COMMUNITY EMERGENCY RESPONSE

What Parents and Community Members Need to Know

Important Information from Law Enforcement and Indian Lake Central School District

A MESSAGE TO OUR COMMUNITY

The recent community information forum was very positive and productive. We appreciate everyone who attended, asked questions, shared concerns, and participated in important conversations about school safety.

One message was clear: **Everyone needs to understand their role during an emergency.** This information is too important to reach only those who attended the forum. Please share it with family members, caregivers, neighbors, and anyone responsible for picking up or communicating with our students.

Our shared priority is keeping students, staff, families, and first responders safe.

WHEN AN EMERGENCY OCCURS: LAW ENFORCEMENT TAKES CONTROL

When law enforcement responds to an active school emergency, officers assume control of the emergency scene and direct the response.

This means:

- Law enforcement directs emergency operations, scene access, and safety decisions.
- School personnel follow the direction of responding law enforcement.
- Parents, family members, and community members must follow all law enforcement instructions.
- No one should enter school grounds, approach the building, or attempt to access the scene without authorization.
- Information will be released only when law enforcement determines it is appropriate and safe to communicate.

During an active emergency, the school may not communicate immediately. This is intentional.

The absence of information does not mean that nothing is being done. It means responders are focused on securing the scene, protecting lives, and addressing the emergency.

WHAT PARENTS AND COMMUNITY MEMBERS MUST DO

1. DO NOT COME TO THE SCHOOL OR EMERGENCY SCENE.

This is one of the most important instructions.

- Do not drive to the school.
- Do not gather near school entrances, parking lots, roads, or emergency access points.
- Do not attempt to enter the building or grounds.
- Do not follow emergency vehicles or attempt to get closer to the incident.

Arriving at an active emergency scene can put YOU in danger. You could unknowingly enter an unsafe area, become a potential target, or interfere with law enforcement operations.

Unnecessary traffic and crowds can prevent emergency vehicles from accessing the scene and delay the response.

Your best way to help is to STAY AWAY.

2. DO NOT CALL OR TEXT YOUR CHILD DURING AN ACTIVE EMERGENCY.

We understand that your first instinct is to contact your child. However, please do not call, text, or attempt to communicate with students during an active lockdown or emergency.

- Phones and notifications can create noise and compromise student safety.
- Students need to remain focused and follow staff and law enforcement instructions.
- Incoming calls and messages can distract students and interfere with emergency procedures.
- Communication may reveal information about a student's location.

Please allow students and staff to remain focused on safety.

3. DO NOT FLOOD THE SCHOOL WITH PHONE CALLS.

During an emergency, school phone lines and staff attention must remain available for emergency response and coordination.

Please do not repeatedly call the main office, administrators, teachers, or staff members seeking information.

Updates will be provided through official school communication channels when authorized and appropriate.

4. DO NOT SHARE UNCONFIRMED INFORMATION.

Social media rumors, screenshots, forwarded messages, and secondhand reports can create unnecessary panic and interfere with emergency response.

- Do not share unverified information.
- Do not post student or staff locations.
- Do not livestream or photograph emergency operations.
- Do not speculate about what is happening.

Share only verified information released by the school or law enforcement.

STUDENT REUNIFICATION: WHAT PARENTS NEED TO KNOW

If an emergency requires students to be relocated or released through reunification, law enforcement and school officials will coordinate the process.

Reunification is a controlled safety procedure, not a regular school dismissal.

Parents and caregivers must:

1. Wait for official instructions identifying the designated reunification location.
2. Do not go to the school or an alternate location unless specifically directed.
3. Follow all traffic, parking, and check-in instructions.
4. Bring photo identification.
5. Be patient. Students will be released through an organized verification process.
6. Follow directions from law enforcement and school personnel at all times.

Only authorized adults may pick up students.

Reunification may take time. We must account for students, verify identities and authorized contacts, and safely release each student to the appropriate adult.

Please do not attempt to bypass the process or arrange an informal pickup.

WHY CAN'T EVERYONE PICK UP THEIR CHILDREN AT ONCE?

We understand how difficult it is to wait when your child is involved. However, releasing students safely requires organization, accountability, and coordination.

Allowing vehicles and individuals to arrive without direction can create traffic congestion, interfere with emergency operations, and make it difficult to account for every student.

The process is designed to ensure that every child is accounted for and released safely.

WHEN WILL WE RECEIVE INFORMATION?

During an active emergency, law enforcement determines when information can be shared safely.

There may be periods when families receive limited or no information. This is not an oversight or a lack of concern for families. It is necessary to protect the integrity of the response.

Once it is safe and appropriate:

- We will communicate official updates through school communication channels.
- Reunification instructions and locations will be shared.
- Families will receive additional information as it becomes available and is authorized for release.

Please do not rely on rumors or assume that a lack of communication means the situation is unresolved or being ignored.

OUR COMMUNITY HAS A ROLE IN KEEPING EVERYONE SAFE.

We all want the same thing: to protect our children and ensure that emergency responders can do their jobs effectively.

REMEMBER:

- STAY AWAY from the emergency scene.
- DO NOT call or text students during an active emergency.
- DO NOT overwhelm school phone lines.
- DO NOT spread rumors or unverified information.
- WAIT for official instructions.
- FOLLOW law enforcement directions.
- BE PATIENT during reunification.

YOUR COOPERATION CAN SAVE LIVES.

When an emergency occurs, the safest and most helpful thing you can do as a parent or community member is to stay away, remain calm, and follow official instructions.

Law enforcement and school personnel are working together with one priority: THE SAFETY OF EVERY STUDENT AND STAFF MEMBER.

Thank you for helping us keep Indian Lake a safe community.