

MCS Emergency Preparedness

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We want to extend our deepest sympathies to the Sandy Hook Elementary community and also take this opportunity to communicate our own emergency protocols to MCS parents. In light of recent events, we are moving forward more urgently with the plans we have been developing in conjunction with a few dedicated parents who have formed our Emergency Preparedness Committee, particularly Sara Hart, who spearheads the committee. The lockdown procedure has been a priority for us since the EPC formed last spring.

- As part of our Emergency Preparedness, various members of the EPC have taken FEMA courses online that provide advice about preparing for various emergency situations. At our November meeting, one of our parents brought back what she had learned from the Lockdown course specifically. She is preparing a presentation to faculty about the contents of the course and we will incorporate many of its recommendations.
- Throughout the fall our facilities staff has been laying the hardware necessary for installing phone lines in all the classrooms. This would ensure that in the case of a lockdown situation we could communicate to all the classrooms at once. Phones will be used strictly for emergency purposes. We will finalize the installment of the phone lines over the winter break.
- Every classroom now has an updated evacuation plan, thanks to parent Jodi Geroux, who was instrumental in bringing building safety to our attention last year. In her capacity as an architect she re-created emergency evacuation route maps. We have regularly practiced fire and earthquake drills this year so students and teachers are aware of the evacuation routes. We have spoken specifically with specialty and extended day teachers about practicing these routes. We will continue these monthly drills and plan to implement a lockdown drill once phone lines have been installed. We will notify parents before our first lockdown drill. Teachers will prepare the children for the drill and we ask that parents also discuss it with their child(ren).
- The other priority for us has been identifying potential emergency notification systems to communicate with parents in the event of a school-wide emergency. We have been researching voicemail and texting services. We will continue to use Facebook and our website as a form of communication with our parents.
- Outside doors are only unlocked during arrival and dismissal times and are locked at all other times.
- We ask all staff to be vigilant and watch for people we don't recognize and to ask anyone we don't recognize how we can help them.
- We ask and expect every visitor to check in at office.
- Parents are required to sign children in and out each day so we have an accurate idea of who is and isn't in the building at any given time.

We recognize that children will have questions. Teachers will address questions simply, and invite children to discuss the events at home. We welcome any questions or concerns you have. Our Emergency Preparedness Committee includes Bob Buchanan, Jan Bosen, Ramira Alamilla, and parents Sara Hart, Jodi Geroux, Rachel Koontz, Vicki Wilkins, Christopher LeCluyse, and Deidre Becker.

We are grateful for each member of this community and it is our highest priority to ensure the safety of all of the children you entrust to our care.

Warm regards,

Robyn, Ramira, and MCS Administration

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