



Pocono Mountain School District

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Superintendent of Schools

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Dear Parents/Guardians,

As we begin the new school year, I would like to share several important reminders and updates regarding our school safety procedures. Working together, we can help ensure our schools remain safe, secure, and welcoming places for learning.

I am pleased to share that the lobby redesign projects have now been completed at all Pocono Mountain schools with school safety as the primary focus. All visitors will be required to follow our Visitor Management System procedures, which include using the intercom to state the purpose of their visit before entering the building and presenting a valid photo identification upon entering the secure lobby.

Parents also play an important role in our emergency preparedness efforts. Please make sure your child's school has your most current contact information. If your phone number, email address, or emergency contacts change during the school year, notify your child's school as soon as possible so we can reach you quickly in an emergency.

In July, administrators from across the district participated in a comprehensive school safety tabletop exercise that simulated a realistic emergency scenario. This valuable training strengthened our ability to work together, evaluate our emergency response procedures, and identify opportunities for continuous improvement.

Throughout the school year, you may hear your children talk about fire evacuation drills, lockdown drills and Run, Hide, Fight. These are some of the training drills we hold in our schools to prepare students and staff for many types of emergencies. While we have many preventative measures and protocols in place in our schools to prevent acts of violence, it's important that our students and staff practice lockdown drills and Run, Hide, Fight drills, so they would know how to respond to such an occurrence.

The training drills and preventive measures we take throughout the school year are part of the District's comprehensive Emergency Operations Plan for All Hazards, which outlines the procedures for all District employees to follow to keep Pocono Mountain students and schools safe. The plan is confidential, and it includes procedures and easy-to-follow checklists for District employees and students to follow during emergencies.

As part of the District's emergency preparedness procedures, all District schools practice lockdown drills. When a school is placed in a lockdown, whether for a drill or potential threat, the school remains locked down until the drill ends, or in the case of a perceived threat, until the threat or hazard has been cleared. If the situation warrants it, the District may also lockdown an entire campus or all campuses during an emergency. When a building is locked down, it's important for parents and community members to know that no one except law enforcement and other emergency responders will be allowed into the school.

Parents can best assist the District during an emergency by refraining from immediately calling their child's school or rushing to their child's school when a lockdown is initiated. During an emergency, school staff will be busy responding to the emergency and addressing the needs of students. Keeping the telephone lines open for emergency use is critical to the District's ability to respond quickly and effectively to the emergency. Likewise, it's important to keep the roadways clear, so law enforcement and other emergency responders can quickly get to our schools.

Parents should check the PMSD website at www.pmsd.org for information. Information and updates will be posted to the PMSD website during an emergency. District officials will also use ParentLink, Talking Points, and Class DOJO to provide updates to parents. If you don't currently receive ParentLink alert emails or text messages, you should sign up through the PMSD website to receive the alert emails and text messages.

Due to the unpredictable nature of any emergency, there may be a situation that requires us to evacuate a school or schools. District officials will notify parents of the location of a possible evacuation and parent reunification site as soon as possible. Depending on the emergency conditions, students may be released to parents at a designated location that is not at their school or campus.

At an evacuation and reunification site, parents will be asked to provide a photo identification. Students will only be released to a parent or individual designated on the student's emergency form, so please make sure your child's school has the correct emergency contact information and permissions regarding who is allowed to pick up your child from school.

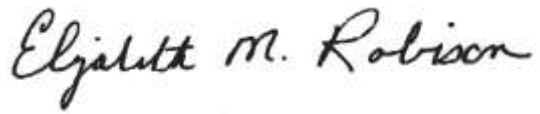
In an emergency, District officials will communicate with parents as quickly as possible, but our first priority is always going to be taking the necessary steps to immediately ensure the life and safety of students and employees.

Every District school has a multidisciplinary Threat Assessment Team that is trained to identify, assess, and respond to potential safety concerns. These teams work closely with school staff, families, and, when appropriate, law enforcement and mental health professionals to address concerns before they escalate. If you become aware of behavior or information that raises a safety concern, please report it to your child's school immediately. Early reporting allows us to assess concerns quickly, provide appropriate support, and help maintain a safe learning environment for everyone.

As a final reminder, I encourage all families to ensure that any firearms in the home are securely stored and inaccessible to children. Please check regularly that firearms remain secure, especially if your child is experiencing stress, anxiety, bullying, depression, or other emotional challenges.

Thank you for your partnership in helping us keep our schools safe.

Sincerely,

A handwritten signature in black ink that reads "Elizabeth M. Robison". The script is cursive and fluid, with the first letters of each word being capitalized and prominent.

Elizabeth Robison
Superintendent of Schools