

5.2 Accessible Emergency Evacuation Planning

Pre-Planning:

1. Identify students with cognitive or physical disabilities who may require assistance during an evacuation.
2. Develop an Individualized Emergency Plan (IEP addendum) for each identified student, outlining specific support needs and roles.
3. Assign a trained staff member as a "designated helper" for each student with disabilities.
4. Conduct regular training for all staff on emergency procedures and evacuation protocols.
5. Ensure evacuation routes and exits are accessible (e.g., ramps, elevators with backup power, or stair chairs).

Preparation and Drills:

1. Include students with disabilities in all fire drills and evacuation exercises.
2. Practice the use of specialized equipment, such as evacuation chairs or mobility aids.
3. Ensure clear communication strategies for students with cognitive disabilities (e.g., visual aids, gestures, or simplified instructions).
4. Review and update emergency plans regularly, especially after drills or changes in student needs.

During an Evacuation:

1. Notification:
 - i) Ensure students with disabilities are alerted using accessible communication methods (e.g., flashing lights, text alerts, verbal instructions).
2. Assistance:

5.0 ASSISTIVE TECHNOLOGY AND INCLUSION PLANNING

- i) Designated helpers assist students in reaching the nearest accessible exit or safe zone.
- ii) Use pre-identified evacuation equipment if required (e.g., stair climbers or evacuation chairs).

3. Priority Support:

- i) Focus on ensuring safety and calmness for students with cognitive disabilities by providing clear, reassuring instructions.
- ii) Guide students away from noise or sensory triggers that could cause distress.

4. Communication:

- i) Use pre-established communication strategies for non-verbal or hearing-impaired students.

5. Coordination:

- i) Staff must coordinate with emergency responders to communicate the location of students who need additional support.

Post-Evacuation:

1. Conduct a headcount and ensure all students with disabilities are accounted for at the assembly point.
2. Provide emotional support to students who may feel anxious or disoriented.
3. Relay essential information to emergency personnel about any students requiring further assistance.

Post-Emergency Review:

1. Hold a debriefing session with staff to evaluate the effectiveness of the evacuation process.

5.0 ASSISTIVE TECHNOLOGY AND INCLUSION PLANNING

2. Collect feedback from students and families to improve future plans.
3. Update individual emergency plans and school-wide procedures as needed.

For more information please see the Ministry of Education document:
Emergency Management Planning for Schools, Districts and Authorities