

SAFETY MESSAGE TO STAFF

Our schools are a “home away from home” for both students and staff and, as such, are places where safety is a priority. Even so, schools are not immune to manmade and natural disasters. Hazards of all kinds can present themselves to any school, even in rural areas. It is every employee’s responsibility to take measures that help protect the safety and security of our students, colleagues, and buildings.

Administrators and school resource officers cannot be everywhere, so we rely on staff members to be alert to potential problems. As you go about your daily duties, please be aware of any unknown or suspicious person or item that you may notice in the school building, on school grounds, or at school events. It is appropriate to ask visitors their purpose for being on school property. Unusual or unfamiliar persons or items should be reported to building administrators at once so that swift, appropriate action can be taken.

In addition, we must always be aware that situations of concern may present themselves in the form of a student, an episode, or even a rumor. We must not tolerate situations which may escalate to violence. Disturbing rumors, threatening remarks, and hostile episodes should be reported to building administrators without delay.

We welcome the public to our schools and encourage community involvement. Even though schools are sometimes targets or victims of anti-social behavior, they are still the safest places in our community. With your help, we can keep them that way.

Be prepared to react quickly in an emergency by becoming familiar with your school’s emergency drill signals. List them in the table below for quick reference. Know your students and identify those who may require assistance in moving to safety.

School Emergency Drill Signals

Evacuation	Reverse Evacuation	Shelter-in-Place	Lockdown
<i>Start Signal:</i>	<i>Start Signal:</i>	<i>Start Signal:</i>	<i>Start Signal:</i>
<i>End Signal:</i>	<i>End Signal:</i>	<i>End Signal:</i>	<i>End Signal:</i>
Evacuation is necessary when an event (e.g., fire, hazardous material spill in the building, earthquake [after]) renders the school building unsafe. Evacuation requires all students and staff to leave the building, either to a safe area away from the building on school grounds or, in certain situations, to other sites. Staff and students should be accounted for to determine that no one remains in the building.	Reverse evacuation is used to quickly return students who are outside to the safety of the school building. (Though you may sometimes practice reverse evacuation immediately after an evacuation drill, the signal should be distinguishable from the one normally used to return at a leisurely pace from evacuation or from recess.) Shelter-in-place or lockdown may follow a reverse evacuation.	Shelter-in-Place is indicated when there is not enough time to evacuate or when it may be harmful to leave the building (e.g., tornado, hazardous material spill outside the school). Students and staff in portables should move to the main building (unless in reality doing so would pose a greater danger). Windows and doors may need to be locked (a lockdown) and sealed if the situation dictates.	Lockdown is called for when a crisis occurs outside of the school and an evacuation would be contraindicated or when a crisis situation exists inside and movement within the school would put students in jeopardy. All doors are locked and students and staff stay in classrooms. Red and green cards are used to signal the status of each classroom, unless announced otherwise.