

Fire Safety at School

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Your daughter's school might not be as safe as you consider it to be.

Past is said to be the key to the future, and schools across the globe have been hit by hazards. 18095 school children and 853 teachers were killed in the 2005 Muzaffarabad Earthquake. 10000 school children were killed in the 2008 Sichuan Earthquake. 18 school children, all aged below 10 years, were killed in a 2010 landslide incident at Sumgarh.

Fire during the Annual Day function of DAV Public School at Mandi Dabwali in 1995 killed 170 school children while 94 school children were killed in the 2004 Lord Krishna Middle School fire at Kumbakonam.

By now you must be ready to review the disaster management-related preparedness of your daughter's school. So we are providing you with some important pointers wherein the Schools can ensure during normal times, during emergencies and after emergencies.



Representational Picture

Schools to ensure during normal times

- Compliance with hazard safety norms that are reflected in the certified document issued by the prescribed authority.
- The school has sufficient exit routes, with two exits from every classroom.
- Most teachers and school staff have attended disaster management/disaster risk reduction-related training. They are also trained in fire safety and first aid.
- Students are regularly made aware of dos and don'ts during fire, and other disaster incidences.
- School has an emergency plan that identifies all possible hazards and provides procedures for minimizing risk and ensuring safety.
- Electrical inspection and testing are carried out regularly along with necessary repairs.
- Kitchen is a secure, and safe location.
- Firefighting apparatus are installed in appropriate numbers and at strategic locations. Check out if your daughter's classroom has one.
- Firefighting equipment is maintained appropriately.
- Fire escape routes, and fire exit doors and passageways are clearly marked, and these always remain unobstructed, and operational.
- First aid kits are available. The expiry date of medicines and others is checked regularly, and replenishment is done as required.
- Fire and other drills are organized routinely.
- Local fire brigade officials are involved in fire drills, and their advice is acted upon to improve the scenario.

School during emergency

- Contain the fire if possible.
- Immediately inform the Fire and Emergency Service.
- Alert the nearest hospital and other concerned officials.
- Execute evacuation plan according to the practised fire drills.
- Exit from the classrooms as planned, and assemble in the identified open area.
- Ensure everyone is out, and safe.
- Have headcount done, and toilets checked.
- Do not allow children, and teachers to panic.
- If the room is filled with smoke, ask children to stay low to the ground during exit.
- Feel any closed door. Ensure before opening that it is not hot.
- If the door is hot, use the nearest window, or another exit.
- Teachers should comfort distressed children.
- Children should not be allowed to leave on their own, or taken home by strangers.

After the emergency is over

- Don't re-enter or permit anyone to enter the school building, unless permitted by the Fire and Emergency Service officials.
- Teachers should confirm that all students have reached their homes safely.
- Review the fire risk management plan and evacuation plan.
- Document lessons learnt from the incident, and revise the fire risk management plan and evacuation plan.
- Implement/execute recommendations by Fire and Emergency Service officials and /or building safety professionals before reopening the school

