

# Emergency School Bus Evacuation Drill Protocol



## PURPOSE

To outline expectations and responsibilities for all stakeholders regarding the planning and execution of school bus evacuation drills.

## SCOPE

This protocol applies to students regardless of student transportation eligibility within NLSchools.

This protocol also applies to Principals, Teachers, Parents, Operators and Drivers as everyone plays a role in preparation for emergency evacuations.

## RELATED GUIDANCE

This Bus Evacuation protocol shall be read and applied in conjunction with:

- NLSchools policies and procedures
- Department of Education [School Bus Transportation Policies](#)
- Individual contracts entered into between the NLSchools and a given contractor
- [NLSchools Busing Safety](#) and Driver training resources

## DEFINITIONS

Front Evacuation: exiting the bus through the front door

Rear Evacuation: exiting the bus through the rear door of a bus

Split Evacuation: using both rear and front doors to exit the bus

Side or Window Evacuation: exiting the bus through the side windows

Roof Hatch Evacuation: exiting the bus through the roof hatch.

Operator: Contractor or, in the case of NLSchools-operated Service, the Foreperson, Lead Driver, Supervisor or Regional Manager

**Emergency School Bus Evacuation Drill Protocol** What to do once everyone has left the bus has proven time and again to reduce risk should there be a need to evacuate outside of a controlled environment.

Students and drivers who learn how to properly evacuate are better able to maintain and contribute to a calm environment for all in situations that could be very scary for some.

# Emergency School Bus Evacuation Drill Protocol



As educators, parents, operators, and drivers, we have a responsibility to do our best to prepare students for such events.

**DRILL FREQUENCY** Bus evacuation drills must be practiced at least once a school year. It is expected that drills be coordinated at the beginning of the school year in the Fall, while weather is favourable (by Nov. 30th).

**CLASSROOM AND DRIVER PREPARATION** Bus evacuation drills give everyone the opportunity to focus on bus safety and to educate students on all of the important safety features that exist on a school bus.

NLSchools has prepared several training materials for students, parents, school staff and bus drivers.

Materials for Schools (students, parents and staff) can be found at [www.nlschools.ca](http://www.nlschools.ca)

Most notably, resources include:

- Bus Safety Tips Brochure
- Student Expectations on the Bus
- Busing Safety Video

Before any planned bus evacuation drill, Principals are expected to distribute/play the above materials to students and instruct teachers to discuss the content and the importance of safety with each class. Materials should also be sent home for Parents to review with their children.

In addition to the above resources, all Drivers approved to transport students for NLSchools complete training to prepare for the event of an evacuation. Drivers learn to use all emergency equipment as part of their licensing process. They also complete online training on a number of safety related topics.

While all of the above resources contribute to emergency preparation, they do not negate the need to practice bus evacuation drills. Drills must be practiced by all students at least annually.

**DRILLS TO BE PRACTICED** While there are multiple ways to get out of a school bus in the event of an emergency, not all are practical to be practiced annually. Students should practice front, rear and split evacuations. Side and roof evacuations are important to understand but can be difficult to maneuver and should be used only in an emergency.

## **COORDINATION OF EMERGENCY EVACUATION DRILLS**

**Emergency School Bus Evacuation Drill Protocol** The Principal and their Operator(s) should connect to arrange a date and time suitable to conduct the evacuation drills. Drills may need to occur over a number of days in order for every class to participate in the drills.

Once a date/time has been scheduled, the Principal is responsible to ensure the students have reviewed the material and are outside at the scheduled time ready to complete the drill. The Operator is the expert in school bus safety and thus is best suited to lead the emergency evacuation drills. It is at the Operator's discretion if they wish to delegate this responsibility to a transportation employee of theirs; however, it is the Operator's responsibility to ensure that the assigned employee is properly oriented, trained and able to successfully lead such a drill.

It is expected that all bus drivers participate in the drills as well to improve their familiarity with the procedure.

## **EMERGENCY EVACUATION DRILL PROCEDURE**

**Step 1:** Load students and teachers onto bus. If working with elementary students, try to mix student ages as best as possible so older students can assist with the drill.

**Step 2:** Identify all emergency equipment and all ways to exit a bus safely in the event of an emergency. It is beneficial to allow students to open emergency exits so they understand what to do in a real emergency. The driver should physically demonstrate how to operate emergency windows, roof hatches, service doors and rear emergency exits to the students.

**Step 3:** Take time to review the Student Expectations on the Bus list before beginning the evacuation. It is beneficial to explain the safety reason for each rule for students' enhanced understanding of their purpose. Expectations contribute to safety and may reduce the need for evacuations.

**Step 4:** Identify a safe location for students to gather once off the bus. This location should be at least 100 ft. away from the bus.

**Step 5:** Explain the three types of evacuations to be practiced.

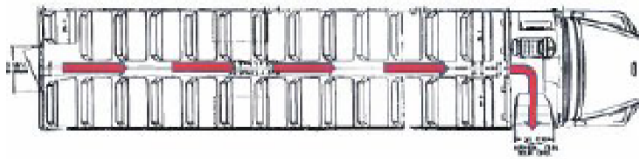
**Step 6:** Execute Front Door Evacuation

- Select two responsible students to help execute the evacuation.
- One student will lead the others to the safe location
- The other student will wait by the front door to help students who may need assistance getting out of the bus
- Instruct students to exit the front door in an organized fashion, leaving all items such as book bags and lunch boxes behind.
- Once all students have evacuated, the driver should walk through the bus, checking for students who may be left behind
- Before exiting the bus, the driver should take the fire extinguisher and first aid kit, in case students need first aid

# Emergency School Bus Evacuation Drill Protocol

- Meet all students at the safe location and check to ensure everyone is safe.

Evacuating Through Front of Bus



Evacuating through front of bus leave from the rear seats first if danger is in the back. Move quickly but in orderly fashion one side then the other.

## **Step 7: Execute Rear Door Evacuation**

- Select three students to help execute the evacuation
- One student will lead the others to the safe location
- Two students will assist others exiting the back door of the bus
- The two students assigned to the back door will be the first to exit the bus, assisting others using the method demonstrated in the NLSchools School Bus Safety video.
- The student assigned to lead the others to the safe location will exit next
- All students will follow, row by row beginning with those sitting in the back or nearest to immediate danger
- Once all students have evacuated, the driver should walk through the bus, checking for students who may be left behind and exit through the rear door
- Before exiting the bus, the driver should take the fire extinguisher and first aid kit, in case students need first aid
- Meet all students at the safe location and check to ensure everyone is accounted for.

## Evacuating Through Rear of Bus



Evacuating through the rear of the bus you would start from the front and work your way back to the exit. The person in the back of the bus would open the door and get out first helping everyone else out.

### **Step 8: Execute Split Evacuation**

- Select five students to help execute the evacuation
- Two students will lead the others to the safe location (one from front door and one from rear)
- One student will wait by the front door to help students who may need assistance getting out of the bus
- Two students will assist others exiting the back door of the bus
- The two students assigned to the back door and two students assigned to assist with the front exit will be the first to exit the bus.
- The student assigned to lead the others to the safe location will exit next
- All students will follow, row by row beginning with those sitting in the back and front of the bus
- Students in the middle will watch each exit and choose the exit that is quickest once it's their turn to leave (typically this is the front exit)
- Once all students have evacuated, the driver should walk through the bus, checking for students who may be left behind and exit through the rear door
- Before exiting the bus, the driver should take the fire extinguisher and first aid kit, in case students need first aid
- Meet all students at the safe location and check to ensure everyone is safe.