

**Keshequa Central
School
Office of the
Superintendent**

To: All Parents

Date: 4/28/2021

Re: Emergency Preparedness Update and Drill

Given the state of affairs in our country, I have received many questions from parents regarding any steps we have taken as a school with respect to our district emergency plan and practice drills in the event of an emergency. The purpose of this letter is to reassure parents that their children are safe and the school has taken every measure to ensure that we are prepared for any emergency we may be faced with. With the reality that our country has declared war on Iraq, safety and emergency preparedness is on the minds of many.

Yesterday I spent considerable time with my administrative team, school counselors and department supervisors reviewing our district's safety plan and making any modifications and/or updates to our plan should we need to institute an evacuation or lockdown of our buildings.

Yesterday afternoon, students in each building were involved in an emergency drill that entailed housing all of the students in one location for the middle/high school students in Nunda and the elementary school in Dalton. This gave us an opportunity to see how such a drill would be executed, give students an idea of what to expect and for the administration to make any revisions to our plans. The drill was extremely successful. Students cooperated and behaved appropriately. In order to avoid any panic, students and staff were warned this morning that there would be an emergency drill 'sometime this afternoon'. During the drill, it was explained to students why such a drill was taking place and what to expect in the event of a true emergency. There are situations that if we were in a complete lockdown, we wanted to impress upon students how important it is for students not to open doors.

We learned many lessons in the wake of September 11, 2001. In the event a catastrophic event, we know that there are students with friends and families in the armed services. We are attempting to identify those students. They may have a need to call family members. In addition, we know that there are some children that when faced with such a crisis, they will want to contact their family. Rest assured we will make phones available to students to make those calls in an orderly fashion. As family members, we would appreciate you contacting one of the principals or myself to communicate this information.

Exposure to the media is also of great concern to parents as well as school personnel. While there is a need to know, there has been more than enough communicated how unhealthy it is for young children (and many adults) to see graphic visuals repeatedly. As an administrative team, we have discussed how TV viewing will be minimized, in some case prevented and in others monitored. For high school students, social studies classes will be very appropriate to discuss and view information on television. Any students or parents not comfortable participating in any viewing of media or class discussions alternative arrangements will be made. Counselors will be available in both buildings to assist students and staff as appropriate.

Parents are also questioning what, if any impact there will be on approved field trips in the district. There are some field trips planned for the Rochester Airport, Toronto and Niagara-on-the-Lake as well as the senior trip. Those trips will be evaluated as the dates approach. We did have a trip planned for the Rochester Airport today. Given their extra efforts to deal with security I felt that we did not need to have our children there. If there is any question as to our ability to guarantee the safety of our children,

or that their going will pose an added burden to those locations, the field trips will be either cancelled or postponed.

One last important topic to address is parents coming to school during an emergency to remove their child. This can and has presented a chaotic situation for school officials. This would be compounded if we were in a lockdown situation. In the event of a lockdown, and parents feel a need to come to school, I ask that you come to either the bus loop in Nunda for Middle and High School students or the bus loop in Dalton for elementary students. Doors would be monitored, parents escorted to a location, and children would then be located and brought to their parents. Again, please keep in mind that school is one of the safest places your child can be. Should students need to be dismissed, the transportation department is ready to handle any changes that may be necessary.

Now that war has been declared on Iraq, I'd like to stress how important it is for students to attend school. School is a place of comfort and consistency for children. It gives them a routine, provides them support of friends and teachers and a place for them to engage in dialogue about the events our country and the world is experiencing. Please consider these factors in making a decision whether or not to send children to school. Obviously, if it becomes necessary to close school, you would hear that on the radio and television in the same manner you would hear of a school closing related to weather.

In closing, these are difficult times for our country. We all hope and pray for a speedy peaceful resolution. I have attached some information I hope you would find helpful. The National Education Service and the Crisis Management Institute have recently developed a partnership to provide services and programs for educators across North America. The information was sent by the National Educational Service in response to President Bush's announcement Monday evening in which he outlined the probable war with Iraq. "A Parent's Guide to Talking with Children About the Impending War with Iraq" is attached for your use. I know I speak for us all in that we pray and for safe return of all our men and woman overseas protecting our freedom.

Should you have any questions, please do not hesitate to contact one of the building principals or me at 468-2541 ext. 1105.

Keep the Faith!

In Education,

Neil A. Rochelle