



Important Back-to-School Safety and Security Update

August 8, 2024

Dear Pine-Richland Community,

As the foundation for our mission to focus on learning for every student every day, **we have both the responsibility and opportunity to ensure a safe and welcoming environment for students, staff and parents.** Strengthening school culture requires a collective commitment from all stakeholders. This summer, we continued to focus on emergency operations planning and training. **Please take a few moments to carefully read this entire message.** We are sharing this message proactively to allow parents and students to talk at home prior to the return to school.

Over the years, PRSD has continued to strengthen its **multi-layered approach to school safety and security practices** that includes physical, technological and cultural considerations. Promoting a safe and secure learning environment is foundational to our focus on learning for every student every day. Our approach to safety and security is integrated with an emphasis on establishing a positive school culture. Each step we take that improves our school culture also enhances our physical safety and security. By building relationships, supporting mental health and ensuring awareness of various reporting mechanisms, we are proactively taking steps that decrease the likelihood of a crisis in our schools.

The Northern Regional Police Department is one key partner in our safety and security plan. The department has supported daily activities at all district schools in a variety of ways. In addition, the district has also maintained internal safety personnel for many years. In the 2024–2025 school year, we have **expanded personnel through additional NRPD School Resource Officers (SROs) and also through PRSD School Security Officers (SSOs).** The SSOs are retired law enforcement officers who will be assigned to schools. In addition, we supplement our district-employed social worker, school counselors, and psychologists through an agreement with Glade Run Lutheran Services for optional school-based mental health services.

On April 19, 2024, the U.S. Department of Education released its final rule to update **Title IX protections and the requirements** set forth in these rules are scheduled to be in effect for the 2024-25 school year. School districts continue to have the responsibility to provide notification, training, and procedures to implement these requirements. Information about Title IX, bullying, and harassment are located in the Back-to-School Toolkit, Annual Notices, and Discipline Code.

An area of focus this summer was the **refinement of our reunification procedures should a serious event require evacuation of one of our campuses.** We have identified community locations where families can pick up their children and have collaborated with these organizations in partnership with Northern Regional Police Department (NRPD) to develop procedures for a safe and orderly reunification.

When an emergency occurs, parents/guardians are contacted via our rapid call system and will receive a telephone call, email and text message. We will also share an email with our entire community to ensure clear communication. Please verify that your emergency contact information is up-to-date in the [Sapphire Community Portal](#). Ensure that you are [signed up to receive district eBlasts](#) so that you are notified in the event of an incident at a school where you do not have children attending. We know that in a serious emergency situation, some students may flee the scene, and we will ask for your assistance in letting us know your children are safe so that we may account for all of our students.

NRPD will close the campus of a school or schools experiencing a serious

emergency event. It is also possible that the other PRSD schools would be placed into a heightened security protocol as a precaution. In that situation, parents should not attempt to come to campus to pick up their children. Please wait for instructions from the district. While we hope that we never need to use these protocols, we are sharing this information with you now so that our community knows what to expect during a critical event. Being prepared is key to our ability to account for every child and ensure a successful reunification process.

An important step in strengthening school safety and security is reporting. We encourage anyone with information or concerns to contact the **Tip Line at 724-449-TIPS and use the Safe2Say Something** application or website.

We hope you are all enjoying the summer break. We look forward to welcoming you back on August 22.

Sincerely,

Pine-Richland School District

Website



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