

# Safety First

The safety of GCPS students and staff is our highest priority. Here are some of the ways we do our best to ensure **Safety First**.

## Inclement Weather

When inclement weather is predicted, GCPS works with local authorities to monitor current and expected conditions in the area.



GCPS announces only **school closing** information. The school system does not issue an announcement when school will be in session as scheduled.

- ❄ If bad weather is forecast overnight, GCPS officials drive roads and bridges across the county to gauge conditions.
- ❄ Full-day cancellations are usually announced by 6 a.m. Once a decision is made, the district posts the announcement about school closures on the GCPS website, GCPS TV, and the district's Facebook page and Twitter account. GCPS also notifies metro-Atlanta news outlets and alerts families with a phone call and optional text message via SchoolMessenger, a new feature.
- ❄ When bad weather moves in during the school day, district leaders decide the safest and most efficient way to get students home. Should GCPS schools release early or cancel afternoon or evening activities, GCPS notifies parents and community members via local school communication vehicles and SchoolMessenger calls and texts, through reports to metro-Atlanta news media, and posts to the GCPS website, Facebook, and Twitter.

## School Lockdown

Schools go on lockdown when school officials and local law enforcement authorities decide that conditions outside or inside the school are unsafe.



- 🔒 A **soft lockdown** occurs when conditions outside the school are unsafe. Students and staff continue with a normal school day, but stay within the building. No one may enter or leave the school until the lockdown is lifted. This may delay dismissal times.
- 🔒 A **hard lockdown** occurs when conditions inside the school are unsafe. Students and staff remain in the classroom and safety procedures are followed until the lockdown is lifted. For their safety, students should turn off or mute their cellphones as a ringing phone could alert an aggressor. No one may enter or leave the school while the lockdown is in effect. This may delay dismissal times.
- 🔒 If your student's school is under a lockdown, please do not go to the school. Excessive traffic congestion could impede emergency responders who are working to provide a safe environment for students and staff. You will not be able to pick up your student until the lockdown has been lifted.
- 🔒 Typically, the school will communicate with families explaining the situation that led to the lockdown.

## School Evacuation

Schools are evacuated when the school environment is unsafe for the students to stay in the building.



Make sure your student's school has up-to-date contact information for you.

- 🔥 If there are concerns that conditions in the school may be unsafe, the principal calls 9-1-1 and issues instructions to evacuate.
- 🔥 Students and staff gather outside the building at a safe distance and out of the way of emergency vehicles. All GCPS schools practice school evacuation ("fire drills") several times a year, so all students and staff know what to do and where to go.
- 🔥 It is important for students to remain with their teacher/class during an evacuation so that school leaders can ensure all students are safe.
- 🔥 Once the school is judged to be safe, students and staff return to the classroom.
- 🔥 If students will not be returning to school for dismissal, parents will be notified of how students will be transported home or to a site off-campus where families can reunite.
- 🔥 If your student's school has been evacuated, please do not go to the school. Excessive traffic could interfere with evacuation efforts.
- 🔥 During an evacuation, school staff are often busy working with students and first responders and may be unable to handle phone calls. Typically, the school will communicate with families explaining the situation that led to the evacuation. When possible, updates related to a school evacuation are communicated by the school and district.