



Outcomes  
First Group

# Invacuation: Going to a Safe Area

Guidance and advise for schools, with  
communication and visual supports

Policy Folder: Health & Safety

## Guidance for adults on how to support children & young people during an invacuation

**It is important to keep the children and young people informed enough to support collaboration and their safety during an invacuation, whilst reducing the risk of causing alarm or panic.**

**The following guidelines will help to support children during an invacuation:**

- Adults to stay as calm as possible. Children will experience this as containing and reassuring.
- Avoid children and young people overhearing adult conversations that might alarm them.
- Use connect strategies to support: If child/young person appears anxious, acknowledge this with them. Ask open ended questions and keep them close to you physically, to support connection and helping them regulate. Validate what they are feeling but provide reassurance regarding the process and procedure being followed.
- When providing information about the situation, keep it factual, concrete, simple and collaborative. E.g. 'We just need to move to a different area of the school quickly, will you help me get there?'
- Use co-regulation strategies that are helpful for the children as required, including soothing and relaxation activities/strategies. Take part in the strategies too to encourage child engagement. Ideally have calming resources available (e.g. fidget tools, noise-cancelling headphones).
- Adults to consult the child/young person's risk assessments for invacuation procedures (if applicable, which maybe specific to each child, e.g. health/medication needs).
- In the event of a child/young person refusing to follow procedure, address the child/young person on an individual basis using all strategies stipulated in their risk assessment. Revert to CPI principles if required, de-escalating proactively, making decisions based on the balance of risk.
- Have some light-hearted activities to do with the child/young person whilst they wait.
- Offer snacks and drinks where possible.

### Possible Script to use

The following script is to be used with children/young people who do not require visual support.

1. "We are taking steps to keep everyone protected. The alarm you can hear is just a signal to tell us that we need to move to a different area. We're going to [name safe and lockdown space]. When we get to the room, wait and say 'yes' when you hear your name."
2. "You must listen so I can tell you where we exit if we need to. I am now going to do a register to check everyone is here. Say 'yes' when you hear your name".
3. "I need to do some things in this room now to keep us safe. We need to stay here until I tell you that we can leave. You may hear another signal: an adult will tell you what this means"

4. “Now we can play some games or activities whilst we wait”. Give children as much choice as possible to help them feel more in control.
5. For older and/or more able children/young people:
  - provide basic and factual information about the situation.
  - Provide opportunity for young people to ask you questions
  - Reassure them that the process is being followed to keep them safe

**Some children and young people need information broken down and presented visually with symbols to add meaning and support understanding. Others need prompt cards with symbols, or a narrative presented as a sequence of visual strips. Some will need to be shown objects of reference. All of these should be prepared and safely stored in the event that there might be, at some point in the future, a need to go to a safe space.**

### **After the Invacuation:**

- Check in on each child in terms of their physical needs, as well as their emotional needs.
- Support children with strategies to help them co-regulate where appropriate.
- Provide opportunities for pupils to express their feelings and thoughts. Use developmentally appropriate methods (e.g. drawing, talking, writing, visuals).
- Help them make sense of what they experienced in a factual and concrete way ‘We followed the steps we needed to keep us protected’ – re-visit the steps with them. The more they can make sense of what happened, the quicker they will recover.
- Celebrate what the children did well – e.g. followed the steps well, kept calm when feeling scared.
- Is there anything we can do differently next time to be more helpful?

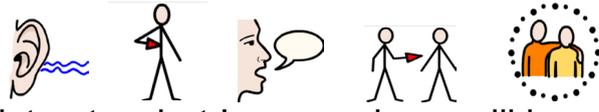
## INVACUATION

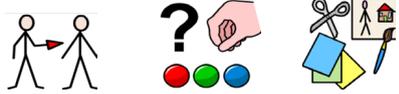
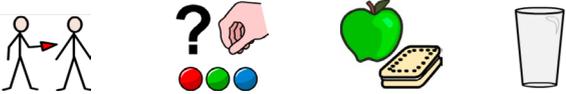
### Going to a Safe Area- Quick Reference Sheet

<b>SIGNAL</b>	We are taking steps to keep everyone protected.
	The alarm is just a signal to tell us we must move to a safe area.
	When we get there wait and say “yes” when you hear your name.
<b>SAFE AREA</b>	I am now going to do the register to check everyone is here. You must answer “yes” when you hear your name.
	I need to check some things now to keep us all safe.
	We need to stay here until I say it is safe to leave.
	If you hear another signal, I will tell you what to do.
<b>ACTIVITY &amp; SNACK</b>	Whilst we are here, we are going to do some activities.
	You can have a snack and a drink.

This is the script to use, but some children and young people might like to have a copy of the sheet so that they can read it themselves. This version is not for children or young people who need information broken down and presented visually.

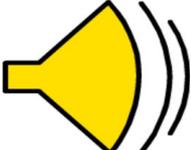
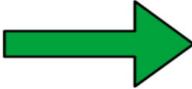
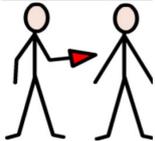
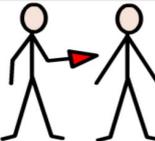
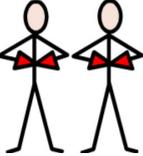
	Signal
1	 <p>We will protect you.</p>
3	 <p>You must listen to me.</p>
2	 <p>We must walk to a safe space.</p>

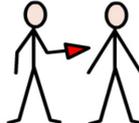
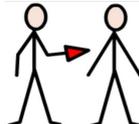
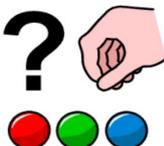
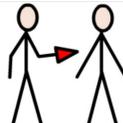
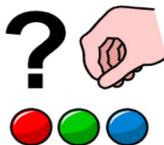
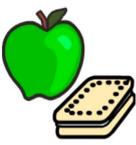
	In Safe Space
1	 <p>Say "yes" when you hear your name.</p>
2	 <p>Now I check my list.</p>
3	 <p>We must stay in the safe space.</p>
4	 <p>Listen to what I say, and you will be safe.</p>

	<p><b>Now Time to Choose an Activity and Snack</b></p>
<p><b>1</b></p>	 <p>You can choose an activity.</p>
<p><b>2</b></p>	 <p>You can choose a snack and a drink.</p>

**Note: For use with children and young people who can read with support when there are symbols to add meaning and context.**

**INVACUATION  
Visual Sequence Strips**

 <b>signal</b>	 <b>to go</b>	 <b>safe space</b>	
 <b>you are</b>	 <b>Safe</b>		
 <b>you must</b>	 <b>listen</b>	 <b>to me</b>	
 <b>we</b>	 <b>now</b>	 <b>walk to</b>	 <b>safe space</b>
 <b>say "yes"</b>	 <b>hear</b>	 <b>Name</b>	
 	 <b>I</b>	 <b>check my list</b>	

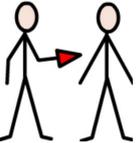
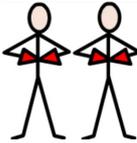
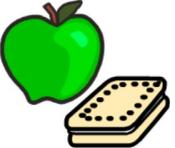
<p><b>now</b></p>  <p><b>we</b></p>	 <p><b>must stay</b></p>	 <p><b>in safe space</b></p>	
 <p><b>you are</b></p>	 <p><b>safe</b></p>		
 <p><b>you can</b></p>	 <p><b>choose</b></p>	 <p><b>an activity</b></p>	
 <p><b>you can</b></p>	 <p><b>choose</b></p>	 <p><b>a snack</b></p>	 <p><b>a drink</b></p>

**Instructions:**

- Visual strips are for children and young people who can follow a short sequence.
- The strips above should be duplicated using Widgit online or InPrint3 software. If software is not available, copy and enlarge this and the previous sheet and then laminate and cut into sequence strips.
- For those children and young people who understand and use signs as a form of AAC, staff should use signs in support of spoken language (see sheet of signs)

**Note:** Symbol selection is to support meaning in the context of what is happening and what needs to be done e.g. “sit” to mean “stay here”.

**INVACUATION**  
**Symbols for Prompt Cards**

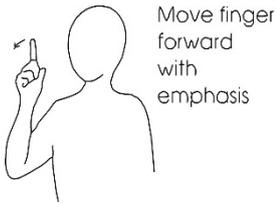
 <b>Signal</b>	 <b>safe</b>	 <b>safe place</b>	 <b>time</b>	 <b>now</b>
 <b>I</b>	 <b>me</b>	 <b>you</b>	 <b>we</b>	 <b>name</b>
 <b>sit / stay</b>	 <b>listen / hear</b>	 <b>listen / hear</b>	 <b>say</b>	 <b>go</b>
 <b>yes</b>	 <b>choose</b>	 <b>snack</b>	 <b>drink</b>	 <b>activity</b>
 <b>checklist</b>				

## Instructions:

- Prompt cards are for children and young people who cannot follow a short sequence.
- Make prompt cards, using Widgit Online or InPrint3 software, of the symbols / words above. If software is not available copy the page and enlarge so prompt cards can be made.
- Prompt cards should be shown one at a time to the child or young person. If a child or young person understands pictures and not symbols these should be used instead. The same applies if the child or young person understands objects of reference.
- If prompt cards are being used it is likely that gestures and signs are needed in support of spoken language.

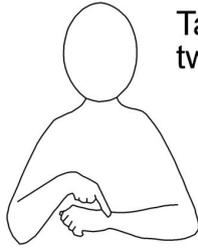
**Note:** Symbols selection is to support meaning in this context e.g. “sit” to mean “stay”.

# INVACUATION Signs for AAC Users



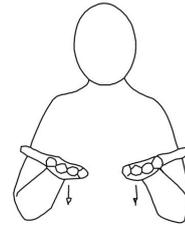
Move finger forward with emphasis

**signal**

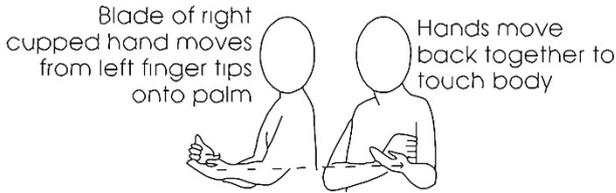


Tap twice

**time**



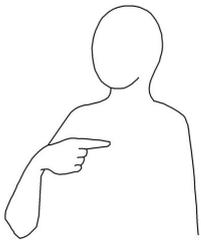
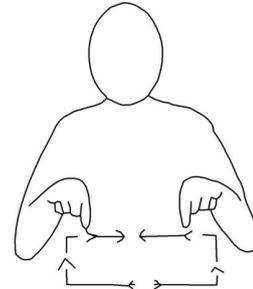
**now**



Blade of right cupped hand moves from left finger tips onto palm

Hands move back together to touch body

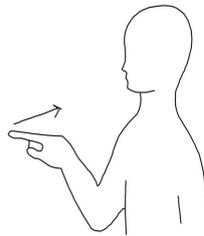
**safe + place**



**I**



**me**



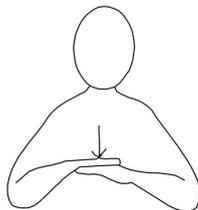
**you**



**we**



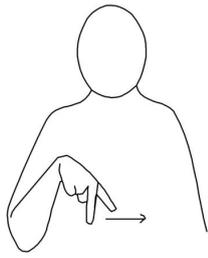
**name**



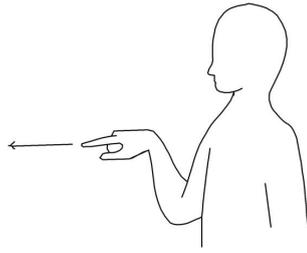
**sit / stay**



**listen / hear**



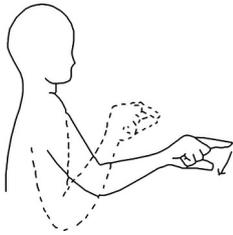
**walk**



**go**



**speak / tell**



**choose**

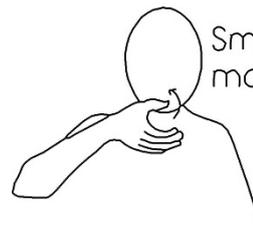


**do (+ visual of activities available)**



Tap once

**food / snack**



Small movement

**drink**



Thumb moves down  
left palm with small  
twisting movement

**list**

## Instructions:

- Use signs to support spoken language if this is a form of AAC the child or young person understands.
- Sign as the word is spoken.
- Signs for specific activities have not been given. The activities available should be in picture / symbol form on a choice board.

**Note:** Some of the signs have been selected for meaning in the context of the situation.