



Northshore
School District

Safety and Security Newsletter

February 23, 2018

A Message from Dr. Michelle Reid, Superintendent



Dear Northshore Families,

I hope you've been able to enjoy special time together during this mid-winter break. As we turn our focus to returning to school, I want to share some thoughts and be clear about our support of student and staff safety here in Northshore schools. Over this past week, we have witnessed a tragedy transform a community. We've seen families and friends grieve for loved ones. We've watched high school students become leaders on the national stage. And here at home, we are engaged in a very important conversation – student safety. We have 22,000 students in the Northshore School District. The safety of each and every child, staff member and volunteer on our premises is our priority.

As I mentioned in my message a week ago, we will bring our community together around this conversation. Our district team is developing a plan that will be inclusive and productive in providing information and inviting your ideas. In the meantime, I know our thoughts are on Florida, how to talk with our students about what happened and what the district is doing to ensure a safe, secure and inclusive learning environment for students.

This is an important topic. The safety and security work at the district and school levels has been ongoing as have conversations with concerned parents. Our Safety and Security Team, along with other district leadership, have put together the following update that provides an overview of how we have been preparing to keep our students safe. This also provides resources for talking with your child about the Florida tragedy as well as their own safety. Please feel free to contact me with your questions or ideas.

Enjoy the rest of your break and I look forward to seeing you around the district.

Michelle Reid, Ed.D.
Superintendent
mreid@nsd.org
twitter: @Northshore_Supt
425.408.7701

Prevention

Prevention begins with a strong, inclusive community. According to [a report](#) delivered by several agencies within the federal government, a positive school climate can help schools and communities prevent a major incident and enhance school safety. A positive school climate includes respectful, trusting and caring relationships as well as social, emotional and behavioral supports. The Northshore School District works hard to create a positive climate in every school, which can affect the capacity of the educators, students and parents to prevent crises. When a student is at risk, there are supports in place. We engage with the Center for Human Services and Seattle Children's Hospital to evaluate these students, understand their needs and provide required support.

A strong and inclusive school community makes it easier to identify a student who may be at risk. This is where we can all play a part. If you see something, say something.

[SafeSchools Alert](#) is an online incident reporting system that lets students, staff, parents, and community members confidentially report safety concerns and suggestions to school administration 24/7/365. Tips can be submitted via phone,

email, text message, and website. Look for the SafeSchools symbol in the top right corner of our website (www.nsd.org) or you can use the following contact information:

Phone: 855.521.2665

Text: 855.521.2665

Email: 1414@alert1.us

Web: <http://1414.alert1.us>

The National Association of School Psychologists provides the following tips when talking to children:

1. We all play a role in school safety. Be observant and let an adult know if you see or hear something that makes you feel uncomfortable, nervous, or frightened.
2. There is a difference between reporting and tattling or gossiping. You can provide important information that may prevent harm either directly or anonymously by telling a trusted adult what you know.
3. Senseless violence is hard for everyone to understand. Doing things that we enjoy, sticking to our normal routine, and being with friends and family help make us feel better and keep us from worrying about the event.
4. Stay away from guns and other weapons. Tell an adult if you know someone has a gun. Access to guns is one of the leading risk factors for deadly violence. (Please ensure your child does not have access to guns or other weapons that could be used to cause harm.)
5. Violence is never a solution to personal problems. Students can be part of the positive solution by participating in anti-violence programs at school, learning conflict mediation skills, and seeking help from an adult if they or a peer is struggling with anger, depression, or other emotions they cannot control.

Preparation

Active Threat training has been completed for staff at all Northshore schools. This training will be mandatory for all new employees. The training is focused on Alert, Avoid, Deny, Defend. Active threat prevention and response training empowers staff to utilize a set of critical techniques before and during an event.

Keep in mind that no incident is the same. Because there are so many variables during an active threat incident, there cannot be one solution that can cover every situation. Therefore, staff are trained to evaluate and respond to dynamic situations to the best of their ability. In addition, all NSD schools have conducted at least one of the three required annual lockdown drills as well as evacuation drills.

Alert – Alert all staff across the campus, transportation, facilities

Avoid – Escape and leave the area. Move away from the threat

Deny – Deny physical and visual access to students, staff, facilities and continue trying to avoid

Defend – When the threat is at close range and you cannot avoid and/or deny, improve your chances by attempting to incapacitate the threat

Another level of preparation is maintaining a strong relationship with our police departments. Leadership across the District are in regular communication with our local law enforcement. We provide them with regular updates and address concerns regarding the safety of our students.

Building Safety Enhancements

These enhancements are ongoing and include the training mentioned above, standardized systems across the district, school emergency plans and clear definitions for building safety status. Thanks to the approval of the 2018 Capital Bond, the District has funding to upgrade safety and security at all schools. We will begin with interior and exterior door locking mechanisms. During our coming community conversation around safety and security, we expect to learn what our Northshore community deems priority upgrades. Our current list of possible safety enhancements includes 24/7 recording and deterrence systems, verbal and visual building notification alarm systems for both staff and the district – working in conjunction with local law enforcement systems, and ongoing staff training on safety and security.

Each emergency incident requires a different response. Throughout the year, students and staff participate in a variety of drills. In February 2017, district schools began using new emergency consoles in their emergency drills. These consoles will send an automated announcement over the public address system for students and staff to hear. The announcements will provide one of four building safety status designations. Please review these designations with your students and help them understand the importance of taking these drills seriously so they are always prepared.

Lockdown

A Lockdown should be reserved for the most serious situations. It would be used only for a possible major threat such as a weapon on or near campus. In a true Lockdown, all students are brought indoors, classroom doors are locked, students may hide, staff may barricade doors and cover windows, and the normal education process stops. If the school is placed in Lockdown, staff and students will hear: “Lockdown, Lockdown, we are now in Lockdown.” Staff will follow their training in locking doors and directing students.

Safe Inside

Safe Inside is a new designation in Northshore, created because schools previously were using the more serious term “Lockdown” for situations that did not require a full Lockdown -- situations where the educational process could have continued. Safe Inside will be used for more common incidents such as wildlife near campus or police activity in the surrounding community. In Safe Inside mode, all students are brought indoors and exterior building doors are locked, but the educational process and interior activity may continue. If the school is placed in Safe Inside, staff and students will hear: “May I have your attention please? The building is now in Safe Inside mode. Once again, we are in Safe Inside mode.” Staff will follow their training in directing students.

Shelter-in-Place

Shelter-in-Place is a designation meant to address exterior atmospheric hazards, such as a gas leak in the neighborhood or ash from a nearby fire. In Shelter-in-Place mode, all students are brought indoors; windows are closed, locked and possibly taped; fans are turned off; and towels may be placed under doors. If the school is in Shelter-in-Place, staff and students will hear: “May I have your attention please? The building is now in Shelter-in-Place mode. Once again, we are in Shelter-in-Place mode.” Staff will follow their training in preparing the room and directing students.

Evacuation

Evacuation is the designation used whenever it’s safer for students to be outside rather than inside, such as an interior gas leak or unstable building structure due to a natural disaster. Note that a fire is an exception. We have a separate protocol for fire. In an Evacuation, students and staff leave the building following similar procedures they would use in a fire drill. If the school is placed in Evacuation, staff and students will hear: “May I have your attention please? Evacuate the building. Once again, evacuate the building.” Staff will follow their training in directing students.

School Resource Officers

Each comprehensive high school currently has a school resource officer (SRO), and they respond to calls from elementary and middle schools within their school feeder pattern. If they are unable to respond, staff are trained to dial 911. In addition, district safety and security staff are on call to respond to events across the district.

Communications

Ongoing communications are a critical part of any emergency response. In the interest of timeliness and transparency, the District currently utilizes multiple communication channels to reach parents. After assessing the situation, the district may communicate on one or all of the channels, including phone calls, district or school email, text, social media and the website. We continue to refine our process based on valuable feedback. Our goal is to communicate from the beginning through the end of any situation. Again, this is where parents can play a critical role. Make sure your contact information is accurate in [ParentVue](#). If you missed a call from the District, listen to your voicemail first. If we are experiencing a real emergency situation, our schools and district receptionist may be focused on that situation.

Additional Resources

School Violence Prevention: [Tips for Parents & Educators \(National Association of School Psychologists\)](#)

Northshore School District communications channels: [Facebook](#), [Twitter](#), [Superintendent’s Twitter](#), [NSD App](#)

Northshore School District

www.nsd.org

425-408-6000

Strengthening Our Community Through Excellence in Education

Northshore School District | 3330 Monte Villa Parkway, Bothell, WA 98021

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