm. This could be verbal commands from the teachers or the school bell.

- Students take the correct action depending on the type of disaster being simulated.

- After a suitable amount of time, the teacher talks the children through what has happened, and what they would be doing now in a real disaster, for instance checking that everyone is alright and that no-one has been injured.

- Classes leave their individual rooms and gather at the assembly area. This area should be identified in the school’s emergency plan, but bear in mind that the disaster could make it unusable.

- Teachers check the roll, and inform the principal and deputy of the status of their class.

- Designated staff go to their reception points, equipped with the list of pupils and the people authorised to collect them. They check off names as people arrive, before passing over the children they are to pick up. If these staff members are classroom teachers, you will need to consider who will look after their children while they are doing this.
Students are all kept in the assembly area until they are picked up by their parents, caregivers or other authorised adults.

**Exercise evaluation**

Assemble all staff participants to discuss if the system worked.

- Did the pupils take the correct action?
- Were class registers checked to ensure everyone was present and no-one was missing in other rooms or on errands?
- Did the move to the assembly area go as planned?
- Was the assembly area checked for hazards such as broken glass to ensure it was safe?
- Did the nominated people collect their children?
- Were any children not collected? If so, why not? What happened to them?

**5. Options**

This exercise describes a school evacuation. There are other options you could use, such as:

- individual classroom evacuations
- ‘reverse evacuations’ where students are contained inside the school because of an outdoor hazard
- evacuations to higher ground
- specific disaster procedures and evacuations.

**6. Simulation and practice activities in a disaster in a mythical town of Seatown.**

Grade 7 students can use this simulation as an opportunity to build on what they have already learned in *Life Competencies and Civic Education* or *Geography*:

- being casualties or children that need to be looked after
- breaking into groups to observe different areas of the simulation
- talking to participants after the simulation about their role.

**After the simulation in ‘Seatown’**

Students discuss in small groups what they and their families could do before, during and after this type of disaster.

- Students interview other students about their role in the disaster response.
- Students contribute articles to make a mock newspaper page about the disaster.
- Students write letters of thanks to organisations involved, outlining what they have learned about that group’s role in a disaster.
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