

Emergency Drills Explained

Bus Evacuation Drills are conducted twice a year, with the cooperation of the Transportation Department, on the school site. Every student participates, as even non-bussed students may be on a school bus for Field Trips.

School Evacuation Drills are the usual “fire drills” with which we are all acquainted. We have ten of these a year.

Site Evacuation Drills are practice for the occasion when we must evacuate the building for an extended period of time, or when it is dangerous to remain close to the building. We will have one drill per year.

Lockdown and **Hold & Secure** are procedures, which have been developed by experts in threat assessment and control, for securing a building and maximizing the safety of its inhabitants. These procedures might be used for a variety of circumstances, such as a medical situation where hallways need to be kept clear, a situation outside the building (example: a fire across the street), an unknown person in the school, or any other situation which the administration feels would warrant keeping students safe in their classrooms. During a Lockdown and Hold & Secure, no one, except police and emergency personnel, enters or exits the building until it is deemed safe to do so. We will have two Lockdown drills and one Hold & secure drill each year.

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In authentic Lockdown, Hold & Secure, and Site Evacuation situations, parents must resist their natural instincts and follow these instructions: Parents must not come to the school or evacuation site; instead go to the parent information site. Parents must not try to phone the school or to phone their child’s cell phone. Emergency communication lines must be kept open, and use of electronic devices may interfere with the actions of the Police.

Schools are expected to ensure that students and staff practice these procedures and that they do so in a serious manner. Thus, if there were ever a need to use these emergency actions, they would occur quickly and efficiently. The idea of preparing and practicing for these situations, especially a Lockdown, Hold & Secure, or Site Evacuation, can cause fear and anxiety. In fact, knowing that we are well-prepared should inspire confidence and comfort. The imaginary threats for which we are preparing have always been a possibility, but we have never been better prepared than we are now!