

School Emergency Reunification Drills

Hi, my name is Ainslie Ryder, and I am one of the emergency management advisors from WREMO who looks after the Upper Hutt community. I'm really glad to hear that St Joseph's School is planning on running a family reunification drill!

The reunification drill is for all the school community, not just pupils and teachers. This drill is to make sure that your kids can get back to your care, or be in the care of someone you know and trust if the school has to close unexpectedly.

Knowing that your children will be properly looked after in an emergency is obviously really important for parents. Holding a drill helps to make sure that the school's plans for how to do that will work on the day, and irons out some of the wrinkles to make the process as smooth as possible.

Make sure that you have provided the school with the names of the people you would trust to collect your child from school if you cannot make it there for whatever reason. The school should not be sending your child home with anyone you have not specifically approved to collect your children. If you are wondering who should be on that list, think of older siblings who are old enough to babysit, your neighbours, your child's best friend's mum or dad, aunts, uncles, grandparents, housemates – anyone you trust enough to look after your child long enough for you to get home, someone within walking distance from the school.

Because this drill involves more than just the children and teachers, it can be a bit of an inconvenience, but it's such an important drill that we encourage every school to do it at least once a year. If you can't make it at the time the drill starts, talk to the people that you have included on that list to see if one of them can come and get your children, especially if they live nearby, or are around during the day. That's as much a part of the drill as you collecting them yourself.

Please be patient with the process, it can take some time to get through everything, but the school needs to make sure every child goes with an approved person.

Thanks again for your participation!

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