

WAYLAND • PUBLIC • SCHOOLS

WAYLAND, MASSACHUSETTS

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Dear Parents:

I am pleased to report that the School Department has been working closely with the Wayland Police and Fire Departments to develop comprehensive safety and emergency response plans for each of the district's five schools and The Children's Way. Individual plans have been designed for each school; still, there are some common elements that I would like to bring to the attention of every school family.

The intention of the district's administrators is to keep students and staff safe at all times. This is especially true during an unforeseen incident that might occur at any of our schools. It is unfortunate that such planning is necessary. However, in response to events and tragedies elsewhere, it is essential that crisis response plans are prepared and then regularly reviewed. Public safety officials and school administrators meet routinely and exchange information about school safety. Each plan is designed to fit within a school's normal operation without being unduly disruptive. Our overarching goal is a positive school environment that promotes effective teaching and learning.

In an effort to keep parents, family members and other residents informed as to what is or has taken place during an emergency situation, we have adopted the following procedures district wide.

- The Town's reverse 911 system and email updates will be used to notify families of students in the affected school of a recent or unfolding emergency.
- During an actual emergency, public safety officials will secure the school involved and no access will be allowed to anyone, including parents, until the incident has been resolved and/or contained. Experiences elsewhere have taught us that it is important that access to school grounds be restricted to public safety personnel only.
- During and/or immediately after any emergency, the Wayland Town Hall gymnasium will be opened as an Information Center where family members should gather. Regular informational updates by a school spokesperson will be made at this location only. (In the case of an incident at the Town Hall, The Children's Way parents will gather at the High School Field House.)
- In the event students are moved from a particular school site, the Town Hall has been designated as the site where students and parents will be reunited. A separate area at the Town Hall will be designated for the media.
- The staff at the school experiencing an emergency will focus their attention on keeping the students safe and working with public safety officials to mitigate the situation.
- During an actual crisis, the following phone number at the Superintendent's Office in the Town Hall (508-358-3759) will have recorded and updated messages about the emergency. **Please refrain from calling the school during an emergency, as this ties up the phone lines. To the extent possible, the school websites will be kept current with relevant information.**
- If a particular school has been "locked down" or cordoned off from public access, all staff and student cell phones will be turned off and collected by school officials. This is necessary for the safety of the students and to keep distractions and the release of incorrect information to a minimum. In addition, a ringing phone during a crisis situation may endanger lives by drawing attention to its owner. Phones will be returned immediately after the incident has been deemed safe and dismissal plans are in place. At that time, students will be encouraged to call family members.

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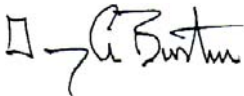
- Staff and student names will not be made public or released to news reporters unless appropriate family members have been notified. A school administrator will personally contact the parents or appropriate family member of any student(s) or staff who have been directly involved.

A considerable amount of time and energy has been expended by town personnel in preparing for a variety of different emergencies, such as weather incidents, accidents, illness, or violence. As you might imagine, planning for a variety of situations is a complex undertaking, and it is neither advisable nor possible to make known all planned responses by public safety officials or school administrators. Doing so compromises our plans and may endanger lives.

Those most closely involved with this planning want the public and school parents, in particular, to be assured that the safety and well being of Wayland's children is their primary concern. Parents, too, can help in this preparation by discussing with their children the absolute need to follow the directions of the adults in charge during an emergency. In an actual crisis situation, it is expected that all residents, children and adults will cooperate fully and follow the directions of those in charge.

In closing, I want to publicly thank the Wayland Police and Fire Departments for their continuing work with school officials to ensure that all who use the schools will be properly supervised and cared for during an emergency. I sincerely hope that this planning is unnecessary. I encourage those with questions or additional concerns to call me directly or speak with any of the building administrators. Your understanding and cooperation in this matter is appreciated.

Sincerely,



Gary A. Burton
Superintendent of Schools

GAB/dmm