

May 15, 2015

Dear Parents and Guardians,

Clinton Community Schools has always placed a high priority on keeping our schools safe and secure, but the threat of war, domestic and international terrorism, chemical warfare and random acts of violence have seriously heightened our resolve to be as vigilant and informed as the ever changing events of national security demand.

It is important that we keep you informed, and it is important for you to remember that emergency preparedness for the nation and for our schools continues to evolve as we all learn more and more about the issues of safety and security that our nation is facing.

What We Will Do

Should we have a major disaster during school hours, your child/children will be cared for at the local school. Each building has a detailed disaster plan which has been formulated to respond to any major catastrophe.

Transportation

In the event a disaster takes place during the time that students are being transported, students will be kept on the bus and the driver will ask for assistance through radio contact with the superintendent's office. If roads are impassable any child who is at home waiting for the bus will not be picked up and will remain the responsibility of the parent or guardian. In the afternoon, the driver will make every attempt to continue delivering students to their homes. Should road conditions prevent the driver from delivering students home or to their individual schools, all students will be delivered to the nearest school site. You may pick them up after Clinton Community Schools or the local radio and television outlets have announced the "all-clear" signal.

Parent Support

Your cooperation is necessary in any emergency. Specific parental support needed is as follows:

- Do not telephone the school. Telephone lines may be needed for emergency communication.
- Parents should become familiar with the local school Emergency Disaster Plan ("Clinton Community Schools Parent Emergency Guide" found on our website www.clinton.k12.mi.us)
- In the event of a serious emergency, students will be kept at their schools until they are picked up by the responsible adult who has been identified as such on the Emergency Medical Form, which is required to be filled out by parents at the beginning of every school year. Please instruct your child/children to remain at school until you or an authorized designee arrives or she/he has been cleared by school officials for dismissal.

- Please be sure you consider the following criteria when you authorize another person to pick up your child at school:
 - He/she should be 18 years of age or older
 - He/she should be known to the child
 - He/she should be both aware and able to assume this responsibility
 - He/she has the required identification
- Tune in to local radio and television stations for emergency announcements. The decision to keep students at school will be based upon the nature of the emergency and whether or not streets in the area are open. If students are to be kept in school, radio and television stations will be notified.
- Impress upon your child/children the need for them to follow the directions of any school personnel in times of an emergency. Your children also have a part to play in the safety and security of our schools. Please help us by making it clear to them that jokes and pranks about bombs, anthrax or any other acts of terror will not be tolerated. Any student engaging in such pranks will be subject to our most severe disciplinary actions and may face criminal charges by law enforcement agencies.

Security Measures and Preparation

You should know that we are meeting regularly with village safety officials. We are regularly being updated on the latest health and national security measures that must be put in place and followed for the safety of our children and school staff. The following are general security procedures that are being updated constantly to meet the needs of schools in the present and changing climate of security and safety.

- All principals, administrators, and supervisors are provided with step-by-step procedures for reporting and handling all serious incidents (suspicious mail, bomb threats, hostage situations, etc.) that might occur in or within close proximity of their schools and/or buildings during regular school hours. Incidents will be reported via telephone to the local 911 and to the superintendent.
- Clinton Community Schools' staff members are being informed regularly about crisis response to incidents.
- All Clinton Community schools have an emergency response plan and will activate the plan in the event of an emergency. Each school also has a general safety and security plan and an evacuation plan that is tested by regular and random drills.
- Teachers and principals are being informed about how to handle and report suspicious visitors or unusual activities in and around schools.
- Information is being shared between superintendents and department heads throughout Lenawee County.
- School psychologists, counselors, social workers and the Lenawee County Youth/Community Crisis Team are available to work in all schools to provide crisis counseling, debriefing and other support services to students and staff.

Please discuss these matters with your immediate family. Planning ahead will help alleviate concern during emergencies. If you have specific questions about your child's school, please call the school principal. Please know that we will leave no stone unturned in our efforts to make sure that all children are safe and secure in our schools. We appreciate your continued support.

Sincerely,

David P. Pray
Superintendent

CLINTON COMMUNITY SCHOOLS

PARENT EMERGENCY GUIDE

Clinton Community Schools is committed to providing a safe environment for students, staff and visitors. We work closely with county and local safety officials - police, fire, emergency medical services, and public health - in order to ensure our schools are well prepared for an emergency. Together, we have developed a comprehensive Emergency Response Plan that covers a wide variety of emergencies that serves as a guide to help staff and our public safety partners respond swiftly should a crisis occur in our schools.

Should a school emergency occur, a parent can get important information and directions by doing one or all of the following:

- **Wait until the situation has been evaluated and information has been sent by the Instant Notification System**
- **Call Clinton Community Schools - School Closing Hotline at 517.456.6571**
- **Visit Clinton Community Schools Website at www.clinton.k12.mi.us**
- **Tune into radio station WLEN (FM103.9) for news alerts.**

The information included on this page provides an overview of the many safety measures Clinton Community Schools has implemented and serves as a guide for parents, students, and staff should there be a school emergency.

Please report any safety concerns you may have to the school principal.

Safety Measures in Our Schools - Parents should be assured to know that the safety measures in place in our schools are extensive. We are constantly working to ensure our emergency plan is current and that all staff members are prepared to respond to a wide variety of school emergencies. Our schools have numerous safety measures in place to provide a safe learning environment for our students. Some of the safety measures that can be found in our schools include:

- Each school has a Crisis Response Team with selected members to ensure appropriate response on a variety of potential school emergencies.
- Exterior school doors are either locked or under surveillance.
- Every school has an emergency radio to receive updates on emergency situation.
- The visitor's desk is manned at the entrance of every school.
- As a condition of entry, visitors must sign-in and wear a visitor ID badge.
- Each school has a minimum supply of two-way radios to assist in emergency communications.
- Intrusion alarms are installed in every school.

WHAT CAN YOU DO TO HELP?

As a Parent How Can You Prepare for a School Emergency? As a parent, there are four simple steps you can take to prepare for a school emergency.

1. Regularly update the Instant Notification System
2. Provide accurate emergency contact information to your child's school and notify the school if it changes.
3. Carry a School Emergency Card for Parents at all times.
4. Have access to school events hotline (517.456.6571) and website (www.clinton.k12.mi.us).

Communications During a School Emergency

During an emergency it is critical that parents receive important information from school officials before going to the school or scene of an emergency. You can be confident that accurate and timely information will be released to parents, the public, and the media during any school emergency.

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Facts and Terms Every Parent Should Know

Should an emergency situation occur at your child's school, it is important that parents are familiar with these terms.

What is a "High-Level" lockdown?

During a "High-Level" lockdown all school interior and exterior doors are locked and students are confined to their classrooms and no entry or exit of the school is allowed. This takes place if there is a threat or possible threat at the school.

What is a "Low-Level" lockdown?

During a "Low-Level" lockdown all school interior and exterior doors are locked. This takes place if the threat is outside of the school. If the situation allows, parents could be admitted into the school with proper identification.

How will I know if a school is in a "High-Level" lockdown?

The main entrance doors will be locked and a sign will be posted on the front door indicating that the school is in a high level lockdown. There will be no admittance to the building, so you should contact the School Closing Hotline at 517.456.6571 or district website at www.clinton.k12.mi.us for information regarding the incident.

If the school is in a “Low-Level”, what type of identification will I need to enter the school?

If it is deemed safe for you to enter the building, you will need to show a proper form of identification such as a driver’s license, military ID, or other valid photo identification.

If the school building is evacuated, how will I be able to locate my child?

Each school has a procedure for helping parents locate their child. Parents will be directed to a specific location where they will be required to show proper identification. Remember, a student can only be released to an adult that is documented as an emergency contact. If you are a non-custodial parent, you must be listed with your child’s emergency contact information as a guardian and show proper identification.

Staff Training for Emergencies is Ongoing

As a parent, you should feel confident to know that we provide annual crisis management training to school administrators. Each school has key staff members with assigned roles and responsibilities to perform during an emergency. In addition, every school conducts emergency drills throughout the school year so that students and staff are aware of the most effective and safe emergency responses.

School Violence - What Should I Tell My Children?

Learn how to hold frank but reassuring discussions with children about school violence. Understand symptoms of anxiety problems and warning signs of potential violence in children.

News reports of school violence leave adults horrified, shaken and anxious. Imagine how they can affect young children, who may see frightening images repeatedly replayed on television but not fully understand them. Or teens, who may be faced with metal detector checks and unsettling thoughts about their own school's safety.

Michael Tiede, L.P., a licensed psychotherapist for children and adolescents at Mayo Clinic in Rochester, Minn., explores how parents and other adults can talk to children of different ages about school violence, as well as what signs may indicate a child is at risk of committing violent acts.

Should adults simply tell children that school violence won't happen in their community?

That's probably not an appropriate message to convey. We've seen that school violence can happen virtually anywhere, even in schools that may seem extremely safe. Unfortunately, a message like this can also give children a false sense of security, and they may not be as vigilant about unsafe situations as they should be. And many children do worry that a shooting or other violent event may happen in their school, so you should validate and acknowledge their feelings. Blanket statements that it won't happen risk minimizing their fears and shutting down conversation.

How do you reassure children about school violence while acknowledging that it can happen?

You can focus on messages about safety. You can honestly tell children that school violence is unlikely to happen, that it's rare. And you can discuss safety measures that are in place to protect them at school. Talk to them about how school personnel, such as their teachers and principals, are trained to keep them safe. Let them know that schools take concerns about violence or safety very seriously. You can also help children feel a sense of control by teaching them to report concerns or incidents. Adolescents and teens can be empowered by learning conflict-resolution skills and participating in anti-violence programs.

If your child doesn't bring up the issue of school violence or express worries, should you just ignore it too?

It's usually up to the adult to initiate conversations about school violence. Just because your child isn't openly talking about school violence doesn't mean that he or she isn't worried about it. For one thing, younger children may not be able to verbalize their fear easily. They may act it out in behavior or play. And older children, who are notorious for clamming up around adults as it is, may be hesitant to raise serious or emotional issues. In fact, some children think about school violence more fatalistically than adults do. It's not uncommon to find out months after the news coverage ends that your child was very worried in the wake of a violent incident.

When is the best time to talk to children about school violence?

Too often, discussions arise only after an incident is reported in the news. But safety and school violence should be topics of family discussion through the various stages of childhood development. Don't reserve discussion only for times when a serious incident occurs.

How do you engage a young child in a conversation about school violence?

Young children, such as those in kindergarten through fifth grade, may have trouble understanding the concept of violence. Because of that, you need to talk to them in a way they can relate to. It may be a less direct approach. You can talk to them about being teased, what's happening on the school bus, about people being "mean," or if they're concerned about strangers coming to their school to hurt them or their friends or teachers.

What about talking to older children about school violence?

With older children, such as those in middle school or high school, you can talk about school violence in a more direct way — making sure it's appropriate for your particular child. You can ask them if they ever worry about school violence, for instance. You can ask them how they feel when school violence makes the news. With teenagers who may not be as open, you can ask them what their friends are talking about or how teachers are addressing school safety, as sort of a backdoor way to get them to talk about the issue.

When reports of school violence occur, what should you do for your children?

For younger children, the discussion should focus on safety and how adults are doing everything they can to protect them. With older children, you can help them understand what's happened. Reinforce the idea that serious school violence is rare. Also, without alarming them, remind them to be aware of possible signs of impending violence and to report any concerns to school authorities. And it's OK to let them know that you feel upset when you see violence in schools, too. But because a child will pick up on parental anxiety like a sponge, it's important to remain calm and reassuring.

Should children watch television news coverage of school violence incidents?

It depends on their age and developmental level. Young children, such as preschoolers, often interpret the news differently than adults do. For instance, some studies show that young children often don't realize that the same incident is constantly replayed on the news — they believe it's different incidences of violence, which can lead them to think that violence is common. Children of any age, and even adults, can have traumatic reactions to violent or shocking images, especially those that show frightened or injured school children. Watching footage from the scene of an incident can be too intense. Even older children should limit viewing of such news. Remind them that early news

coverage may be inaccurate and sensationalistic because the facts aren't all known. Consider watching the news together so that you can discuss it.

How do you know if your child needs professional help coping with reports of school violence?

If you feel like you've tried to address the issue with your child but it's not helping his or her fears, or if you feel stuck yourself, consider consulting a mental health professional. Be alert for signs and symptoms of coping difficulties. Symptoms vary depending on developmental age but usually involve impairment in some aspect of their life, such as avoidance of situations or an inability to focus on homework. Other signs and symptoms may include:

- Regression in behavior, such as a return to thumb sucking
- Physical complaints, such as stomachaches or headaches
- Reluctance to go to school
- Drop in grades
- Failure to complete homework
- Sleep problems/Nightmares
- Relationship problems

Keep in mind that symptoms may be subtle, not glaring. For instance, your child may not have nightmares every single night. And because it may be hard for parents to admit that their child needs professional help, you may find yourself explaining away symptoms or making excuses for them.

What kind of professional help is effective for coping with reports of school violence?

Often, this kind of anxiety can benefit from a type of psychotherapy known as cognitive behavior therapy, and it can be brief, usually just six to 14 sessions. In some situations, medications may help, but many times, anxiety can be treated effectively with behavioral methods that help children learn to cope with their fear and stress.

What if you have concerns about your own child's potential for committing school violence?

This is difficult because no parent wants to believe that their child is capable of violence. But getting professional help promptly may prevent problems from worsening. Some signs and symptoms that can indicate a potential for violence include:

- A history of violence
- Fighting
- Bullying
- Picking on younger children
- Harming animals
- Threats of harming people or animals
- Access to weapons of violence
- Substance abuse
- Intense anger
- Frequent loss of temper
- Violent or overly aggressive behavior during sports
- Depression
- Thoughts of suicide

You can directly ask your child about their behavior and intentions. If he or she talks about hurting someone, ask if that's really their plan. Address the threat. If they look mad, ask them why. Ask how serious they are about hurting someone else or themselves. If you have concerns, take your child to a mental health professional as soon as possible for a thorough evaluation.

Is school violence really increasing or does it just seem that way?

School violence has always existed in some form or other. Playground fights and teasing have seemed almost a rite of passage for school children, although we know now that behavior like bullying and hazing can be very harmful. In fact, school children are more likely to be involved in fist fights or subjected to bullying or hazing than to school shootings. However, when school shootings do occur, they get a tremendous amount of publicity, which promotes the misconception that they occur more often than they actually do. In reality, children are more likely to be victims of homicide outside of school. And because many schools have adopted safety procedures, school violence can often be prevented.