



School Safety and Security Questions and Answers, Dec. 3, 2021

At Rochester Community Schools, safety is our priority. We realize that safety is not always convenient, but we are committed to doing everything within our control to protect our students, staff, and guests.

How does the district enhance school security for students, staff, and guests?

The district made a strategic investment through recent bond efforts to enhance student safety and school security. Completed initiatives include redesigning the main building entrances with two sets of vestibule doors (along with a door to the office), and providing staff with a better visitor verification system and building lockdown capabilities. Locks that latch from the interior side of the classroom door have been added, and video surveillance cameras have been installed in the schools and on buses. An updated districtwide telephone system, radio, and public address (PA) system also ensure proper notification and warning during an emergency.

What safety procedures are in place?

The district consults regularly with experts to learn about opportunities to enhance our daily operating procedures for student safety and school security. Safety procedures include the following:

- All visitors must enter through the main entrance using the visitor verification system. Guests are required to show picture identification and sign-in, documenting their name, time in/out, and purpose of the visit. Staff, students, and guests should never open a door for other visitors.
- All exterior doors are locked throughout the school day. If staff or a community member notices a door that has been propped open for any reason, they should close the door and report the incident to the front office immediately.
- All interior classroom doors should be locked at all times.
- All exits and hallways should be clear of desks, material, and debris so as to allow for a quick exit in the case of an emergency.
- All students must remain quiet and attentive to teacher instructions during any emergency situation.
- All rooms in the district have an Emergency Management Response Plan posted near the door for quick reference and instruction.

Are public safety officials present in our schools?

Safe Ed. school security professionals and police liaison officers from the Rochester Police Department and Oakland County Sheriff's Office have a regular, familiar presence in our buildings and on school campuses.

Throughout the year during daily visits, casual conversations in the lunchroom, parking lot and traffic monitoring, and participation in school activities, we build respectful, trusting, and long-lasting relationships with our public safety partners. If students have questions, require assistance, or need to talk with a trusted adult, they have confidence that our police liaisons and Safe Ed. staff will provide a helping hand and a connection to resources. They are an important part of the school family. In addition, our trained police professionals enrich the curriculum, providing age-appropriate discussions throughout the year to address seatbelt and bicycle safety, crossing the street, when to call 911, community helpers, stranger safety, substance abuse, and what to do if a weapon is found.

Does the district conduct emergency drills?

Throughout the school year, each school conducts drills during both structured and unstructured times. Drills include, at a minimum, three lockdown/shelter-in-place drills, five fire drills, and two tornado drills. Each building also has an emergency response plan that outlines procedures for staff to follow in case of a crisis. The plan includes securing all students in a classroom, covering windows, turning off the lights and having students sit in a designated area away from the hallway and door. These drills help improve readiness and response to incidents. Detailed drill information for each school is located on the [district website](#). Each district building has an emergency “go kit” with essential emergency items including first-aid supplies, flashlights, and other important items.

What type of safety training is provided for staff?

Our local law enforcement, security consultants, and police liaison officers provide RCS with the guidance and training to keep our students and staff safe. Regular staff training opportunities for multiple scenarios include medical emergencies, lockdown/shelter in place, aggressive intruder, fire/evacuation, natural disasters and weather-related emergencies. RCS uses the “run-hide-fight” protocol response for active shooter training, which aligns with the U.S. Department of Homeland Security guidance.

Does the district have formal emergency operations plans?

Each RCS school/building has an emergency operations plan that is revised annually to empower employees in an emergency situation to act quickly and knowledgeably. The plan represents collaboration between the school district, educational professionals, local first response agencies, and emergency management officials. The plan is based on guidance provided by the Federal Emergency Management Agency (FEMA), the Department of Education, the Michigan State Police and Oakland County.

Portions of the emergency operations plan are confidential to prevent theft, compromise, inadvertent access, unauthorized disclosure, and potential security breaches in our buildings.

What support mechanisms are in place to help students and staff cope with a tragedy?

The district, as well as each school building, has a Critical Incident Team, which consists of staff, counselors, social workers and psychologists. Teams are deployed quickly in case of an emergency. All elementary, middle, and high school administrators meet with their Critical Incident Teams to review support plans for students who may be upset or have questions about tragic events in the news and community. Administrators and law enforcement officials work together to review our safety and security practices.

What should my child do if they see or hear something that they are concerned about? What’s the best way to report a concern?

Please encourage children to talk to a trusted adult. If your child sees or hears something that doesn’t seem right, he or she may speak with a school staff member or administrator or submit a confidential tip to OK2SAY. OK2SAY allows anyone to confidentially report tips on criminal activities or potential harm directed at Michigan students, school employees, or schools. Call 855-565-2729; text 652729; or email OK2SAY@mi.gov. For emergencies, dial 911. The OK2SAY link is on the RCS website, or you can go to: <http://www.michigan.gov/ok2say>.

What is the disciplinary process for students who violate the Student Code of Conduct?

The Student Code of Conduct provides guidelines for responsible student citizenship. These guidelines provide a consistent, systematic approach to addressing violations of expectations.

The immediate objective of school discipline is to allow for student growth in abilities, attitudes, and habits which are essential to the personal and collective learning environment. Restorative practices will be utilized as a teaching method to repair harm, resolve conflict, and restore positive community culture. The partnership between home and school is vital in the development of each student.

A Disciplinary Step System provides a clear course of action in handling disciplinary matters and a progressive approach from moderate to most severe action. An eight-step system begins with an administrative conference that may include students, parents and guardians, and progresses to suspension, social probation, and possible expulsion. A student may be placed on any of the steps under each Code of Conduct violation, depending on the severity of the incident.

The following categories of misconduct will result in expulsion: dangerous weapons, arson, criminal sexual activity, and physical assault. In compliance with the law and in cooperation with school police liaisons, some infractions will be reported to law enforcement.

The Student Code of Conduct can be found on the RCS website at:

<https://www.rochester.k12.mi.us/about-us/departments/human-resources/policies>.

As a parent, how can I help?

We encourage parents to talk with their son or daughter on a regular basis about the importance of sharing concerns if something doesn't seem right. Parents can relay the information to their school principal; however, in case of an emergency, please call 911. Law enforcement works closely with the school district to resolve issues.

What are some resources to help me talk with my child about tragic events?

- Common Ground offers free and confidential counseling, information, and referrals. For more information, go to: <http://www.commongroundhelps.org/#/>.
- National Association of School Psychologists. Talking to Children About Violence: Tips for Parents and Teachers. <https://www.nasponline.org/resources-and-publications/resources-and-podcasts/school-safety-and-crisis/school-violence-resources/talking-to-children-about-violence-tips-for-parents-and-teachers>.
- National Association of School Psychologists. School Safety and Crisis. Mitigating Negative Psychological Effects of School Lockdowns: Brief Guidance for Schools. <https://www.nasponline.org/resources-and-publications/resources-and-podcasts/school-safety-and-crisis/systems-level-prevention/mitigating-psychological-effects-of-lockdowns>.
- The National Child Traumatic Stress Network (NCTSN) Child Trauma Toolkit for Educators: <https://wmich.edu/sites/default/files/attachments/u57/2013/child-trauma-toolkit.pdf>.
- NCTSN. Talking to Children About the Shooting. http://www.nctsn.org/sites/default/files/assets/pdfs/talking_to_children_about_the_shooting.pdf
- Rochester Community Schools Social-Emotional Wellness Resources: <https://rcssocialemotionalresources.weebly.com/>.