

Regional School District No. 7

Superintendent's Newsletter

December 7, 2021

Judith A. Palmer, Ed.D

Dear Northwestern Staff, Students, and Families:

There is no doubt that these are trying times. The news is full of very disturbing stories that can weigh heavily on all of us. We all feel “on edge” when we hear distressing news of school threats. Please be assured that the safety and wellbeing of our students and staff is our top priority.

Our School Resource Officer, Dave Wood, and the NWR7 administrative team work diligently to protect our students and staff while they are in our care. Over the past several years, we have spent a considerable amount of time and effort planning and practicing security measures. We have taken full advantage of state funded security grants to improve the safety of our facility.

For example, our entrances and exits from our schools are restricted. Visitors entering our building must provide identification and receive a temporary badge before proceeding. Our video cameras are located throughout the interior and exterior of our buildings. All of our administrators have live camera access on their desktops and iPads. The Winchester Police Department also has access to a live feed to our cameras.

Our schools have updated security plans and key school personnel regularly participate in crisis response training. Our school district works closely with the Winchester Police Department, Troop B, and other public safety departments to prepare for any type of crisis. Further, Winchester Police officers regularly patrol our campus and will visit our buildings throughout the year.

Even with all of our protocols in place, sometimes the best information comes from students and/or family members who recognize an issue that raises concern. During school hours, please bring your concerns to Officer Wood or any member of our administrative team. After school hours, please report any concerning threats or important information directly to law enforcement.

Our school administrators and local law enforcement use a very specific threat assessment protocol to determine if the report is a valid threat. The results of that assessment determine the course of action for school administrators and law enforcement.

If the results reveal a valid threat, you will receive a School Messenger notification from me or a member of our administrative team.

Other reports, such as inciting a rumor or making a deliberate false claim, will be significantly addressed through RSD7 discipline policies and referred to the police for further investigation. A person making a threat (or a false claim of a threat) against our schools will be arrested and prosecuted to the fullest extent of the law. No exceptions.

If you would like more information regarding our emergency preparedness and related issues, please reach out to our School Resource Officer, Dave Wood, dwood@nwr7.org or 860-379-8525 ext. 2508.

During school hours, you may reach the NWR7 administrative team in this way:

Gary Franklin, High School Principal, gfranklin@nwr7.org or 860-379-8525 ext. 2103

Andy Bakulski, House I Assistant Principal, abakulski@nwr7.org or 860-379-8525 ext. 2200

Dan Carroll, House II Assistant Principal, dcarroll@nwr7.org or 860-379-8525 ext. 2250

Steve Carvalho, Special Education Supervisor, scarvalho@nwr7.org or 860-379-8525 ext. 2505

Fran Amara, Middle School Principal, famara@nwr7.org or 860-379-7243 ext. 2315

Judy Palmer, Superintendent of Schools, jpalmer@nwr7.org or 860-379-8525 ext. 2401

It saddens me to have to send this message. However, I also want you to know that we are well prepared and that we take school security very seriously. Please join me in keeping good thoughts about our safety.

We are fortunate to have a strong school community. While remaining vigilant, we will continue to enjoy our positive school environment. Our schools are warm and welcoming, which is largely due to the caring relationships between staff, students, and families.

It is a good time of year to share kindness and good will. Do what you can to help those in need and stay grateful for your blessings.

May we all experience the love, joy, and peace that the holiday season brings.

Thank you for your continued support of NWR7.



The Pride of the Northwest Corner