

Sample School District/School Action Steps for Special Needs Planning

Mobility Impaired	
Action Completed	ACTION:
	Store emergency supplies in a pack or backpack attached to the student's wheelchair, walker, or scooter.
	Store needed mobility aids such as canes, crutches, walkers, etc. close to the student in a consistent, convenient, and secured location. If possible, store extra aids in several other locations in the classroom in case of damage.
	Keep a pair of heavy gloves in the teacher's "Go Kit" and a pair in the student's pack to use while wheeling or making your way over glass or other debris.
	If the student has a motorized wheelchair or scooter, consider having an extra battery available, if possible. Power may be out and an alternative method of charging the wheelchair should be explored.
	A car battery can be substituted for a wheelchair battery, but this type of battery will not last as long as a wheelchair's deep-cycle battery. Check with a vendor to see if you will be able to charge batteries by either connecting jumper cables to a vehicle battery or by connecting batteries to a specific type of convertor that plugs into a vehicle's power plug in the event of loss of electricity.
	If the wheelchair does not have puncture-proof tires, keep a patch kit or can of "seal-in-air" product to repair flat tires. You might also consider keeping an extra inner tube for the wheelchair's tires.
	Store at least one extra MANUAL wheelchair in the classroom.
	Arrange furniture to allow for easy egress from the classroom.
	Make sure paths of travel out of the building are unobstructed for easy movement.
	If the student or staff member spends time above the first floor of a building with an elevator, plan and practice using alternative methods of evacuation. Portable wheelchairs stored at the top of the stairs are an option.
	If the student or staff member cannot use stairs, discuss lifting and carrying techniques that will work for them. There will be instances where wheelchair users will have to leave their chairs behind in order to safely evacuate a structure. Discuss these issues with your municipal fire department. Fire fighters can come to your School and give you needed assistance and instruction before an incident occurs.
	All students and staff should know the location of fire extinguishers.

	If it is necessary to install extended handles on fire extinguishers to make them accessible for students and staff with mobility impairments, do so before the incident occurs.
	Students and staff should practice walking down the stairs with assistance if this is an option. Students or staff who will assist students and staff with mobility impairments should be identified before the incident and parental consent forms should be signed prior to an incident.
	If absolutely necessary, the student or staff member might be able to bump down the stairs on their hind quarters, crawl, etc. Would they need something to strap on their hind quarters if this becomes an option? Gloves to protect their hands might also be needed.
	If necessary to transfer in and out of a wheelchair, practice this before an incident occurs.
	It is important for the student or staff member to be able to give brief instructions regarding how they can be moved in the event of an incident.
Visually Impaired	
Action Completed	ACTION
	Can the student read the emergency signage? If not, you might consider developing signage with larger print or possibly even Braille.
	Are there raised and Braille characters on signs that designate exits, directions to exits, information on exit routes, and floors designated by numbers or letters, including floor level designations provided in stairwells.
	Will the student or staff member be able to evacuate independently without relying on the usual auditory clues found in their environment, such as the hum of a copy machine or something else of that sort? If there is a power outage, these everyday relied upon clues may be absent.
	Schools should consider having emergency lighting along the escape routes that will be used during an incident. If the power is out, students and staff with visual impairments might rely on emergency lighting for a safe egress from the building.
	If the student requires glasses an extra pair should be stored in their pack.
	If contact lenses are worn by the student or staff member, consider what to do if and when smoke, dust, or fumes become painful or even dangerous. Discuss this ahead of time with the student's parents/guardians and the staff member.
	Before the disaster, staff should be instructed and trained in how to be a "sighted guide". This information is available from community service agencies.

	If the student uses a cane to move about, you should store extra canes in the classroom. Consider storing an extra cane with the School first aid emergency supplies.
	Store high-powered flashlights with wide beams and extra batteries in the classroom.
	If the student or staff member has a service animal, it may become confused, panicked, frightened, or disoriented during and after an incident. Keep them confined or securely leashed or harnessed.
	Mark emergency supplies with large print, fluorescent tape, or identify in Braille.
	Make every effort to give directions calmly and clearly recognizing the student or staff member may not be able to read signage or visually observe the damage that may have taken place.
Hearing Impaired and/or Deaf	
Action Completed	ACTION
	Does the School district/School have an emergency alert mechanism for hearing impaired or deaf students and staff? These students and staff may not be able to hear the audible alert.
	Consider flashing lights, strobes, flashing blue lights, etc. to alert hearing impaired or deaf students and staff.
	The alert mechanism you select should be placed strategically throughout the building. Don't forget the cafeteria, restrooms, gymnasium, halls, etc. Ask yourself where your hearing impaired students and staff may be and insure an alert mechanism is available.
	Students and staff should be instructed in the alert mechanism and trained to watch for it to trigger.
	Hearing impaired students and staff will have a hard time hearing over the sound of a very loud audible alarm. Consider how you will communicate emergency information to your students and staff. Remember, hearing aids will amplify background noise, so the sound of the audible alarms may interfere or drown out voice announcements. Remember to speak directly to your students and staff and repeat critical announcements.
	If the student or staff member wears hearing aids, will they work if they get wet from the sprinklers being activated? Consider storing a spare pair, if available, in the classroom "Go Kit". It will be difficult to replace or fix hearing aids immediately after a major incident.
	Store extra batteries for hearing aids and implants in the classroom "Go Kit". Be careful to watch for upcoming expiration dates on the stored batteries.

	<p>Students and staff should consider carrying a pre-printed copy of important messages with them. These messages might include “I speak American Sign Language and need an interpreter”, or “If you make announcements, I will need to have them written or signed”.</p>
	<p>Another consideration might be hearing impaired students and staff who have low literacy skills in written and oral English. These students and staff should carry a pre-printed message saying “I do not write or read English well”. Special accommodations must be made before the incident to communicate with these students and staff to ensure their safety.</p>
	<p>Have a battery operated lantern in the classroom “Go Kit” to assist the student’s and staff’s ability to read and write notes or read lips.</p>