

## Teachers' emergencies

*The teachers' job is a very comprehensive one. As the responsible person of, say, 25 minors, "general professional competences" of a teacher include how to face any emergency. You can put yourself to the test with the questions below. Indeed, this text is an invitation to ask yourself more questions, and then go look for the reliable answers that apply to your school setting.*

Expect the unexpected, because emergencies do occur. Most commonly, there are health emergencies. A first aid training usually needs to be refreshed after a while, and in any case you also need to do your homework because there are many more health conditions that can happen in a class (e.g. an epileptic seizure, or the crisis of a diabetic pupil) that do not have sufficient space in a classic first aid training. Beyond the medical knowledge, you should also know how to get support: Do you have an internal emergency number to call, saved in your phone in such a way that it appears on top of your contacts' list? Indeed, there must be a person who e.g. accompanies the ambulance doctors to your class within the school "labyrinth". Do you need to send a pupil to fetch someone more expert within the school, or to grab a first aid kit? Do you know where the closest first aid kit is, and do your pupils also know it? What does the first aid kit of your school contain?

In a nutshell, not only you need to provide medical help but you also need to organise support. The former is rather standard and I look forward to official websites called "First aid for teachers". The latter heavily depends on the school, and if you have unanswered questions, please do ask them. As a side note, nowadays you can also do trainings in "mental health first aid". Even if those trainings will not turn you into a superhero, they may avoid you some avoidable mistakes hence they are worthy.

The easiest "global" emergency is probably a fire, because everybody has been instructed as what to do and fake fire alarms are perfect trainings. Do you know where the fire extinguishers are, like the ones closest to your classroom? Have you read the instructions (indeed, different models of fire extinguisher have different activation modes)? Would you use those fire extinguisher towards computers as well? There are things you can learn in advance and let you spare time in a real emergency.

In any case, "fire" can mean many different scenarios: a fire outside causing a thick smoke, or a fire in the classroom, or a fire somewhere else in the school.

Imagine there is an earthquake (if you do not live in a seismic zone, lucky you, but maybe you do make trips with your class to Rome?). Imagine there is a nuclear alarm (the nuclear reactor closest to your school is not far enough to exclude any danger). You can imagine many things, some being more realistic than others of course but I do hope you are prepared for everything. For example, you may locate the part of the school building which is more "shielded" towards radioactivity. Or you may look at your "equipment". Look at your classroom: Which items can be used to barricade? Actually, do you know how to barricade in practice? Or, what would be your "shield" against a knife? For me, the computer bag with a computer or a book inside (by the way, it can also be used to hit). Do you know the email address of the local police, or what would you do to contact emergencies in a situation where you cannot speak (e.g. if hiding)?

Many of us have been to the great GDM Tagung in Wuppertal. I don't know if you noticed their "Notfall" website, where for example they do not shy away from naming "Geiselnahme" among the possible occurrences. In a very sketchy way they explain many things, something to do and something absolutely not to do. Every school can have their own version of "expected behaviour" and everyone, both teachers and pupils, would benefit of more information and regular trainings. I recommend that we treat any emergency as a fire, meaning we do learn what to do in case of fire in a very rational and pragmatic way, and everyone knows they must know the basics of what to do in case of a fire.