



September 28, 2018

Dear Parent/Guardian,

The safety and well-being of our students and staff are critical to the learning environment of the Ayer Shirley Regional School District and in accordance with MA General Law. Students and staff must feel safe and secure in warm and welcoming environments. The district's Safety Committee comprised of school, police, and fire officials meet monthly to ensure we are prepared for an emergency situation.

Please read this letter carefully as it provides information on general procedures related to safety and security. The Safety Committee's work is best described below:

Section 363 of MGL Chapter 159 of the Acts of 2000:

Notwithstanding any general or special law to the contrary, the superintendent of each school district shall, prior to the beginning of the school year, meet with the fire chief and police chief of the city, town or district to formulate a school specific "Multi-hazard evacuation plan" for each school under the superintendent's supervision. Said multi-hazard evacuation plan shall encompass, but not be limited to, evacuation for fires, hurricanes, and other hazardous storms or disasters in which serious bodily injury might occur, shootings and other terrorist activities, and bomb threats. Said plan shall be designed for each school building after a review of each building. Said plan shall include, but not be limited to: (1) establishment of a crisis response team; (2) a designation as to who is in charge of said team and designate substitutes; (3) a communication plan; (4) crisis procedures for safe entrance to and exit from the school by students, parents, and employees; and (5) policies for enforcing school discipline and maintaining a safe and orderly environment during the crisis. Each district, with the assistance of the local police and fire departments, shall annually review and update as appropriate said plan. At the beginning of each school year, students at each school shall be instructed as to the plan that is developed.

The district safety plan is designed to minimize the dangers posed to any individual on a school campus in the event that an emergency develops. Your cooperation is needed in our efforts to make sure all of our attention may be directed to securing the safety of our children and staff should a crisis arise. Our response procedures are reviewed regularly so that we can be prepared to make prompt and responsible decisions in the event of an emergency. Please read this information carefully, so you will be aware of our safety plan and know what you should do in case of an emergency.

Please Follow the Procedures Below if You Hear of an Emergency at Your Child's School:

- **DO NOT TELEPHONE THE SCHOOL** - Phone lines are limited and MUST be kept clear to communicate with emergency responders. School personnel have specific responsibilities to attend to student/teacher needs.
- **WATCH FOR ASRSD UPDATES**
 - Blackboard Connect Notification System via an email and telephone call
 - Facebook <https://www.facebook.com/ASRSD/>
 - Twitter @MaryMalone7
 - ASRSD website at www.asrsd.org
- *****Please rely only on communications from the School Department and or fire and police departments. During an emergency, we are unable to respond to inaccurate posts made on social media.*****
- **TUNE IN TO LOCAL TV STATIONS: Channels (WBZ 4 & 38, WHDH 7 & 56, WCVB 5, WFXT 25, and NECN)**
- **DO NOT COME TO THE SCHOOL UNLESS STUDENT PICKUP IS REQUESTED** - All entrances to school buildings must be free of traffic to allow emergency response vehicles immediate access. In most cases, students will be able to remain and be cared for at the school they attend.
- **IF IT BECOMES NECESSARY TO RELOCATE STUDENTS AND STAFF OFF CAMPUS, THE ALTERNATIVE LOCATION WILL BE PROVIDED.**

Very Important Guidelines for Parent/Guardian:

- Keep medical information on file for your child up-to-date. It is very important that you notify the school nurse of any health or medication changes.
- In the Parent Portal, keep all emergency contact information current, and inform the school Administrative Assistant if there are changes to your email address, cell, office, or home phone numbers. When providing phone numbers for emergency contact, please provide us with phone numbers without extensions if possible, list only lines and cell phones that will be answered by you or a person that you have authorized to pick up your child in an emergency. Be sure to inform your co-workers if you have listed your place of employment as an emergency contact number, and inform the school(s). ALWAYS KEEP YOUR CHILD'S CONTACT INFORMATION CURRENT.
- Cooperate with visitor sign-in and identification procedures at all times. When you enter any of our schools, please go to the Main Office. The Administrative Assistant will be there to assist you.
- In an emergency situation, do not immediately drive to the school. Access routes may not be open, and additional traffic will interfere with safety procedures and put students at risk. Refer to the Blackboard message system for instructions and emergency information.
- Please have your family review and practice responses to emergency situations at home, including instructions that your child should be following in the event of an early dismissal if you are not at home.

General Overview of Safety Plan:

Emergency drills are conducted periodically to ensure that staff members and students are prepared to respond in a confident and calm manner.

1. Run, Hide, Fight:

Run, hide, and fight is the response protocol to emergencies. In any given emergency situation, school personnel and students have been trained to make the decision on whether the response to an emergency requires them to run out of the building, lockdown in the classroom, or put up a fight.

During an emergency drill, as with an actual event, students and staff will either remain quiet in a designated location within the room, run from the situation, or fight. Based on the situation, staff and students may evacuate the building to a predetermined location. During any emergency, it is not possible for anyone to enter or exit the building until an "All Clear" signal is given by the principal or public safety official.

2. Lockout:

A lockout requires the building to remain secure. No one will enter or exit the building. During a lockout, students and staff may move about the building in their usual fashion.

3. Shelter-In-Place:

A shelter-in-place requires all staff and students to remain within a classroom, keeping the hallways clear, but are free to continue with class instruction.

A lockout or shelter-in-place are implemented when it has been determined that conditions outside of the classroom or building are potentially unsafe. Situations that may activate a lockout or shelter-in-place response include, but are not limited to a hazardous materials situation near the school, police activity close by, a health situation, or potential intruder alerts.

Off-Site Evacuation/Dismissal Policy:

In an extreme emergency when a school has been evacuated, and it is not possible to return, an off-site meeting place may be needed. Parents will be directed to go to a designated reunification center in the community. The Superintendent, with public safety personnel, will determine the location that best meets the needs of the specific emergency, and staff will be on site to assist with dismissal procedures using the following guidelines:

- No student will be dismissed from a primary or secondary evacuation site unless a parent, or individual designated by the parent in the Parent Portal, comes for him/her and is able to present photo ID upon request.
- All parents or designated persons who come for students will be required to sign out at the front office (or from a designated alternate release location in certain emergencies).
- In addition to the above notification sources, signs will be posted if an alternate location is needed.

The need to evacuate students from a building before the regularly scheduled dismissal time could arise from a relatively minor incident such as a power failure, or from a major event such as fire or bomb threat. During evacuation, students are guided to the nearest exit and assemble at an established location. Communication into the school, dismissal times, and transportation may be temporarily disrupted. Families will receive information and instructions from the listed communication sources.

Throughout the school year your child will be trained in emergency procedures. Each school conducts fire drills, unannounced emergency drills, shelter-in-place drills, and a school evacuation to an offsite location. While it can be unsettling to think about situations that require emergency response, frequent review and practice will reduce hazards and help everyone to be prepared in an actual event.

Please keep this important information at home and your place of work. We welcome your feedback on our safety and security procedures and suggestions for improvement.

Have a healthy, safe, and productive school year.

Sincerely,

A handwritten signature in cursive script that reads "Mary Malone".

Mary E. Malone, Ed.D.
Superintendent of Schools