

September 21, 2018

Dear Parents,

As you know, the safety of our students is our number one priority. Our staff is extremely careful about accounting for every child at all times and ensuring that children are released only to authorized adults at dismissal. We appreciate your attention to detail in your notes regarding dismissal and changes to your emergency contacts.

Our Superintendent of Schools, Mr. Fenter, shared information with you last month about security in our schools. As a matter of course, our staff prepares for a variety of emergency situations. We work closely with the Suffolk County Police Department and representatives from BOCES to ensure that our practices are thorough and effective.

NYSED regulations require that schools have a number of Evacuation and Lockdown Drills during the course of the school year. The drills serve as practice experiences for the children so that in the event of an emergency they will be more readily able to follow their teacher's directions. Most importantly, drills serve as opportunities for the adults in charge to review and implement our safety protocols.

We had a lockdown and evacuation drill today—presenting both in a teaching manner. Our explanation of the lockdown- *an indoor drill*--is simple at this age. We tell the children that lockdown means we LOCK the doors and sit DOWN. We explain that we need to practice being safe and away from something in the hallways that could be dangerous (such as a dog or other animal running loose). We do not discuss the idea of an intruder. We emphasize the idea that listening to the teacher and sitting quietly is a good way to be safe. We explain an evacuation or fire drill (outdoor drill) as being a way to leave the building in case there was something like smoke from the kitchen that could hurt our eyes.

Drills will not be announced ahead of time, but I will always let you know, via email, after we conduct one. If you happen to come to school during a drill, you will see a sign posted on the school door indicating that visitors will need to wait a few minutes until the drill is completed. As I mentioned, Suffolk County Police officers often assist us, and therefore you should not become alarmed if you see a patrol car at the school.

Please be assured that we make every effort to ensure that the children are not alarmed by our safety drills. Their sense of security is very important to us.

Please feel free to contact me if you have any questions or would like to know more about talking to your child about safety.

Have a wonderful weekend!

Warm regards,
Lynn Herschlein