

Parent/Guardian Tips to Support Students Before, During, and After Required Lockdown Drills

Before Lockdown Drills:

- Prepare your child.
 - You know your child best. Let them know that school is a safe place. Part of the job of teachers and school staff is to practice safety skills. “Just like you practice fire drills at school, you also practice lockdown drills so that you know exactly what to do to stay safe in an emergency.”
 - Make connections to safety habits you already practice like wearing helmets when riding a bike or wearing seatbelts in the car. Explain that the lockdown drill is a safety habit that you practice in school. Though it may be new to your child, the lockdown drill will be best learned through practicing.
 - Acknowledge what your child is feeling. If your child admits to a concern, simply confirm what you are hearing: “Yes, I can see that you are worried.”
 - Help children relax with breathing exercises. Breathing becomes shallow when anxiety sets in; deep belly breaths can help children calm down. You can hold a feather or a wad of cotton in front of your child’s mouth and ask them to blow at it, exhaling slowly. Or you can say, “Let’s breathe in slowly while I count to three, then breathe out while I count to three.”
 - Let your child know that schools perform lockdown drills throughout the school year and that they are announced as a drill.
- Consider your child’s unique needs. If you are concerned about how your child will handle the lockdown drill, reach out to your child’s teacher to address your concerns.

During: You will receive notification from the school that lockdown drills will be conducted during the school year. However, the exact date and time of the drill may not be announced. Additionally, you may receive messaging of the completion of a lockdown drill from the school, so that you know when it has happened.

After: Check in.

- Follow your child’s lead.
 - Ask your child about the lockdown drill that occurred during school.
 - Ask if they would like to talk about it and let their comments guide you. Children process events in many ways. Some children would prefer not to talk about it, which is okay. Some children may simply want to spend some together in a shared activity with few words.

- If your child shares that they felt okay about the drill, reinforce that the purpose of the drill is to keep them safe by knowing what to do.
- If they share that they felt scared, sad, or nervous, acknowledge the feeling while directing the child towards positive coping skills. You might say something like, “It is natural to feel _____. What helps you to feel calm/safe when you feel that way?” You can also share a time when you felt scared and what helped you get through it.
- Maintain routines. Following your typical home routines help everyone feel calm and safe. Most children will feel better with the passage of time and returning to their familiar routine.

If at any point you have concerns and would like to follow up with the school, please reach out. Your child’s teacher, administrators, or the school-based counselor, school psychologist or school social worker are all available to support your child.

Resources

[School Safety During and Emergency or Crisis: What Parents Need to Know](#)

[How to Prepare Your Child with Special Needs for Lockdown Drills](#)

[School Safety Drills and Exercises for Students with Autism Spectrum Disorder \(ASD\): Tips and Resources for Educators](#)

[Child Mind Institute: Helping Children Cope After a Traumatic Event Trauma](#)

[Talking to Children About Violence: Tips for Families and Educators](#)