

ANCHORAGE SCHOOL DISTRICT
ANCHORAGE, ALASKA

MEMORANDUM

DECEMBER 6, 2007

TO: ALL PRINCIPALS, NURSES AND SPECIAL EDUCATION STAFF

FROM: *Jerry Sjolander*
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SUBJECT: Evacuation Plans for Medically Fragile Students

The ASD Emergency Action plan and Alaska state law requires schools to conduct monthly evacuation drills. These drills are a necessary component for ensuring that all staff and students can exit a school building in the event of an emergency.

Within some school settings, there are medically fragile students who may have their health compromised if required to participate fully in the drills conducted in inclement or very cold weather conditions (days of temperatures lower than 25 degrees).

Nursing staff and administration should review their student's individual medical conditions to determine whether a medically fragile student should fully participate in evacuation drills. The goal of a reduced participation in evacuation drills is to limit the student's participation to those aspects of the drill that are medically safe for the student. Use of professional nursing judgment and knowledge of a student's chronic medical condition is required to develop individual evacuation plans for medically fragile students who may fall into one of the following categories:

- a. medically fragile students recently having recovered from a respiratory ailment;
- b. medically fragile students recently discharged from hospital
- c. students with respiratory conditions like cystic fibrosis or poorly controlled asthma who would have substantial respiratory difficulty if waiting in cold weather conditions for a period of time up to 20 minutes; and
- d. students recovering from a recent seizure

We need to avoid exacerbating a chronic condition in such a way that a medically stable child becomes ill and is absent from school following a period of time outside in extreme weather conditions such as we experience in our state.

Additionally, buildings with students attending autism classes or students with significant sensory integration issues should work with special education staff to ensure that social stories and appropriate other educational methodologies are utilized to “practice” evacuation drills sufficiently so students can participate in monthly school drills.

Other important considerations:

- The use of crutches or a wheelchair doesn't preclude a student from participating in an evacuation drill.
- Students who participate partially in evacuation drills (those who practice evacuating but do not exit the buildings) should evacuate to a specified area. This area may be a site located near an exit of the school.
- There is no general policy that indicates that medically fragile students are evacuated to bathroom locations.
- There is no exception made for the convenience of the staff – the expectation is that the overwhelming majority of students participate fully in evacuation drills.
- Building level administration must share alternate evacuation plans with staff at their closest fire station and with the Director of Security and Emergency Preparedness.