

SWEDESBORO-WOOLWICH SCHOOL DISTRICT

ADMINISTRATION OFFICES

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Kristin P. O'Neil, Ed. D
Superintendent of Schools

Christopher J. DeStratis
School Business Administrator

August 2018

Dear SWSD Community,

It is horrific that we continue to learn about school tragedies across the country. I am sure, like me, you have had some sleepless nights thinking about these events or you have sat in disbelief thinking about the conversation that you have had to have with your child. During this time of worry, I wanted to share with you how the Swedesboro-Woolwich School District prepares for such events.

District Preparation and Procedures:

- Each school has an official emergency plan that is reviewed by our local police department and submitted to the Prosecutor's Office.
- The District will host an on-site School Resource Officer to assist with security plan management as well as on-site safety and security concerns.
- Every month all schools practice a minimum of two unannounced safety/emergency drills. These drills include: fire drills, lock down drills, evacuation drills, weather drills, etc.
- The District has an internal and external camera system that is capable of being accessed by our local police department in the event of an actual emergency.
- The District routinely discusses school and district safety procedures in various committee structures. Staff have been trained on ways to save lives through a program called, "Stop the Bleed," and we have benefitted from learning about Sandy Hook directly from a Connecticut State Police Officer.

We are very fortunate to partner with a very supportive Police Department. It's important that you know that even though a School Resource Officer will be housed in our District, the Woolwich Police Officers regularly visit our buildings, and they even stop by to have some fun with the kids. The Woolwich Police Department also holds emergency drills inside our buildings.

Lock Down and Evacuations:

- The school will communicate with all parents through the school messenger system (telephone, email, and text). We will also communicate via our social media pages. It is very important that you make sure all contact information is up to date.
- It is important to understand that our very first priority is to ensure the safety of all of our students and staff, and it is equally important to communicate *accurate* information with everyone. Unfortunately, sometimes rumor and/or personal observations will be posted on social media before we can relay accurate information to the community. The District assures you that the school will communicate with all parents as quickly as possible. However, ensuring the safety of everyone within our buildings must be our first priority.

The Swedesboro-Woolwich School District:

"A community dedicated to inspiring life-long learners."

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- If there is a need to evacuate students and staff to an off-site location, the District will notify you where you may meet your child. The parents will be directed to the check in area.
- In the event that we need to implement our reunification plan, please realize that this will take time. We could have several hundred students to reunite with their families. This will also be a stressful situation for our staff, too.
- As parents are checked in, school staff will require you to present identification. Students will **only** be released to individuals named as emergency contacts in OnCOURSE. Please make sure this information is up-to-date as we maintain up-to-date printed lists in our go-bags and all staff will be using OnCOURSE to view the students' family/emergency contact information.

I know that if such an emergency was to take place your first thought would be to immediately rush to the school, get your child, and take him/her home. Please understand that in the event of a lock down drill or an actual lock down, no one (other than emergency personnel) will be permitted to enter the building until we receive an all clear. All doors will remain locked.

It is best to resist the urge to report to the school right away. As hard as it will be for every parent and loved one, please understand that the school needs to allow all emergency personnel to get to the scene first and do their jobs. In most serious situations, parents will not be reunited with their children on school property. We will utilize an off-site reunification location.

As Superintendent, please know that I care deeply about your children, the staff, and this District. Ensuring the safety of this District is of critical importance to me and every member of our staff.

Sincerely,
Dr. Kristin P. O'Neil
Swedesboro-Woolwich School Superintendent

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