

EMERGENCY COMMUNICATIONS

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PRESENTED BY
Michael Bennett & Sierra Pizzola

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CRISIS COMMUNICATIONS

CHECKLIST

Use this checklist as a reference in creating a guide for crisis communications.

List of Emergency Protocols & Instructions

Lockout, Lockdown, Shelter-in-Place, Hold-in-Place and Evacuation – define each and have a list of specific instructions that staff members are trained follow. This serves as a reference for the communicators.

Communications Roles (List with Names & Phone Numbers)

Who is responsible for what, and how to get ahold of them.

Stakeholders List

Detailed list of everyone who needs to be communicated with, broken up into tiers.

Communications Channels

What channels you use and exactly how to use them.

Communications Timeline

Which stakeholders need to be communicated with and when.

Communications Plans for each Protocol

Include communication steps, information inventory & planning sheet, and sample documents ON LETTERHEAD that you can quickly download, adjust, and send out.

Step-by-Step Instructions

Specifically define how to use your communications platforms (including login credentials) and what steps to follow when there's an emergency.

KEEP THIS DOCUMENT IN A SAFE & SECURE PLACE.

PREPARE

Being proactive in communications helps build confidence in the District's commitment to school safety. The absence of factual information will often generate misinformation, speculation, panic, and responses by key audiences that do not help resolve the situation. Conversely, communicating early demonstrates that there is nothing to hide, and that the District is dealing with the incident in a responsible and transparent manner.

PREPARATION EFFORTS

- Know and practice all emergency procedures
- Establish communication roles
- Identify the people who will fill these roles
- Set location and prepare communication center and supplies
- Identify key stakeholder groups and make sure information is up-to-date and accessible
- Establish channels for communicating with each stakeholder group.
 - Phone, email, socials, and website
- Update and review communication guidelines and templates annually
- Prepare, parents, students, staff, and other stakeholders for emergency situations.

NO COMMUNICATION IS COMMUNICATION

We are always communicating, whether we are saying anything or not. It's just a matter of whether we're doing it well.

ESTABLISH COMMUNICATION ROLES

Depending on the nature of the emergency, several people may need to be involved in the communication process. One person may need to fill several roles. Three people should be identified for each role, in case one person is not there. In cases of severe emergencies, once the incident command is transferred to emergency response authorities, so will the Public Information Officer functions.

1. **Incident Commander** will have the final say on what is communicated. Responsible for communicating with instructional administrators
2. **Lead Communicator** is responsible for preparing and communicating messages at the site to faculty/staff, parents, and the community. Also responsible for communicating with the incident commander.
3. **Phone Communicators** are responsible for answering school phones during emergencies.
4. **Media Liaison** is responsible for coordinating with media to meet at a pre-determined off-site location for the Incident Commander to make a statement.
5. **Post-Emergency Communicator** is responsible for all communications after the emergency - with approval from the incident commander and police agencies.

SHARE WITH PARENTS

- Highlights of the emergency plan (do not share the plan in its entirety, or post it online)
- Summary of the emergency protocols.
 - Example: newsletter, presentation at back to school event, in the building handbook, on the website.
- Review measures in place to prevent or reduce the risk of crime, violence, and other safety hazards.
 - Example: visitor sign in, employee ID badges, SRO, etc.
- Test your emergency notification system. If parents notice they are not receiving any alerts, they should contact the school.
- Emphasize commitment to communicate as early and as often as possible. Ask for patience if communication is not as fast as many would like. Again, safety is the priority.
- Explain how you will communicate in case of an emergency
- How parents can help keep kids safe
 - Ensure emergency contact information is up-to-date and thorough.
 - Ensure list of adults who are authorized to pick up child is up-to-date and that those adults know to always carry their ID with them. Children will not be released to anyone who is unauthorized or cannot provide appropriate identification.
 - Check established communication channels regularly.
 - During an emergency, parents should not call the school unless other forms of communication are down. If students are ill or injured, the parents of those students will be notified first.
 - During an emergency, parents should not go to the school. Parents may inadvertently create traffic jams that could block emergency responders from accessing campus.
 - Parents should not reach out to their child during an emergency at school. Students need to be focused on what they should be doing, and in some cases, they need to be quiet.
 - Teach and encourage children to “see something, say something.”
 - Encourage children to take drills seriously, listen carefully, and follow directions.
 - Talk about drills, policies, and procedures as a family.

Dear Families:

As we head into the new year, we want to make you aware of our communication practices should an emergency occur. The safety of our students and staff is of the utmost importance, and we want to ensure that you are informed and kept up-to-date through all circumstances.

In the event of an emergency, an initial message notifying families of the situation will go out via text, phone call, email, social media, and the website. We will continue to update the community, even if no new information is available, by providing timestamped updates. When the situation is resolved, we will send out an update stating the status of the emergency, and indicating that communication is the “final” update about the situation.

We encourage all members of the school community to make sure that their contact information is up-to-date in our records, so that we can reach you in a timely manner. If you are not currently receiving communications from the District, please email pizzolas@greenvillecsd.org or call 518-966-5070 x523 to update your information. It is also important to regularly check your email and phone for updates and to follow our website or social media channels for additional information.

We understand that receiving information about an emergency can be stressful, and we will do our best to provide clear and concise updates in a timely manner. In the event of an emergency, please refrain from calling the school offices, or entering the school grounds. School secretaries are an integral part of our emergency response teams, and their phone lines must be kept open to aid in resolving the situation. Additionally, parking lots and roads surrounding the campus must be kept clear for emergency personnel to easily access them, should their services be required.

If you have specific questions while the District is experiencing an emergency, our School Communications Specialist will to the best of their ability, monitor email, and social media comments to respond in a timely manner.

We appreciate your cooperation and understanding as we work to keep our school community safe.

DRILLS

It's advantageous to remind families about emergency procedures once per year, at the very least. Below is a sample letter that can be sent out:

Dear Families:

We will be conducting a lockdown drill today. In years past, we have not notified families before we conduct a drill like this. However, there are a number of changes that will be noticeable to those passing by the campus, and to ensure our community isn't alarmed, here's what you need to know:

- You are receiving this communication as a text message in order to test our emergency communication system. For future lockdown drills you will only receive an email on the day of the drill. This is our first planned lockdown drill of the year, we conduct four lockdown drills per school year. If you or someone you know didn't receive a text message, please email pizzolas@greenvillecsd.org.
- The Elementary School and the Middle School/High School will lock down at different times today, in order to better test each of our systems.
- The blue lights will turn on when the lockdowns begin. We will post a message on the outdoor signs alerting the community that the blue lights are activated because of a drill, and that there is no emergency.
- We will have an increased police presence on campus during the drills. The goal is to make sure first responders in surrounding areas are familiar with our school's emergency response procedures. Please don't be alarmed if you see an increased police presence on campus today.

What's a lockdown?

A lockdown is used to secure a school during incidents that pose an immediate threat of violence in buildings or on campus. Students are to remain hidden behind locked doors until physically cleared by law enforcement or a school administrator.

Why are we informing you of lockdown drills?

We notify families on the morning of planned lockdown drills because we do not want to cause panic in the community, but we also do not want students to be kept home in anticipation of the drill. We understand some people feel that drills may be challenging for children to experience. All students need to know what to do in case of an emergency, these drills save lives.

Continued on next page.

Elementary School Families

To support the conversation you have with your children at home, we've included a list of talking points that were reviewed with them by their teachers.

- **Introduction:** Please begin by explaining that we will participate in a lockdown drill. We practice these drills to help all of us stay safe when a person has the intention of doing harm in school.
- **Purpose:** To reassure students that the drill is not because there's immediate danger, it's to practice what to do in case there ever is danger. As a suggestion, emphasize that the purpose of a lockdown drill is similar to a fire drill - to make sure we know what to do in an emergency.
- **Define:** A lockdown is the way we stay safe inside our classroom until a police officer opens the door and says it's safe for us to leave.
- **Stay Calm & Quiet:** Explain the importance of remaining calm and quiet during a lockdown. Staying quiet allows us to stay hidden and safe.
- **Follow Instructions:** Remind students to focus on you and to listen to you! Encourage them to follow directions quickly and quietly, no asking questions at this time. Explain that Mr. Lopez will announce that the lockdown drill will begin in a few minutes. Then, a pre-recorded announcement will come over the loudspeaker to initiate the lockdown. This will be louder than a normal announcement and will continue for three minutes. The volume of this announcement may initially startle students, but it will prompt them to follow lockdown directions. *Please emphasize that this announcement will be loud.
- **Securing the Classroom:** Let students know that when they hear the lockdown sound, we will move away from windows and doors, and ensure we are hidden.
- **Police:** Share with your students that during these situations everyone works together to make sure we're all safe. This means police officers, police dogs, firefighters, and ambulances will be coming to our building.
- **Questions:** Encourage students to ask questions now, because they will not be able to during the drill. Let them know it's normal to feel worried when we know police are coming or we're hearing loud noises we don't usually hear. Please remind them we do these drills to make sure we all stay safe.

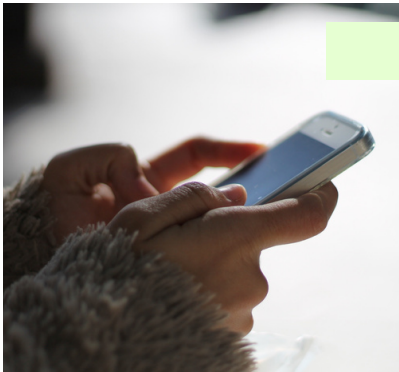
As a District, we appreciate your cooperation as we work to ensure the safety of students, faculty, staff, and guests. If you have any questions, please reach out to person.

COMMUNICATION CHANNELS



WEBSITE

Other communication channels are effective at getting the word out quickly, but websites are a place where information can be updated easily and in more detail. Ideally, the other channels direct people to the website for more information.



TEXT/CALL/EMAIL

A message delivered almost instantly through text/phone call is the best way to communicate quickly. Using multiple streams (text, call, email) all at once helps ensure the information gets to the largest number of people. Remember, email helps reach those without cell service.



SOCIAL MEDIA

While people might not be checking the website regularly, many will be on social media. Post frequent, brief, and pertinent updates throughout the duration of the crisis, even if there is nothing new to report. Be sure to monitor comments to identify and respond to concerns and correct misinformation.

SURVEY

Struggling to find the right channels for your community? Start with a survey!

SECTION 1

I'm a....

- Parent
- Student
- Faculty/Staff Member
- Community Member (no kids currently enrolled)

How old are you?

- Under 18
- 19-30
- 31-45
- 46-64
- 65+

Which school does your student(s) attend? Select all that apply.

- elementary school
- middle school
- high school

SECTION 2

How would you rate the district's communications on a scale from 1 (terrible) to 5 (wonderful)?

- at this point?
- at this time last year?

SECTION 3

Communication about _____ is to my satisfaction. Please rate 1 (strongly agree) to 5 (strongly agree).

- homework & grading
- upcoming classroom/school events
- opportunities for parents to volunteer/be involved in the classroom
- athletic team schedules/changes
- athletic scores/results
- my child's curriculum (what they're learning)
- extra-curricular activities
- emergencies

SECTION 4

I'm interested in communications about... Please rate 1 (strongly agree) to 5 (strongly agree)

- educational program options
- how I can help my child learn and grow
- how well my child is doing academically
- safety-related incidents and precautions on or near school grounds
- budget/tax/finance information
- school construction/campus improvements and renovations

SECTION 5

1. I prefer to receive REGULAR communications from the district (daily/few times per week) by... Select all that apply....

- Email
- Text Message
- Phone
- Student Management System
- Facebook
- Twitter
- Instagram
- Website

2. I prefer to receive EMERGENCY notices by...

- Email
- Text Message
- Phone
- Student Management System
- Facebook
- Twitter
- Instagram
- Website

3. I prefer to receive summary/wrap-up communications (every week/every 2 weeks)

- Email
- Text Message
- Phone
- Student Management System
- Facebook
- Twitter
- Instagram
- Website

If I have school-related questions, I'm most likely going to check...

- Facebook
- Twitter
- Instagram
- Student Management System
- Website
- eNews
- Announcements

SECTION 6

I want to receive communication (select one)

1. from my child's teacher

- every day
- every other day
- every week
- every 2 weeks
- every month
- every 3 months
- every 6 months
- every year
- never

2. from the school

3. from the district

4. about school sponsored events

5. about upcoming athletic events

6. about athletic scores/results

MEDIA

In the event of an emergency, develop a written talking points to be read by the incident commander, and handed out to reporters. Communicate with the members of the media where they can gather. Have two separate locations, one for low impact events and one for high impact events.

TIPS

- Stress concern for student safety and positive actions taken by the school or the district.
- Do not make statements about responsibility until all the facts are known.
- Pause and collect thoughts before responding to questions.
- The interview is not over until the reporters leave. Assume the microphone is always on, even before or after an interview.
- Avoid answering “what if” questions – you cannot predict the future.
 - *“That’s an interesting thought, but I think the key issue here is...”*
 - *“That’s an excellent question and made me think about...”*
 - *“What we should really focus on here is...”*
 - *“My job is not to speculate, it’s to lead our school community and provide facts along the way. Right now, the fact of the matter is....”*
- Avoid answering with “no comment”
 - *“I will have to check into that and get back to you.”*
- Be transparent about why you can’t give information – lean on laws as often as possible.
 - *“While I would love to be able to answer all of your questions in much more detail, the Family Educational Rights and Privacy Act prevents me from sharing...”*
 - *“I appreciate your question, however, this is an ongoing investigation and there are limitations on the information I can legally provide at this time.”*
 - *“Yes, we do have initial information. But we’re not able to confirm or share that information until law enforcement has time to verify the reports.”*
 - *“I understand why you would like more details, but we must allow the investigative process to unfold properly to ensure a thorough and accurate understanding of the situation. When I’m able to share more information, I absolutely will do so.”*
- It’s okay if you don’t have the answers **YET**.
 - *“That’s a great question, please give me time to look into that and get back to you.”*
 - Be true to your word and follow up with them!
- Do not speak off the record/on background.
- Avoid using acronyms/nicknames for buildings, jargon, technical terms, etc.
- Try not to read a written statement, instead, have 3-5 talking points to guide your thinking throughout the interview.
- Do not fill the awkward silences, it’s a trick to get you to say more. If you must say something..
 - *“Do you have any other questions for me?”*
- Talk to the reporter, not to the camera.

SAFETY LETTERS

EXAMPLE: COMMUNICATIONS PRACTICES

As we head into our first full week back to school, we want to make you aware of our communication practices should an emergency occur. The safety of our students and staff is of the utmost importance, and we want to ensure that you are informed and kept up-to-date through all circumstances.

In the event of an emergency, an initial message notifying families of the situation will go out via text, phone call, email, social media, and the website. We will continue to update the community, even if no new information is available, by providing timestamped updates. When the situation is resolved, we will send out an update stating the status of the emergency, and indicating that communication as the "final" update about the situation.

We encourage all members of the school community to make sure that their contact information is up-to-date in our records, so we can reach you in a timely manner. If you are not currently receiving communications from the District, please email email@email.org or call 555-555-5555 to update your information. It is also important to regularly check your email and phone for updates and to follow our website or social media channels for additional information.

We understand that receiving information about an emergency can be stressful, and we will do our best to provide clear and concise updates in a timely manner. In the event of an emergency, please refrain from calling the school offices, or entering the school grounds. School secretaries are an integral part of our emergency response teams, and their phone lines must be kept open to aid in resolving the situation. Additionally, parking lots and roads surrounding the campus must be kept clear for emergency personnel to easily access them, should their services be required.

If you have specific questions while the District is experiencing an emergency, our School Communications Specialist will, to the best of their ability, monitor emails and respond to social media comments in a timely manner.

We appreciate your cooperation and understanding as we work to keep our school community safe.

SAFETY LETTERS

EXAMPLE: EMERGENCY EXPECTATIONS

Back in December, I sent a letter notifying families of our emergency communication practices. It is a goal of mine to reshare this message every quarter to keep our community informed of what to expect if an emergency occurs.

The letter I'm sharing today outlines the emergency responses that our district has in place, expectations in the event of an emergency, where to direct questions, and how to update contact information before an emergency.

Emergency Responses Every school district in New York State, including ours, has five emergency procedures they follow:

- **Lockdown** - Used to secure school buildings and grounds during incidents that pose an immediate threat of violence in or around the school.
 - o For example, if a person has a weapon on school grounds, we would call a lockdown.
- **Lockout** - Used to secure school buildings and grounds during incidents that pose an imminent concern outside of the school.
 - o For example, if police were looking for a suspect in the area, the schools would go into a lockout.
- **Hold-in-Place** - Used to limit the movement of students and staff while dealing with short-term emergencies.
 - o For example, if a student were having a medical issue in the hallway and emergency services needed to get through, we would call a hold-in-place to avoid unnecessary commotion in the hallway.
- **Evacuate** - Used to evacuate students and staff from the building.
 - o For example, if a pipe were to burst in the school, we would evacuate everyone to a predetermined off-site location.
- **Shelter-in-Place** - Used to shelter students and staff inside the building.
 - o For example, if a tornado were to occur outside the school, we would call a shelter-in-place.

Expectations in an Emergency

Our first priority will always be the safety of our students, faculty, staff, and visitors in our buildings. In the event of a lockout, hold-in-place, evacuation, shelter-in-place, or lockdown, an initial message notifying families of the situation will go out via text, phone call, email, social media, and the website. The message will contain the type of emergency, and any information surrounding the specific incident that we can provide. We will continue to update the community, even if no new information is available, by providing timestamped updates. When the situation is resolved, we will send out an update stating the status of the emergency, and indicating that communication is the "final" update about the situation.

SAFETY LETTERS

EMERGENCY EXPECTATIONS (CONTINUED)

We understand that receiving information about an emergency can be stressful, and we will do our best to provide clear and concise updates in a timely manner. Additionally, parking lots and roads surrounding campus must be kept clear for emergency personnel to easily access them, should their services be required.

Questions During an Emergency

In the event of an emergency, please refrain from calling the school offices, or entering the school grounds. School secretaries are an integral part of our emergency response teams, and their phone lines must be kept open to aid in resolving the situation. If you have specific questions while the District is experiencing an emergency, our School Communications Specialist will monitor email and social media comments to respond in a timely manner to the best of their ability.

Contact Information

We encourage all members of the school community to make sure that their contact information is up-to-date in our records, so that we can reach you in a timely manner. If you are not currently receiving communications from the District, please email email@email.org or call 555-555-5555 to update your information. It is also important to regularly check your email and phone for updates and to follow our website or social media channels for additional information.

As a reminder, we plan to reshare this message every quarter to keep our community informed of what to expect if an emergency occurs. We appreciate your cooperation and understanding as we work to keep our school community safe.

SAFETY LETTERS

EXAMPLE: NEW SECURITY FEATURE

With school starting this week, I wanted to make you aware of a new safety feature here at school. Over the summer, the District installed a blue light system throughout the outdoor portion of our campus. In the event of a lockdown, these lights will prominently flash bright blue and will alert everyone who is outside to quickly move to a designated safe location and not re-enter the building.

If the blue lights are flashing, one of our buildings is in a lockdown. A lockdown is implemented to secure school buildings and grounds during incidents that pose an immediate threat of violence in or around the school. During a lockdown, students are to remain in designated classrooms or lockdown locations at all times with doors locked and barricaded, until physically cleared by law enforcement or site administration.

There are blue lights located on the buildings throughout the campus. These lights will be especially helpful for outdoor classes, physical education, recess, and staff members who travel between buildings.

In the event of a lockdown, you will receive a phone call, text message, and email from the District alerting you of the situation. Our goal will always be to provide the most information possible, without compromising the safety of those on campus or interfering with ongoing police matters.

Throughout the year we will continue to take inventory of safety procedures and processes to ensure our schools remain a safe place for students to learn. Unfortunately, safety continues to be an area of high concern not only here at Greenville, but across the state and our nation. If you have any questions, I encourage you to attend the School Safety Community Engagement Session on Wednesday, September 27th at 6pm in the high school auditorium. I will give a brief presentation on safety here at Greenville, and answer questions from those in attendance.

SAFETY LETTERS

EXAMPLE: BACK TO SCHOOL

Safety is one of my top priorities here at school. As we get into the school year, we will continue to take inventory of safety procedures and processes to ensure our schools remain a safe place for students to learn. Unfortunately, this continues to be an area of high concern not only here at our school, but across the state and our nation.

Blue Light System

Over the summer, we installed a blue light system that will be imperative to on-campus communications in an emergency. Due to the number of staff members that travel between buildings, the number of classes that are taught outside, and the overall geography of the campus, the District sought to install technology capable of alerting individuals who are outdoors during an emergency. With this new system, blue lights strategically placed throughout campus will prominently flash if a lockdown is initiated. The flashing blue light will notify individuals who are outside of the buildings to leave campus or move to a designated alternative location.

Emergency Response Protocols

In light of the recent swatting calls that have been occurring in other districts in our area, I think it's important that families understand exactly what will occur in the event of an emergency on campus. The second page of this letter contains a parent guide to emergency response in schools that we created based on information provided by Questar III. These are the five emergency protocols that we use here at school.

What You Can Expect From Us

In the event of an emergency, an initial message notifying families of the situation will go out via text, phone call, email, social media, and the school website. We will continue to communicate with the community, even if no new information is available, by providing timestamped updates. When the situation is resolved, we will send out an update stating the status of the emergency, and indicating that communication is the "final" update about the situation.

If you have specific questions while the District is experiencing an emergency, our School Communications Specialist will, to the best of their ability, monitor messages and respond to social media comments in a timely manner.

Update Your Contact Information

We encourage all members of the school community to make sure that their contact information is accurate in our records, so we can reach you in a timely manner. You can also use the "Student Information" section of ParentVue to update your information. If you are not currently receiving communications from the District, please email email@email.org or call 555-555-5555. It is also important to regularly check your email and phone for updates and to follow our website or social media channels for additional information.

SAFETY LETTERS

SEPTEMBER CHECK-IN (CONTINUED)

Contacting School in an Emergency

In the event of an emergency, please refrain from calling the school offices, or entering the school grounds. School secretaries are an integral part of our emergency response teams, and their phone lines must be kept open to aid in resolving the situation. Additionally, parking lots and roads surrounding the campus must be kept clear for emergency personnel to easily access them, should their services be required.

We understand the idea of an emergency occurring at a school can be overwhelming, but it's imperative that we stay vigilant and prepare for the unexpected. I encourage you to attend the upcoming Community Engagement Session on school safety where I'll give a presentation on our safety procedures and then open the floor for a safety-related Q&A. The event is Wednesday, September 27th at 6:00pm in the Middle/High School Auditorium

SAFETY LETTERS

EXAMPLE: CYBER SAFETY

As many of you know, I share a message about school safety each quarter. In the past, these letters have been on the topic of “hardening” our schools – creating safer spaces with things like surveillance cameras, blue lights, auto-locking doors, and ID badges. While these measures are both necessary and effective, I would be remiss if I did not discuss another aspect of school safety that often gets overlooked: cybersecurity.

We live in a digital age and technology is an integral part of education. We must prioritize cybersecurity to safeguard not only the personal information of our students and staff, but also to ensure that our school operations can function properly. With that being said, our district’s IT Department has worked hard to implement robust measures to protect data within our systems. This includes using advanced encryption methods, regularly updating our security protocols, and conducting comprehensive audits to identify and address potential vulnerabilities within our system. The department also employs state-of-the-art firewalls, intrusion detection systems, and other preventative security measures to fortify our network against cyber threats. These systems are monitored and updated regularly to stay ahead of the curve. I am grateful that our district has such an incredible team of IT professionals to keep our school safe.

Swatting messages are another aspect of cybersecurity that our community should be aware of. You may recall last year, several schools across the country, including some in our Capital Region, were placed on lockdowns due to these threats. Swatting messages are threats made to trigger a police (or SWAT team) response to a particular address. Thus creating mass fear, panic, and disruption. These messages can come via email or phone calls. The perpetrators often use computer-generated calls and caller ID spoofing technologies to disguise their numbers. In the local cases last year, these calls originated from outside of the United States.

While our District did not receive one of these messages last year, we have remained on high alert because of the volume of calls within our area. Over the past year, we have worked with local law enforcement offices, as well as our contacts at Questar III BOCES, to put specific emergency procedures in place should our District ever receive a swatting message. It’s important to note that if we receive a threat, we will continue to treat it as credible until we know otherwise. As always, it takes law enforcement time to determine the validity of a threat, and communications decisions must be made based on the best information available to us at the time.

By staying vigilant, proactive, and informed, we strive to create an environment where technology can be used for educational purposes without compromising the security and well-being of our school community. As a reminder, if you or your child see anything out of the ordinary, in person or online, we urge you to report it. Thank you for your help in keeping our schools safe.

AFTER AN EMERGENCY

Depending on the nature of the emergency and response, communication needs and work might actually escalate after the emergency is resolved.

FUTURE COMMUNICATIONS

Address Common Questions...

- How did this happen?
- Why did this happen?
- What could have been done differently?
- What will be done so this does not happen again?
- What are you doing now?

REMEMBER...

- You may want to conduct a daily press conference for more severe emergencies - keep the time for questions short. Read the talking points, take a couple of questions, and remind people to check the website for updates.
- The Superintendent should interact with parents and conduct the press conferences. People want to hear from the person in charge, who should be very present and visible at all stages of the emergency.

LOCKOUT

INFORMATION INVENTORY & PLANNING

Why did we go into a Lockout? Get specific so you understand the threat.	
When did the incident take place?	
Who has been involved since the incident began? (ex: Sheriff's Department, District Office, Superintendent, etc.)	
What are first responders doing to address the situation?	
What are we doing about the incident?	
Who do we need to notify about this incident?	
When must we notify parents about changes in student dismissal, in case the situation is not resolved?	
What should parents do at this point in time? (Ex: stay inside, do not call, follow our set communication channels for further information on the situation and any impact on regular dismissal).	
Other Notes	

INITIAL COMMUNICATION

[Date & Time]

Dear Families:

[School Name] is in a lockout at the request of **[superintendent, police department, building principal]** due to an incident in the area.

A lockout is a precautionary measure taken against incidents that pose an imminent concern outside of the school. Lockouts require locking all classroom/office doors and exterior windows, and closing entrance and exit points on the school's perimeter. School activities will continue as usual within classrooms until given the all-clear.

Safety is our top priority. Please DO NOT come to the school or attempt to call the office until you are notified that the lockout has been lifted. It is imperative that we keep phone lines open for communication with law enforcement and all roads clear for emergency services if necessary.

We will update **[this document, webpage, facebook, via text, etc.]** as more information becomes available.

Sincerely,
[Person]
[Title]

SITUATION RESOLVED

[Date & Time]

Dear Families:

The lockdown was lifted for **[schools]** at **[time]**, after **[department]** suspended its **[action taken by police]** in the area. **More information.**

Regularly scheduled school activities will resume as of **[time]**. We appreciate your cooperation and patience.

This will be the final status update regarding the lockdown. Thank you for working with us to keep our schools safe.

Sincerely,
[Person]
[Title]

NEXT DAY

[Date & Time]

Dear Families:

At **[time and day]**, **[school]** was placed in a lockout at the request of **[department]** as it responded to **[issue]**. The school remained in a lockout until **[time]**, when law enforcement notified us that the situation was contained.

A lockout is a precautionary measure against incidents that pose an imminent concern outside of the school. Lockouts require locking all classroom/office doors and exterior windows, and closing entrance and exit points on the school's perimeter. School activities continued as normal within classrooms until the all-clear was given.

We wish to thank you for your patience and understanding as **[law enforcement/we]** responded to the incident. Our primary concern is always for the safety of our students, faculty, and staff. We appreciate your partnership in ensuring that our schools are a safe space for all to learn, teach, and belong.

Sincerely,
[Person]
[Title]

EXAMPLE: DANGEROUS ANIMAL

April 18, 2023 9:23am

Dear Families:

Earlier this morning a staff member notified the main office of a rabid raccoon on the premises. As a precautionary measure, we immediately initiated a campus lockdown to ensure the safety of all students, staff, and visitors. During this time, everyone remained indoors, and all exterior doors were secured until the situation was resolved.

Our school resource officer responded quickly, and with the help of Animal Control, the raccoon was contained and removed from campus without harming anyone.

The safety and well-being of our students and staff are always our top priorities, and I want to reassure you that at no point was anyone in immediate danger. Our protocols for handling situations like this were followed diligently, and I commend the quick and coordinated response of our staff and the local authorities.

Sincerely,
James Smith
Superintendent of Schools

EXAMPLE: BANK ROBBERY

November 11, 2023 11:22am

Dear Families:

Earlier this morning local authorities notified us of a robbery in progress at the bank on Oakwood Street near our school. In response to this nearby incident, we immediately went into a lockout.

I want to reassure you that at no point was our school directly involved in the incident, and there was no immediate threat to our campus. However, the safety and security of our school community are always our top priorities, and we took this precautionary measure to ensure everyone's well-being.

Local law enforcement has since confirmed that the suspect involved in the bank robbery has been apprehended and the situation has been resolved. The area is now deemed safe by the authorities and we have lifted the lockout.

I want to commend our students and staff for their calm and cooperative response to the lockout. Additionally, I'm grateful for our local law enforcement agencies and their prompt action.

Sincerely,
James Smith
Superintendent of Schools

EXAMPLE: UNKNOWN PERSON

December 12, 2023 12:14pm

Dear Families:

At approximately 11:50am, our aide monitors observed an unknown individual near the playground area during recess. They immediately contacted the main office and alerted our School Resource Officer, who was nearby at the time. While the situation was being assessed, we moved into a lockout and all students were brought inside.

I want to assure you that the safety and security of our students and staff are our utmost priority. Our SRO was able to speak with the individual and determined it was a relative of a student visiting during recess.

After speaking with the individual, our SRO confirmed there was no immediate threat to our campus safety. The person in question fully cooperated and agreed to leave the school premises without incident. We released the school from lockout at 12:05 pm. Our SRO will continue to monitor the recess area and ensure the safety of our campus.

While this incident may have caused concern, I want to emphasize that at no point were our students or staff in danger. I commend the quick response of our aide monitors, and the professionalism of our SRO.

I'd like to take this opportunity to remind families that all visitors must report to the main office to sign in and receive a visitor badge. At no point should you proceed directly to the classroom, cafeteria, or recess area for any reason, including picking up your student. Protocols are in place for the safety of everyone on our campus. We appreciate your understanding and cooperation.

Sincerely,
James Smith
Superintendent of Schools

HOLD-IN-PLACE

INFORMATION INVENTORY & PLANNING

Why did we go into a Hold-in-Place? Get specific so you understand the threat.	
When did the incident take place?	
Who has been involved since the incident began? (ex: Sheriff's Office, District Office, Superintendent, etc.)	
What are first responders doing to address the situation?	
What are we doing about the incident?	
Who do we need to notify about this incident?	
When must we notify parents about changes in student dismissal, in case the situation is not resolved?	
What should parents do at this point in time? (Ex: stay inside, do not call, follow our set communication channels for further information on the situation and any impact on regular dismissal).	
Other Notes	

INITIAL COMMUNICATION

[Date & Time]

Dear Families:

[School Name] is in a hold-in-place at the request of **[superintendent, police department, building principal]** due to **[incident details]** in the school.

A hold-in-place is a precautionary measure used to limit the movement of students and staff while dealing with a short-term issue. School activities will continue as normal within classrooms until given the all-clear.

Please remember that safety is our top priority. We urge parents and other visitors to avoid calling or coming to the school until normal school activities have resumed. This allows us to maintain a safe environment and keep our communication channels open.

We will update **[this document, webpage, facebook, via text, etc.]** as more information becomes available.

Sincerely,
[Person]
[Title]

SITUATION RESOLVED

[Date & Time]

Dear Families:

The hold-in-place was lifted for **[schools]** at **[time]**, by **[person]** after **[action taken]**. Normal school activities will resume as of **[time]**.

As you know, a hold-in-place is a precautionary measure used to limit the movement of students and staff while dealing with a short-term issue. School activities continued as normal within classrooms until the all-clear was given

Thank you for your patience and understanding as we responded to the incident. Our primary concern is always for the safety of our students, faculty, and staff. We appreciate your partnership in ensuring that our schools are a safe space for everyone to learn, teach, and belong.

Sincerely,
[Person]
[Title]

EXAMPLE: ELEVATOR STUCK

March 3, 2024 10:24am

Dear Families:

Right before the 4th period bell rang this morning, we were made aware of two students stuck in the elevator on the south side of the school. Students are permitted to use the elevator for medical reasons. These students were dismissed early from class to allow for extra time to move between classes.

Upon receiving this information, our priority was to get in touch with the students in the elevator and ensure that they were unharmed and comfortable. Staff members stayed in constant communication with them, providing reassurance and support while we awaited assistance.

Due to the timing of the incident, our second priority was to initiate a hold-in-place to limit movement in the hallways. All other students remained in their classrooms until the elevator doors opened and all recovery tools were removed from the hallways.

Our Buildings and Grounds team responded swiftly to our call for assistance. Six minutes after the initial call inside the elevator, the doors were opened and the students were immediately assessed by our school nurse.

While incidents like these are rare, I want to reassure you that the safety of our students is always our top priority. We are taking steps to prevent similar incidents in the future - our Buildings & Grounds team will be conducting a thorough inspection of the elevator to identify and address any potential issues and they are in contact with the manufacturer to determine the cause of this morning's incident. In the meantime, the south elevator will remain closed. Students in need of an elevator will be given extra time to access the elevator on the north side of the school.

We appreciate your understanding and cooperation as we work to maintain a safe environment for all students.

Sincerely,
James Smith
Superintendent of Schools

EXAMPLE: MEDICAL ISSUE

April 12, 2024 11:26am

Dear Families:

Today during third grade recess a member of our staff suffered a medical episode. Aide/Monitors at recess responded by calling 911, providing assistance, and immediately moving students inside to the cafeteria.

While in the cafeteria I spoke with students and addressed their most immediate concerns by telling them that:

- They were very helpful and did everything right by following directions.
- The adults were helpful and did everything right by calling 911 and providing care.
- The staff member is going to the doctor in an ambulance to get the care they need.

Additionally, I explained that:

- Many people have health concerns that we might not notice from the outside, but sometimes require a doctor to help us through them.
- Some people have medical conditions that can cause them to lose control of their body, fall over, and/or be unable to stand up.
- They would see an ambulance and hear sirens at our school because it is the fastest way to get someone to a doctor.

We understand an event like this can be scary and unsettling to witness, especially for students. As a result, teachers were given information to provide support as their students returned from lunch. We encourage families to check in with their students and answer any of their questions.

We are grateful to the first responders who provided medical assistance, the staff members who acted quickly to provide care and remove students from the area, and the students who remained calm and concerned throughout the rest of their recess.

Our thoughts are with the staff member as they seek medical care at the hospital.

Sincerely,
James Smith
Superintendent of Schools

EXAMPLE: ALTERCATION

October 22, 2023 3:47pm

Dear Families:

Earlier this afternoon there was an altercation in one of the bathrooms in school. As a result, we immediately initiated a hold-in-place procedure to ensure the safety and security of all students and staff. During this time, all students were instructed to remain in their classrooms, and all hallway activity was restricted while the situation was addressed.

Our staff responded swiftly to address the altercation, and appropriate disciplinary actions will be taken per our school policies.

While incidents like these are rare, it is important for us to take immediate action to ensure the safety of our school community. Our administrative team and school resource officers are investigating the incident and are committed to providing a safe and supportive environment for all students.

Sincerely,
James Smith
Superintendent of Schools

SHELTER-IN-PLACE

INFORMATION INVENTORY & PLANNING

Why did we go into a Shelter-in-Place? Get specific so you understand the threat.	
When did the incident take place?	
Who has been involved since the incident began? (ex: Sheriff's Department, District Office, Superintendent, etc.)	
What are first responders doing to address the situation?	
What are we doing about the incident?	
Who do we need to notify about this incident?	
When must we notify parents about changes in student dismissal, in case the situation is not resolved?	
What should parents do at this point in time? (Ex: stay inside, do not call, follow our set communication channels for further information on the situation and any impact on regular dismissal).	
Other Notes	

INITIAL COMMUNICATION

[Date & Time]

Dear Families:

[School Name] is in a shelter-in-place at the request of **[superintendent, police department, building principal]** due to **[incident details]**.

A shelter-in-place is a precautionary measure used to shelter students and staff inside the building.

Please remember that safety is our top priority. We urge parents and other visitors to avoid calling or visiting the school until they are notified that normal school activities have resumed. This allows us to maintain a safe environment and keep our communication channels open.

We will update **[this document, webpage, facebook, via text, etc.]** as more information becomes available.

Sincerely,
[Person]
[Title]

SITUATION RESOLVED

[Date & Time]

Dear Families:

The shelter-in-place was lifted for **[schools]** at **[time]**, by **[person]** after **[action taken]**. Normal school activities will resume as of **[time]**.

We appreciate your understanding and patience. This will be the final status update about the hold-in-place. Thank you for working with us to keep our schools safe.

Sincerely,
[Person]
[Title]

EXAMPLE: HAZMAT SPILL

February 11, 2024 1:16pm

Dear Families:

Oakwood High School is currently in a shelter-in-place due to a hazmat spill at the gas station near the school. While emergency response teams are working to contain the spill, we have moved to a shelter-in-place out of an abundance of caution.

A shelter-in-place is a precautionary measure used to shelter students and staff inside the building.

Please remember that safety is our top priority. We urge parents and other visitors to avoid calling or visiting the school until they are notified that regular school activities have resumed. This allows us to maintain a safe environment and keep our communication channels open.

We will provide more information when it becomes available.

Sincerely,
James Smith
Superintendent of Schools

February 11, 2024 1:47pm

The shelter-in-place at Oakwood High School has been lifted. Emergency response teams have successfully contained and cleaned up the spill, and there is no longer any risk to the health or safety of individuals on campus. The area has been thoroughly assessed and deemed safe for occupancy.

With the all-clear given by the authorities, we are now able to resume all regular school activities without any restrictions. Classes will proceed as scheduled, and students can safely participate in extracurricular activities and after-school programs.

Thank you for your cooperation throughout this time.

EXAMPLE: TORNADO

September 16, 2023 11:12am

Dear Families:

The National Weather Service has issued a tornado warning for our area due to a tornado sighting by the weather radar. In accordance with our safety protocols, we have moved into a shelter-in-place procedure to ensure the safety and well-being of all students and staff on campus.

A shelter-in-place is designed to shelter students and staff inside the building. We are closely monitoring the situation and following guidance from the local authorities and the National Weather Service.

Please remember that safety is our top priority. We urge parents and other visitors to avoid calling or visiting the school until they are notified that regular school activities have resumed. This allows us to maintain a safe environment and keep our communication channels open. We will provide an update when the shelter-in-place has been lifted.

Sincerely,
James Smith
Superintendent of Schools

September 16, 2023 11:34am

The National Weather Service has lifted the tornado warning and we have received word that the tornado has moved out of our area.

All regular school activities have resumed as of 11:32am this morning. There are no signs of damage to the campus at this time. All students and staff are safe.

Thank you for your cooperation.

EVACUATION

INFORMATION INVENTORY & PLANNING

Why did we evacuate? Get specific so you understand the threat.	
When did the incident take place?	
Who has been involved since the incident began? (ex: Sheriff's Department, District Office, Superintendent, etc.)	
What are first responders doing to address the situation?	
What are we doing about the incident?	
Who do we need to notify about this incident?	
When must we notify parents about changes in student dismissal, in case the situation is not resolved?	
What should parents do at this point in time? (Ex: stay inside, do not call, follow our set communication channels for further information on the situation and any impact on regular dismissal).	
Other Notes	

INITIAL COMMUNICATION

[Date & Time]

Dear Families:

[School] students, faculty, and staff are being evacuated from the building at the request of **[the Fire Department, Police Department, etc]** due to **[incident]** on campus.

An evacuation takes place when conditions make it unsafe for students and staff to remain in the building. This action provides for the orderly movement of students and staff along prescribed routes from inside school buildings to a designated outside area of safety.

We urge parents and other visitors to avoid calling or coming to the school at this point in time. This allows us to maintain a safe and orderly environment for all. Please remember that safety is our top priority.

We will update **[this document, webpage, facebook, via text, etc.]** as more information becomes available.

Sincerely,
[Person]
[Title]

SITUATION RESOLVED

[Date & Time]

Dear Families:

The **[Fire/Police Department]** has declared **[School]** safe to return to the building. Normal school activities will resume at **[time]**.

Students, faculty, and staff remained safe throughout the evacuation. We appreciate your cooperation and patience.

This will be the final status update regarding the evacuation. Thank you for working with us to keep our schools safe.

Sincerely,
[Person]
[Title]

EXAMPLE: FIRE ALARM

October 12, 2023 1:03pm

Dear Families:

We are aware of a fire alarm going off at the middle and high schools. Students, faculty, and staff are being evacuated from the building.

An evacuation takes place when conditions make it unsafe for students and staff to remain in the building. This action provides for the orderly movement of students and staff along prescribed routes from inside school buildings to a designated outside area of safety.

We urge parents and other visitors to avoid calling or coming to the school at this point in time. This allows us to maintain a safe and orderly environment for all. Please remember that safety is our top priority.

We will update this document as more information becomes available.

Sincerely,
James Smith
Superintendent of Schools

October 12, 2023 1:18pm

The Greenville Fire Department responded to the alarm and confirmed there is no emergency on campus. The alarms were set off by our Buildings and Grounds crew doing work inside of the building. Students and faculty may return to the building.

EXAMPLE: GAS LEAK

March 11, 2023 1:23pm

Dear Families:

Students and staff at Oakwood Middle School are being evacuated due to a suspected gas leak in the school.

Do not call or come to the school. This allows us to maintain a safe and orderly environment for all. Please remember that safety is our top priority. An evacuation takes place when conditions make it unsafe for students and staff to remain in the building. This action provides for the orderly movement of students and staff along prescribed routes from inside school buildings to a designated outside area of safety.

We will update this document at 1:35pm, or as more information becomes available.

Sincerely,
James Smith
Superintendent of Schools

March 11, 2023 1:35pm

All students and staff at Oakwood Middle School have been evacuated. Our buses are transporting everyone to Oakwood Elementary School, where they will remain until dismissal at 2:15pm.

Parent Pick Up

If you have a student at Oakwood Middle School that you usually transport, you may pick them up at Oakwood Elementary School beginning at 2:15pm. Please do not come to the school early. This will allow staff time to prepare for the influx of traffic. Extra staff will be on hand to assist with student sign-outs.

Bus Routes

Students who usually take the bus home will ride their usual bus routes. They will depart from the elementary school.

After School Programs

All after-school programs are canceled for today. No students are permitted to stay after. All students must be picked up, or must ride the bus home.

School Tomorrow

We are assessing the situation and considering the potential for a school closing tomorrow. No decision has been made yet. We will continue to work with local authorities and make an announcement with the final decision by 7:00pm.

EXAMPLE: GAS LEAK

March 11, 2023 7:00pm

Dear Families:

Our Buildings and Ground team has worked with the Orange County Fire Department and fixed the gas leak that led to today's evacuation of Oakwood Middle School.

Now that these teams have had adequate time to ensure all systems are functioning properly, I'm confident in sharing there is no longer a health and safety threat.

We will open all schools at their regular times tomorrow. There will be no changes to the regular school day. We appreciate your support and patience as we responded to this incident. This will be our final communication on the matter.

EXAMPLE: POWER OUTAGE

March 11, 2023 10:11am

Dear Families:

Oakwood Elementary School is currently without power. We are working on evaluating the situation and are in touch with the power company to determine estimated restoration times.

If power cannot be restored by 11:00am, when lunches are supposed to be served, the elementary school will dismiss early. In this case, students would be sent home on buses to their emergency dismissal locations.

We will notify you again by 10:30am with another update, unless more information becomes available sooner.

March 11, 2023 10:24am

The power outage has impacted our ability to maintain a safe and comfortable environment within the school premises and the estimated restoration time is well after our lunch service hours. In the interest of everyone's safety, the elementary school will dismiss at 11:00am today.

All elementary school students will ride the bus to their emergency dismissal locations, submitted at the beginning of the school year. All after-school activities are canceled.

We will provide another update regarding school tomorrow by 6:00pm.

March 11, 2023 3:56pm

Power has been restored to the elementary school. Classes will resume at 8:00am tomorrow.

EXAMPLE: BOMB THREAT

October 12, 2023 11:26am

Dear Families:

Oakwood Middle School is currently in a lockdown after the main office received information regarding a possible weapon on campus.

Law enforcement is on site assessing the situation. Please DO NOT come to campus or call the school as it's imperative we keep phone lines and roadways open for emergency services.

We will provide an update at 11:35am, or sooner if more information becomes available.

October 12, 2023 11:45am

Oakwood Middle School remains in a lockdown as law enforcement continues to assess the situation. We will provide another update at 11:45am, or sooner if more information becomes available.

October 12, 2023 11:52am

The Orange County Sheriff's Department has confirmed the threat of a weapon on campus is credible. With the safety of everyone in mind, we have made the decision to evacuate campus. Students and staff will be transported to a predetermined off-campus location, which we will share after everyone has been evacuated.

From that location, all students will be dismissed on school buses to their emergency dismissal locations.

We will share another update after everyone has been evacuated from the building.

EXAMPLE: BOMB THREAT

October 12, 2023 12:17pm

All students and staff have been evacuated from Oakwood Middle School and are currently at Holy Spirit Church boarding buses to their emergency dismissal locations. Please DO NOT come to the church or the school, all students will be transported via bus. If you are unsure where your child's emergency dismissal location is, please contact 555-555-5555.

We will share more information as it becomes available.

October 12, 2023 12:29pm

All students have boarded buses and are en route to their emergency dismissal locations. If you are unsure where your child's emergency dismissal location is, please contact 555-555-5555. We will provide an update when all students have been dropped off.

October 12, 2023 3:04pm

All students have been dropped off at their emergency dismissal locations. We are working with law enforcement to provide an update on today's evacuation. We will communicate another update by 6:00pm tonight.

continued on next page

EXAMPLE: BOMB THREAT

October 12, 2023 5:46pm

Oakwood Middle School was evacuated today after the main office received information regarding a potential weapon on campus. Our School Resource Officer immediately assessed the situation, deemed the threat credible, and called for backup.

By 11:46am, the Orange County Sheriff's Department discovered an improvised explosive device (IED) inside a locker. Within minutes, we evacuated all students onto school buses and transported them off campus to Holy Spirit Church, our predetermined off-campus location for emergencies.

Law enforcement was able to work together to safely remove the IED from the premises, as well as sweep the building for any other potential threats. After reviewing surveillance footage, the person responsible was identified. This is an open investigation with the Orange County Sheriff's Department and I cannot provide further details about the incident without impeding their investigation. We are grateful for the quick response from law enforcement, and that no one was physically harmed during this incident.

Safety will continue to be our top priority. Classes will resume tomorrow morning at 8:00am. While there is no threat to safety, there will be an increased number of law enforcement officers on campus. Additionally, counselors will be available to every student or staff member.

Please take this opportunity to remind students that if they see something to say something to an adult immediately. Thank you for your cooperation in keeping our schools safe.

LOCKDOWN

INFORMATION INVENTORY & PLANNING

Why did we lockdown? Get specific so you understand the threat.	
When did the incident take place?	
Who has been involved since the incident began? (ex: Sheriff's Department, District Office, Superintendent, etc.)	
What are first responders doing to address the situation?	
What are we doing about the incident?	
Who do we need to notify about this incident?	
When must we notify parents about changes in student dismissal, in case the situation is not resolved?	
What should parents do at this point in time? (Ex: stay inside, do not call, follow our set communication channels for further information on the situation and any impact on regular dismissal).	
Other Notes	

INITIAL COMMUNICATION

[Date & Time]

Dear Families:

[School] is in a lockdown **[provide FACUTAL information if possible]**.

Safety is our top priority. Please DO NOT come to the school or attempt to call the office until you are notified that the lockdown has been lifted. It is imperative that we keep phone lines open for communication with law enforcement and all roads clear in the event that emergency services are needed.

A lockdown is implemented to secure school buildings and grounds during incidents that pose an immediate threat of violence in or around the school. Students are to remain in designated classrooms or Lockdown locations at all times with doors locked and barricaded, until physically cleared by law enforcement or site administration.

We will update **[this document, webpage, facebook, via text, etc.]** as more information becomes available.

Sincerely,
[Person]
[Title]

SITUATION RESOLVED

[Date & Time]

Dear Families:

The lockdown has been lifted for **[school]**. The **[PD/admin]** has determined that there is no longer an immediate threat on campus. **(include more info about the outcome - medical transports, support services, etc).**

[Dismissal information if applicable].

We wish to thank you for your patience and understanding as we responded to the incident. Our primary concern is always for the safety of our students, faculty, and staff. We appreciate your partnership in ensuring that our schools are a safe space for everyone to learn, teach, and belong.

Thank you for helping us maintain a safe learning environment for our students.

Sincerely,
[Person]
[Title]

NEXT DAY

[Date & Time]

Dear Families,

At **[time and day]**, **[school]** was placed in a Lockdown in response to **[incident.]** The school remained in Lockdown until **[time]** when **[police/administration]** determined that the situation was contained. While the school was in Lockdown, students, faculty, and staff remained in classrooms with the doors locked, escaped safely from campus, remained in the gym, etc.

[Include other relevant information grief counselors, canceled classes.]

A Lockdown is implemented to secure school buildings and grounds during incidents that pose an immediate threat of violence in or around the school. Students are to remain in designated classrooms or lockdown locations at all times with doors locked and barricaded, until physically cleared by law enforcement or site administration.

[Thank law enforcement]

We wish to thank you for your patience and understanding as we responded to the incident. Safety will always be our top priority. We appreciate your partnership in ensuring that our schools are a safe space for everyone to learn, teach, and belong.

Sincerely,
[Person]
[Title]

EXAMPLE: WEAPON

November 20, 2023 at 9:23am

Dear Families:

Oakwood Elementary School is in a lockdown at the request of the building principal.

Safety is our top priority. Please DO NOT come to the school or attempt to call the office until you are notified that the lockdown has been lifted. It is imperative that we keep phone lines open for communication with law enforcement and all roads clear in the event that emergency services are needed.

A lockdown is implemented to secure school buildings and grounds during incidents that pose an immediate threat of violence in or around the school. Students are to remain in designated classrooms or Lockdown locations at all times with doors locked and barricaded, until physically cleared by law enforcement or site administration.

We will update this document by 9:35am, or as more information becomes available.

Sincerely,
James Smith
Superintendent of Schools

November 20, 2023 at 9:33am

Oakwood Elementary School is still in a lockdown and law enforcement is now present on campus assessing the situation. We will communicate more information about the cause or status of the lockdown when it becomes available.

We understand the amount of information available is frustrating. However, law enforcement needs enough time to get all the facts straight. Our goal is to provide accurate information in a timely manner, we do not want an instance of providing misinformation because we tried to get the message out too quickly.

We will update this document at 9:45am, or as more information becomes available.

November 20, 2023 at 9:45am

Oakwood Elementary School is still in a lockdown with law enforcement on campus responding to the matter.

We will update this document by 9:55am, or as more information becomes available.

November 20, 2023 at 9:52am

The Orange County Sheriff's Department has determined there is no longer a threat on campus. Law enforcement is working to release each classroom from lockdown.

We will update this document by 10:05am, or as more information becomes available.

November 20, 2023 at 10:05am

All classrooms at Oakwood Elementary School have been released from lockdown by the Orange County Sheriff's Department.

The lockdown was initiated at 9:15am when the building principal received a report that a student had a weapon inside the school. Upon determining this information was credible, the principal initiated a lockdown and called 911. The Orange County Sheriff's Department responded quickly and was able to locate the person with the weapon. No students or staff were physically harmed. This is now an ongoing police investigation.

Students will return to their regular class schedules. All after-school activities will run according to schedule and bus routes will run as usual.

We would like to thank the brave first responders, and those actively working on this investigation. We appreciate the community's patience and understanding throughout this process. This will be our final communication regarding today's lockdown.

Sincerely,
James Smith
Superintendent of Schools

EXAMPLE: SWATTING

September 9, 2023 at 12:43pm

Dear Families:

Oakwood High School is in a lockdown at the request of the Orange County Sheriff's Department.

Safety is our top priority. Please DO NOT come to the school or attempt to call the office until you are notified that the lockdown has been lifted. It is imperative that we keep phone lines open for communication with law enforcement and all roads clear in the event that emergency services are needed.

A lockdown is implemented to secure school buildings and grounds during incidents that pose an immediate threat of violence in or around the school. Students are to remain in designated classrooms or Lockdown locations at all times with doors locked and barricaded, until physically cleared by law enforcement or site administration.

We will update this document by 12:55pm, or as more information becomes available.

Sincerely,
James Smith
Superintendent of Schools

September 9, 2023 at 12:55pm

Oakwood High School has been released from lockdown by the Orange County Sheriff's Department (OCSD). Students and staff have resumed regularly scheduled activities.

The lockdown was initiated after the 911 Center received a phone call that referred to a possible active shooter in the school. OCSD immediately put the school on lockdown and launched an investigation into the call. Once they determined there was no active threat to student safety, the lockdown was lifted. At this time, the information we have points to this being a situation of "swatting" - a threat made to trigger a police (or SWAT team) response to create mass fear, panic, and disruption. There was never any weapon or threat to safety on our campus.

Please know that our top priority is the safety and well-being of everyone on our campus. We take any and all reports of potential threats seriously, and we are making every effort to maintain an environment where students and staff feel safe. We continue to encourage our school community to report anything that could be perceived as a threat to school safety. As always, we are grateful for OCSD and their quick response. This will be our last communication regarding today's lockdown.

QUESTIONS?

Michael Bennett

518-966-5070 x501

518-421-4520

bennettm@greenvillecsd.org

Sierra Pizzola

518-966-5070 x523

518-956-3865

pizzolas@greenvillecsd.org