



# American International School of Freetown Emergency Procedures Manual



**20/2021**

American International School of Freetown

## General Communication

It is essential that in any emergency information is disseminated by one source only: the Director or a designated representative. Teachers, students and parents should do all possible to dispel rumors and refrain from speculation. The Director or designee will be responsible for all communication with outside authorities, the embassies and the press.

At the core of AISF emergency procedures is the Emergency Team. The team includes the following personnel:

- Director
- Drill Chief
- Finance Manager
- Nurse
- Admin Assistant
- AISF Security Services Contractor Representative (G4S)

In addition to the roles identified under the various emergency conditions in these procedures, each member of the team will have specific roles and responsibilities associated with the school's emergency plan. In broad terms, they will be responsible for the following:

- establishing and maintaining the Parent Directory, Emergency Phone Tree (Admin Assistant)
- handling the media (Director)
- designating specific staff duties for each emergency plan (Director)
- ensuring communication systems are in place and functioning (Director)
- scheduling and conducting periodic emergency drills (Drill Chief)
- establishing evacuation procedures and safe havens (Drill Chief)
- providing for necessary supplies and equipment for each type of emergency (Nurse)
- providing guidelines for student behavior (Director, Drill Chief)
- establishing a chain of command for the dissemination of information (Director)
- establishing a standing agreement with local medical providers (Director/Finance)
- ensuring the provision of first-aid services (Nurse)
- providing contingency plans and follow-up procedures (Director, Drill Chief)

## Resources

### On-site Resources

- **Classroom information kits** are kept easily available in each classroom, for use when evacuating the classroom. These kits contain the following:
  - a class list to be used for attendance purposes, Parent Directory, Staff Phone Tree
- **On-site safe haven:** Multi-Purpose Room (MPR)
- **Emergency medical kits:** Nurse's Office

### Outside Resources

- AISF is supported by the **United States Embassy**. The United States Embassy should be the first agency informed when an emergency at AISF results in school shutdown or closure
- A strong relationship with the **Regional Security Officer (RSO)** at the US embassy has been established.
- **Aspen Clinic**. This facility will be notified of any relevant emergency.

## General Procedures

The information source for notifying all the parents/guardians of all AISF students is **the Parent Directory**. This Directory will be compiled in September and updated continually as students arrive and depart. The Directory will be organized alphabetically by student last name. **A hard copy of the Parent Directory is available at all times in every classroom, at reception, and in the director's office.** The Admin Assistant is responsible for the keeping the Parent Directory current and accurate. **There is a published phone tree for staff. The phone tree is available in hard copy in every classroom and at Reception.**

## Stay at Home Emergencies: Procedures for Communication

This option will be enacted during non-school hours when AISF experiences an emergency making school attendance by students impossible. **In the event of an emergency which requires the school to be closed, parents and all staff will be notified by text, WhatsApp, and email of such closure.** This communication will use all three methods for all families and all staff. Phone texting will be carried out by the AISF Telephone Team (Admin Assistant, Procurement Officer, Finance Manager, IT Officer). The Director (or designee) will contact these same groups using: AISF Families WhatsApp Group, AISF Staff WhatsApp Group, and the AISF email groups for Families and for Staff.

The director or designee is responsible for providing the script for all contacts made. The script provided will be as simple and brief as possible. All participants are required to deliver the script exactly as given in writing (or verbally if necessary) by the director.

## Emergency Departure from School Buildings: Building Evacuation Procedures

**The main goal in an emergency evacuation is the rapid and orderly evacuation of all children and staff.**

*Note: In all cases, if a designated person is not available, the duties are assigned to a back-up person.*

When the sign for evacuation is given the following procedures are to be followed:

- **Students line up quietly and prepare to exit.**
- **Teachers will lead students out** according to the exit routes posted in all classrooms.
- **Teachers will bring the complete emergency kit from their classroom (Parent Directory, Staff Phone Tree, Class List for Attendance) and teacher phone**
- The teaching assistants will collect any weather-related necessities
- Doors should be left closed but unlocked; lights should be left on.
- Designated area checkers will check their areas of responsibility to make sure all students and staff have moved out of the area and that all doors are closed.
- The Nurse will take the emergency medical kit.
- All teachers and assistants will take mobile phones
- The Admin Assistant will take the -
  - Parent Directory and Staff Phone Tree
  - Emergency Procedures Manual
  - list of absent students

- school phone

The Director will take the US Embassy radio and a mobile phone.

## Rally Areas for Students

**In case of Evacuation for Fire, Earthquake or other emergency requiring departure from the buildings-** All classes will report to the **Main Sports Field** during the evacuation, in the event or need to continue to evacuate campus, staff and students could be redirected from the field to the campus exit. Once to the rally point:

- Teachers will take attendance of students in their care/class.
- Teachers will report any missing students to the Drill Chief.
- The Finance Officer will take attendance of all staff and report to the Drill Chief.
- The Drill Chief will report on absences to the Director or designee
- The Director shall immediately call the necessary emergency numbers and notify the United States Embassy as needed.
- If needed, classroom teachers will use the Parent Directory to notify families of students in their class. The Director will provide the script of the message to be communicated.
- If needed, the Director and the Drill Chief will monitor the release of all students, checking names from the current Parent Directory before releasing a student to a parent or driver or proxy.
- In the event of bad weather, the Director will decide if students should move to another location.
- In the event of danger on the field, the Director will decide if students and staff should move to another location.
- Everyone must wait for the all-clear signal from the Drill Chief (after Chief is advised by Director). After all-clear is given, all should return to the building in a quiet and orderly fashion.

## Fire Emergency: Specific Guidelines

**When the signal for evacuation is sounded the Evacuation Procedures as outlined above should be followed.**

After everyone is safely out of the building, the Director and Drill Chief must determine whether there is an actual fire. If there is a fire, the fire department/US Embassy Post One will be called immediately and campus maintenance staff will determine immediate needs for localizing or extinguishing the fire. The Admin Assistant shall notify other buildings in the immediate vicinity of the school including but not limited to: St. Mary's Grocery complex and The Nigerian High Commission.

- **If any students or staff members are seriously injured, the emergency procedure for injury goes into effect.**
- After the fire has been extinguished, the Director and the Drill Chief shall determine if it is safe to return to the building. If not, the students must be sent home. If it is close to the end of the school day, the students can wait for their usual transportation. If it is early in the day, the students can wait in a safe location while classroom teachers contact the family of every student in their class.
- The Director and maintenance staff must assess the damage to the school and take appropriate measures. The Finance Manager is responsible for all insurance concerns. For very minor damage, the Director will decide when to reopen the school. For severe damage to the school premises and property, an emergency session of the School Board must be

convened to decide where and when the operation of the school will resume. Parents and staff will be notified, as quickly as possible, of whatever decisions the School Board makes.

## Earthquake

Upon sensing an earthquake, the following steps shall be taken:

- **If indoors, teachers will keep their students inside. While shielding their heads with their hands and elbows, students should duck and cover, (See Figure 1) moving away from windows, shelves, and heavy objects and furniture that may fall.** They should not be under light fixtures or other suspended objects. If in the classroom, students should take cover under desks, tables, or other heavy furniture. (See Figure 2.)



Figure 1

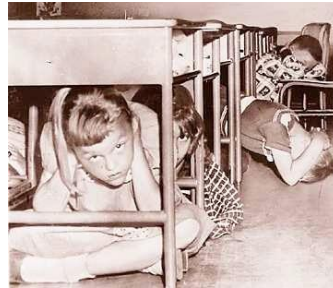


Figure 2

- If in a hall, stairway or other area where no cover is available, the students should move to an interior wall. They should turn away from windows, duck and cover, kneeling alongside the wall, bend their heads close to their knees, cover the sides of their heads with their elbows, and clasp hands firmly behind neck.
- If in the library, the students should immediately move away from windows and bookshelves and take cover under a desk or a table. If in another school space, students should duck and cover and remain in place until the tremors subside.
- An uncontrolled, panic-driven exit by the students should be avoided.
- Students with proximity to exits should immediately exit buildings.
- If outdoors, students should move to an open space, away from buildings and overhead power lines. Students should lie down or crouch low to the ground (since legs will not be steady). Teachers and students should constantly keep an eye on the surroundings to be aware of dangers that may demand movement.

Once the Director and the Drill Chief have judged that the earthquake has ended, the Evacuation Procedures (see above) should be followed.

### Evacuation Routes:

#### Evacuation to Upper Field:

See Maps in every classroom.

**At this time a decision will be made about the next step.**

- **return to school**
- **wait for further information**
- **evacuate the campus immediately as a group (campus exit: exit from field to main gate)**
- **evacuate students individually to their cars or predetermined drivers (campus exit: exit from field to main gate)**

**Exit to the main gate.** Students and classes will walk quietly and calmly in order to the gate exiting to the pre-determined rally point. All staff and faculty will remain with students at all times and no



student will leave supervision areas unless released to parents with permission from the director. The nurse will bring the emergency kit. The teachers and office staff will bring the copies of the Parent Directory and phones. The Telephone Team will initiate texts to every family using the director-provided script.

Or

**Students will exit to their cars or predetermined drivers** at the request of parents. Teachers will commence calling parents from the field to let them know of the immediate school closure and the need to come to school to pick up children.

## Emergency Procedures: Evacuation of Students

### Civil Unrest

The United States Embassy assists AISF with regard to notification of an existing or potential security threat. In most instances, it will be the Embassy notifying the school of a threat. However, the school should notify the Embassy, via the official US Embassy two-way radio or through a phone contact with Marine Post One of any situation that has come to the attention of the staff, which may affect the security of the school. A two-way US Embassy radio is located in the Director's Office and in the MPR (safe haven). Examples of what to report to the US Embassy include sightings of riots or demonstrations; reports of possible terrorist acts; and observations of suspicious persons/vehicles in the vicinity of the school.

#### Possibility of violence or hostile action

The school will work in conjunction with the United States Embassy and any other participating embassies, which might have pertinent information concerning the situation. Depending upon the situation, the Director will decide if the school will remain open or close.

#### School Open

If the **school remains open**, the following course of action should be taken:

- **The United States Embassy should be notified** by radio or call to Marine Post One that there is concern over the possible threat of violence; the school should request that the appropriate authorities be notified.
- **All classroom and exterior doors and windows should be secured.** If applicable, curtains and blinds should be closed.
- **The security guards should lock all gates.**
- **The on-site safe haven in the MPR should be opened** and necessary equipment should be moved to the MPR.
- Recess, and any other outdoor activities should be canceled. No students or staff should be outside the MPR. The Drill Chief is in charge of Safe Haven MPR.
- The Director should determine if there is to be a change in transportation plans (e.g. change in pickup/drop off times). The Director will inform the Drill Chief of any change. Telephone Team will contact parents using the script provided by the Director.
- The Director should establish 'check-in' times with the United States Embassy. These are times that the Embassy will expect to receive contact from the school to ensure all is well.
- If possible, the Director or designees must make frequent checks of the situation if the disturbance is expected in the vicinity of the school. The person watching the situation (likely G4S security) outside must be able to communicate with the director quickly by

walkie talkie or phone in order to give warning of any new developments.

- The Director, if possible, may assign a staff member to watch the perimeter of the school from a safe interior location.

### **School Closed with Evacuation of Students from Campus**

If the school is to be closed and students to be evacuated from campus, the following course of action should be taken:

- The Director should **immediately notify the United States Embassy through two-way radio or Marine Post One call** that a decision has been made to close the school.
- **The Director will cooperate with the US Embassy to notify local authorities** of the decision to close.
- All students and all staff minus director and one maintenance worker will be moved to the MPR (Drill Chief in charge) for staging the departure of students. Adequate water and medical supplies will be brought to the MPR. Teachers must bring Staff Phone Tree, Parent Directory, mobile phones.
- The Director will determine a course of action for evacuating students and communicate procedure to the Drill Chief.
- Director will create a written script and the Telephone Team will text all families, the script given by the director. Back-up parent contact will be made by classroom teachers for students in their classes, strictly using the script created by the director.
- If both the Telephone Team and the teachers cannot reach families, the Admin, Assistant and the Drill Chief will cooperate to phone those students' auspices (Embassies, NGOs, businesses) to provide transport to evacuate the children connected with their institution. If auspices do not exist, faculty and Drill Chief will arrange transport with another family and continue trying to contact the parents.
- Director and maintenance staff should secure the school building as much as time permits. The United States Embassy should be notified by US Embassy radio and by call to Martine Post One when the building has been closed and the last staff member has left.

### **Emergency Evacuation: Safe Haven On-Site (Multipurpose Room/Upstairs Yoga Room for ECC)**

If danger is imminent, and it is not possible to evacuate students from the school campus, all students and staff will evacuate to the Safe Havens. Teachers will carry Parent Directory, Staff Phone Tree, and teacher phones at the signal to evacuate to the MPR Safe Haven or, for ECC/KG, to their upstairs Safe Haven. Telephone Team must have phones and chargers. Nurse must have First Aid Kit. Finance Assistant must have container with emergency food. All classes will walk with their teacher to the MPR remaining inside the building as much as possible. All outside individuals and staff will move indoors and then walk to the MPR. ECC students, faculty and staff will find safe haven in the upstairs yoga room. The ECC teacher must have a phone and parent contact list. At the respective Safe Havens, attendance for each homeroom class will be taken by the homeroom class teacher and reported to the Drill Chief. The Drill Chief will record attendance as reported including names of students absent. When all staff and students are accounted for or after a period of 5 minutes the MPR metal doors will be secured. The Drill Chief is in charge inside the save haven. The director and one maintenance worker remain outside along with G4S security. The Drill Chief and director communicate using either phone or walkie talkie. Maintenance worker is equipped with walkie talkie.

- **Maintenance staff should if possible secure the ECC and the Main Building** by locking

- all exterior doors, closing all windows, and drawing any curtains, blinds or shutters.
- **Teachers will lead students to the on-site safe haven following the map.**
- If possible, the usual team of maintenance workers will sweep all rooms and the exterior campus for people before entering the MPR.
- The Director will maintain contact with US Embassy and Post One using phone and Embassy radio.
- Upon receiving an “all clear” message from the US Embassy or Marine Post One, the Director will organize the evacuation of students from the campus, if necessary, as efficiently and quickly as possible, in cooperation with the Drill Chief.

It is possible that when the “all clear” is sounded the director may determine that the emergency is passed and that school may remain open.

## Attack without Warning

- The **students should be directed to lie on the floor**, preferably under desks or anything providing protection.
- Teachers should **close and lock their classroom doors**, and close curtains if possible without endangering life.
- Upon securing the classroom, teachers should **also remain on the floor until further instructions are received.**
- If any students or staff members are seriously injured, the emergency procedure for injury goes into effect, if at all possible. (See “Accidents and Medical Emergencies”.)
- Teachers should be aware that they might have to move the students out of the building because of fire.

## Long-term Crisis Situation Civil Unrest, Epidemic

**NOTE: If the political situation or a natural calamity in the host country becomes life threatening to the school population, the School Board will conduct an emergency session to decide whether or not to close the school on a long-term or permanent basis. Students and their families as well as expatriate staff will be assisted in evacuation by their respective embassies. The school will carry out the procedure for a force majeure closing.**

## OTHER EMERGENCIES

### Bomb Threat

If a bomb threat is received, the Director shall be notified immediately, and a signal will be given or an announcement will be made for everyone to evacuate the building. When that signal or announcement is made, evacuation to the field procedures should be followed immediately (see above).

- The person receiving the bomb threat should fill out a Bomb Threat Report. The report will be of assistance should there be an investigation.
- **Mobile phones should NOT be used** in the immediate vicinity of the school as they could detonate a bomb.
- **The Director will notify the US Embassy via Embassy radio or Marine Post One.**



- The Director, Drill Chief, and two maintenance staff designees should **begin checking the school grounds**. Checkers should look for suspicious items.
- The Director, in collaboration with the United States Embassy, will make the decision whether school is to be resumed or closed.

### **Bomb Checking Tips**

- The checker **should not move, jar or touch anything** throughout the search process.
- The initial search should be conducted of those places generally accessible to the public,
- The checkers should search from the outside and work inside, from the lowest level up.
- Inexperienced personnel should never attempt bomb removal.
- A suspicious device should never be immersed in water.
- Bombs can be armed and detonated in numerous ways (timing devices, photo-electric, and anti-disturbance). The construction and appearance of a device is limited only by the imagination of the perpetrator.
- Typical packing forms of bombs are brief cases; hollowed-out boxes, cigar boxes, unusual parcels, boxes or wrapped packages.

## **Stranger on campus**

Any person who is not immediately known to the observer should be treated as a stranger. All visitors to campus should be processed through the gatehouse. All visitors to AISF unless known family members, must have a Gate Visitor Pass issued by security. A person without a pass is a stranger. During large maintenance jobs or construction, extra G4S Security will monitor the site and restrict worker movement. Upon sighting a stranger, ask for the Visitor Pass.

- All visitors, who are not parents or specifically cleared by one the three people listed below, must sign in with security and be issued a badge. Some may be escorted by security to reception.
- If you encounter a stranger without a badge, politely greet the visitor.
- Inquire as to the purpose of the person's visit to the school.
- If you are concerned go quietly to reception and report the stranger immediately.
- **There are three people approved to accept all visitors to school:**
  - The Director
  - The Admin Assistant
  - The Finance Officer

## **Danger on campus**

The procedures in this section are to be applied in the event of a number of situations. This section is intended as a guide, and the actual application of these procedures will vary, depending on the circumstances, including the following:

- **a dangerous person on campus**
  - **an attack on a person on campus**
  - **the presence of a weapon on campus**
  - **an attempted suicide**
- **Immediately remove all students and staff from the area.**
  - **Provide first aid to any injured persons**, if safe to do so.
  - If need be, **move all students and staff to the on-site safe haven area**, making sure that the Drill Chief or designee or designated adult remain with the students.
  - **Notify the Director**, without risking the safety of staff or students.

- **Contact emergency help, upon consultation of the director or their designee if possible.** Provide as much information as possible, including:
  - description of threatening persons (race, sex, clothing, height/weight, features)
- If needed, the director or their designee will contact the US Embassy.
- Do not disturb any crime scene.

## Accidents and Medical Emergencies

In the event of any accident to a student the following procedures must be strictly followed. (Similar procedures apply to accidents involving adults.)

- **All children must be effectively and regularly briefed** so that any accident is immediately reported to a member of staff.
- **The staff member to whom the accident is reported will take charge of the situation.**
- Staff members or reliable **students should move any gathering students away from the area.** Any students not directly involved should be sent to their next class, the library, or a supervised area.
- Staff member in charge will notify nurse and Director by the quickest means possible.

The nurse or person with first response training will decide whether the child should be moved. An injured person should not be moved if:

- the person is unconscious, not breathing, or severely bleeding
- a back or neck injury is suspected
- an arm, leg or pelvis is suspected to be broken
- If the child should not be moved, and is obviously in shock, the child should be kept warm. In such cases the Nurse or Director (or designee) should be immediately called to the scene of the accident.
- In most cases there will be no problem with the child walking to the Nurse's office, but an adult should always accompany the child.
- The Nurse shall determine if any first aid is to be administered.
- Before any first aid is administered, the Medical Emergency List should be consulted. All members of staff should make themselves aware of the needs of children on the Medical Emergency List.
- The Nurse shall determine if the child will be able to return to play or other activity.
- The staff member in charge should make sure that the accident is reported to the teacher. The nurse must notify the parents. The nurse must always complete an accident report for file.
- In all cases where the child is left to recover or to wait for the arrival of a parent, it is essential that the child never be left alone, but is always in sight/sound of an English-speaking school faculty member and nurse.
- In all cases where the child may have difficulty expressing herself/himself due to inadequate command of English, translation help should be obtained.
- In all cases that may require qualified medical assistance, the Director or designee must be advised as soon as possible. If applicable, the school nurse or a staff member should accompany the injured person in the ambulance, emergency vehicle or driver/parent.
- In the case of a serious accident, an announcement about the incident should be made to dispel any rumors. If the incident was very serious, teachers should discuss it with their students. Time should be allowed for grief and discussion. Students should be allowed to express their grief and openly discuss their feelings, fears, and concerns.

## Off Campus Emergencies (Field Trips etc.)

To assist staff in dealing with an emergency while students and staff are away from school, all faculty must complete the required Field Trip Planning Form. The supervising teachers should carry a phone with the school phone number. The Director and the Admin Assistant must be notified of the group's departure, and must have the phone number of the supervising teacher.

In the event an off-campus emergency does occur, the following procedures should be followed:

- The **group leader will be designated as the person in charge**; all persons should follow his/her instructions.
- **Contact the Director immediately, or as soon as is reasonably possible.**
- Teachers should **remain with the students** and ensure that all students are present.
- **Evaluate the first aid needs** of the students and staff.
- Refer to any procedures set out in this Manual for the type of emergency that has occurred.
- Assign an adult to supervise and record the release of students to parents/guardians.
- Make a written record of any person that is transported to local hospitals including:
  - name, address and phone number of the hospital
  - name and license number of the transporting vehicle
  - name of the transported person
  - list of injuries