

Safety

Safety Is The Responsibility Of Each One Of Us
And....Together We Are Better!

While there are no absolute guarantees of safety for any of us on any given day, there are some key components to providing a safe environment at school. Open and honest communication among all the adults concerned about the child's welfare is the centerpiece of safety. Keeping information secret can lead to tragic consequences for individual students.

It is essential for parents and staff to really know the students who attend school. If you are a parent, that means monitoring what your child does at school each day by scheduling a daily debriefing session. It means knowing who your child's friends are. It means ensuring that there are adult chaperones for students during social activities. It means making the effort to meet the parents of your child's friends and discussing boundaries and expectations. It means getting involved in your local community groups so that you can work together to keep children safe. It means holding your child accountable for failing to meet parental guidelines and imposing appropriate sanctions. This could be, for example, loss of privileges for a week in the case of a curfew violation. It means listening to your child and if you are concerned contact the school counselor in order to work together to resolve the concerns. It requires you to know their music, their interests, their fears, their hopes, and continually guide them to productive choices. It means loving them enough to say no to requests that you are leery of as their parent. Responsible parenting is very hard work, day in and day out, and the most important job on earth.

For the staff it means knowing each child as well as we can. Having an intervention team consisting of counselors, administrators, teaching and support staff assists with knowing each child.

They have three primary responsibilities:

The First Primary Responsibility which falls more to the administrators, is to ensure that students meet expectations, guidelines, and standards for behavior. There is for example, a policy that does not tolerate gang related clothing or any behavior that mimics activities commonly associated with gangs. Students exhibiting this behavior in school are confronted, parents are contacted, and depending upon how much the activity could affect school safety, the student may be expelled from school. There is a no tolerance policy for this behavior and others including use of drugs and alcohol, harassment, fighting, weapons, assault, and other criminal behaviors. We have found that being clear and consistent coupled with enforcing the rules keeps school safe. Parents reviewing the student handbook with their children at the beginning of the school year also help give the message about what is expected and demonstrates that parents are partners with the school.

The Second Primary Responsibility falls to the intervention staff. For them knowing the child well means paying attention to each one, monitoring the child's progress, meeting with the student's teachers to make sure no concerns are cropping up there, and intervening with students when concerns do become apparent.

The Third Primary Responsibility rests with the teaching staff. They see the students each day in the classroom. In working with students each day, they are consistently monitoring students. Should there be a concern they contact parents directly or refer the concern to a counselor for follow-up.

Finally, students have an important responsibility to keep school and themselves safe. It is most important they do all they can to make school a good place for everyone to be. That means exercising good citizenship and being civil to other students. It is not acceptable to engage in name calling or harassment of any other student for any reason. Students need to call each other on that kind of behavior and not engage in it themselves. Students need to let an adult know when they are afraid or concerned about the behavior or possible action of another student. A student in trouble will often tell another student who is a friend. In serious situations the only way the friend can be of help is to tell an adult. Students need to be reminded that getting adult help can save their friends' lives. They also need to consider how they would feel for the rest of their lives if something terrible happened that could have been prevented if they had only told a trusted adult. Adults who receive information of this nature need to communicate immediately with school officials.

It takes all of us working together, knowing each other as well as we can, and following and enforcing the rules for good citizenship that makes our school a good place to be. Our motto, "Together We're Better" works if we communicate openly, honestly, and join hands together in our efforts to make our school and this world a safe place for us all.

Safety Tips For Children and Their Families

1. If possible, walk with a friend.
2. Don't go over to the car of someone you don't know even if they ask you a question or ask for your help.
3. If you are approached try to remember a description of the car /person - but keep walking - don't stop and talk.
4. When you are away from school or home -keep your distance - 10 feet - from adults - even if you recognize the person - from a store, or bus stop. If the adult asks you to help - remember adults should get help from adults not from kids. Go find an adult you know and trust and tell them about the problem. They will determine what help should be given to the other adult. If you feel threatened - run away fast and yell loudly - "I'm scared - I don't know him."
5. Set up a code word with your family, for example "cabbage". If an adult approaches you who you may recognize - or who appears like a nice person - and says he is supposed to pick you up because your parents asked him to for some ordinary or emergency reason - keep your distance and holler - what's the code word? If there is no code word keep walking or run away.
6. Cooperate with neighbors and establish "Safe Houses/Contacts" where children know they can go to if they feel threatened and their parents are not available.
7. Children should share information about any situation or encounter with any adult that worries them. Parents should determine upon hearing the information whether to contact the police - school or both.
8. Discuss these safety tips frequently and role play them so children are practiced in them, feel comfortable, and know automatically what they will do to keep safe. You may want to fold this into your family overall safety plans which include what everyone in the family is to do in the event of fire or earthquake.

Student Success

1. Ask your child often - daily is best - about school. Ask specific questions so that your son or daughter gets the opportunity to talk about specific assignments, classes, and subjects. Ask to see their work and talk with them about it. Ask them their opinions about different current events.
2. Talk to your child about the importance of getting along in a civilized way with everyone. Ours is a diverse society where we celebrate and respect our differences but also recognize how, in so many ways, we are similar.
3. Give your child specific comments that praise his/her achievements, attitudes, interests, and characteristics. "You're great!" is a much better message if it tells why, "You're great, because you stuck with that homework assignment, even though it was tough, and finished it. Persistence is a positive trait. Good work."
4. State your values to you children. Say things like, "Honesty is what we value and here's why..." It is OK to be corny - parents are entitled.
5. Listen to your child. Get the whole message from what you hear. If your child was enthusiastic about school and now is not, it needs to be explored. If your child has always talked openly but changes to being very closed, hear that message too. Research tells us that there is nothing more important to children than being able to talk about their opinion with someone who wants to hear what they have to say.
6. Set boundaries and guidelines for your children. They need, especially at this time of their lives, to be safe, and safety is being able to say, "I can't do that because my parents would ground me until the end of time." They want parents to be the heavy because it gives them time to deal with all the peer pressure and it is their safety net. So be comfortable being the heavy and accept the role with love, of being the only parent who won't go along. If you explore it, you'll find you've got lots of company.
7. Talk to school personnel at the first sign of a concern. The school staff are there to work with you for your child's wellbeing and success. If they don't know of a concern, they can't help. Call them and talk about it.

Safety/Emergency Procedures

Address, instruct, and year to year all folks review and practice procedures at school.

List of Emergency Procedure

- List of Emergency Signals
- Emergency Evacuation Procedures
- Emergency Evacuation and Reporting Procedure
- Fire Drill Procedures
- Earthquake Drill Procedures
- Lockdown Procedures
- Inclement Weather/Snow
- Power Outage Procedures
- Bomb Threat Procedures
- Staff Emergency Phone Tree

Example of Lock Down Communication

Dear Parent/Guardian:

We called a lock down today at lunch time because a student had called in a false threat to 911. We locked down so that we could investigate and determine if there was any truth to the threat. There was no truth to the threat.

The police were involved and arrested the student who made the call.

Students and staff did an excellent job of cooperating with our lock down procedure. We are able to get all students into lock down in under one minute. Please congratulate your child on having a safe school. Student cooperation with adult directions in any drill or real emergency keeps them safe. A police officer said that our security team and safety measures were the best she had seen in any school. Together We're Better!

Thank you for your support,

Sincerely,
Administrative Staff

Example of Earthquake Drill Communication

Practice makes perfect. The practice evacuations are showing us where we need to improve. There are three important parts to the drills.

First, the students need to be able to quickly duck and cover.

Secondly, they need to quickly evacuate the building. We have set a goal of three minutes once they are told to evacuate after the duck and cover portion.

Third, we need to be quick and efficient in taking attendance on the field. This is crucial in the event of an actual earthquake. The length of time it takes to determine who is missing and report it could be the difference between life and death for someone trapped in the building. This should take no more than five minutes once everyone is on the field. It is also essential that it is accurate because there is no point in risking the lives of our search and rescue volunteers if no one is in the building. Thanks to all of you for taking this as the serious business it is. We don't have to experience a catastrophic event to really appreciate the importance of practicing and preparing.

Example of Emergency Evacuation Communication

There have been a number of incidents in recent days causing schools to evacuate. If we need to evacuate the building, we will follow the exact same procedures we did on the earthquake evacuation drill. Escort the class you are with to the field. Do not stop on the way, for coats, bathroom, etc. Once at the field connect up with your advisement class. Take roll and send a runner to the designated staff member with the names of any missing students. These events have taken place at high schools, and I am concerned that too much emphasis on this will encourage this behavior at this level. Please use discretion in the amount of information you share. This is a serious crime.