

March 31, 2014

Dear Parents/Guardians,

In light of the tornado disaster of last May, we understand that there is apprehension in our community as we approach spring weather, and we want to assure you that Moore Public Schools continues to work towards preparing our students and staff to respond to Oklahoma's ever changing weather. This year, specific emphasis was placed on our severe weather procedures during our meetings to review and reevaluate all of our disaster preparedness plans.

With storm season quickly approaching, we know many of you have questions regarding the safety procedures that Moore Public Schools will be following. Any time there is a risk of severe tornado weather we will follow our district Tornado Sheltering Plan:

1. Once students are in school, if severe weather warnings are issued, parents have the option of picking up/checking out their student and receiving an excused absence. Please review carefully the following regarding timelines for checkout:
 - At all school sites, with the exception of Westmoore High School and Kelley Elementary, any time that the storm **sirens** begin to sound the school will not check out students as they will be sheltering in place.
 - Since Westmoore High School and Kelley Elementary have storm shelters (FEMA built after the May 1999 tornado), once a **tornado warning** is issued by the National Weather Service, students may not be checked out because they will already be sheltering in place. *(Please note: Procedures will change as storm shelters are built at other school sites.)*
2. Students at each school will follow tornado safety guidelines which include sheltering in the safest refuge areas within each school site or facility. Research shows that there are no guaranteed safe areas; however, the determinations of these refuge areas were located with the help of emergency personnel from both Oklahoma City and the City of Moore.
3. Buses will be held and not be in transit when there is immediate pending severe weather expected. If the severe weather is unexpected and a bus is in route the bus will seek safety at the nearest school.

In addition, the following information is provided relative to overall safety precautions in the school district:

1. Each school has a crisis intervention team and a written crisis plan that outlines procedures regarding safety concerns (i.e., intruder, severe weather, gas leaks, fire, etc.).
2. Weather radios are used in every school to monitor conditions and alert us to any tornado watches or warnings. School administration or a designee at each school building monitors the weather radio. The Superintendent's Office and other district officials will be in direct contact with the National Weather Service (NWS) out of Norman anytime that severe weather is anticipated. This will occur through a live feed between NWS and Moore Public Schools administration. The live feed also allows for real time questions and answers about storm fronts, weather alerts, potential affected areas, and overall questions relative to the weather. This new procedure will allow school district officials to be more weather aware.
3. All schools practice safety drills for intruder, tornado, and fire events. Fire drills are held monthly and intruder and tornado drills are held twice a year.
4. Each school has reviewed its site specific tornado plan with Assistant Superintendent Brad Fernberg, the district's crisis management coordinator.
5. To help prevent head injuries, elementary and junior high schools have been provided helmets to wear during emergency situations. It is anticipated that high schools will receive helmets in the near future. All helmets were donated through the "Moore Helmets for Schools" program.
6. School access systems will also be installed at each elementary school. These access systems will require school visitors, during school hours, to "buzz" the main office from outside and with camera recognition be allowed to enter the building.

I hope the above information has answered many of your questions. However, if you have additional questions please contact your child's principal or feel free to contact me at 735-4249.

Sincerely,



Robert Romines
Superintendent