

Diamond Elementary School



4 Marquis Drive
Gaithersburg, MD 20878-1895
Telephone: 301-840-7177

Office of the Principal

October 6, 2015

Dear Parents,

We strive to keep all of our students safe throughout the school day, from the moment they step onto the school bus until the moment they return home. Diamond Elementary uses a comprehensive crisis plan that is specific to our school, staff, and students. MCPS has established several processes to ensure all schools follow specific safety measures.

Each family is requested to complete or revise the ***Emergency Contact Information form***. This form was sent home the first week of school for all parents to update and return to school. In addition, all families were asked to complete a ***Parent Child Reunification Plan form***. We ask that you list any family members (other than custodial parents) or friends (over the age of 18) you entrust your child to if you were unable to pick-up your child in the event of a school, local or regional emergency.

Fire Drills are conducted at least once per month during the school year. The first two fire drills occur during the first 30 days of school. We have at least ten fire drills a year. We want everyone to be fully prepared in the event of an actual emergency. Students are instructed to be silent, walk to the nearest exit and wait at the assigned location while class attendance is taken.

In the event of a school emergency, our school will follow ***Shelter*** or ***Lockdown*** procedures. ***Shelter*** is a procedure used to describe a situation in which there could be danger with public safety in the larger community, severe weather, or outside hazardous materials released. ***Public Safety Shelter*** procedures include bringing students/staff/visitors into the main building, lock all exterior doors, and ascertain purpose of visitors. Typically, instruction continues and student movement around the building is closely monitored. The ***Severe Weather/Hazardous Materials Shelter*** procedures include bringing students/staff/visitors into the main building, evacuating relocatable classrooms, moving to identified weather-safe areas in the building, and shutting down ventilation systems if needed. ***Shelter*** procedures are activated by the principal of the school, local authorities such as the police or fire department or by the Superintendent (or his designee) of MCPS. When it has been determined by the appropriate authorities that the danger to the school no longer exists, the ***Shelter*** procedure will be deactivated and the school building will return to normal daily procedures.

Lockdown is a procedure used to describe a situation in which the danger is imminent or within the school building and requires all staff, visitors, and students inside the building to move to an immediate lockdown mode. It requires all students, staff, and visitors to be accounted for and under supervision. A ***Lockdown*** is activated by the principal of the school, local authorities such as the police or fire department or by the Superintendent (or his designee) of MCPS. When it has been determined by the appropriate authorities that the danger to the school no longer exists, the Lockdown will be deactivated and the school building will return to normal daily procedures

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If any of these situations extend beyond the regular school day, delay dismissal, result in evacuation from the building, the ***Parent Child Reunification Plan*** will be activated. This plan is developed to assist the school in effectively and efficiently reuniting students with their parents or guardians in a calm and orderly manner. There will be staff members on site to direct and assist parents/guardians through the process. Upon entering, parents will be asked for ID and will wait in the hall while a staff member retrieves the children and brings them to the parents. To ensure safety for all involved, no parents will be permitted beyond the sign-out counter. Students will only be released to people who have been designated on the Reunification Forms or the Yellow Emergency Cards. Individuals MUST show identification when picking up students.

If there was a situation that required the students and staff to evacuate the school building, we have designated two safe sites. The on-campus site is the athletic field in the back of the school. The off-campus evacuation site is Quince Orchard High School. The choice of the site would be dependent on the emergency situation. Parent child reunification would occur at these sites, once public safety has given the “all clear”.

Classroom teachers have discussed these procedures with their students and we will have Fire Drills, Shelter and Lockdown drills periodically throughout the year. In addition, we encourage you to review these procedures with your children. We understand that you will be concerned about the safety of your child in an emergency situation and that is why we appreciate your patience and support during these procedures. We are very fortunate to have such caring and dependable Diamond Elementary staff who all work together for the safety and well-being of all our children.

A video about the safety and security procedures for MCPS schools and offices is located on the MCPS website. This community video provides an overview of our security protocols and explains the clear language that is used in response to incidents, including lockdown, evacuation and shelter in place. The video can be viewed at the following link: <http://www.montgomeryschoolsmd.org/emergency/preparedness/>

Emergency Preparedness Brochures are available that describe the three different safety and security levels— Lockdown, Evacuate and Shelter in Place—are available in six languages on the same website as the video. <http://www.montgomeryschoolsmd.org/uploadedFiles/emergency/preparedness/CrisisPreparedness.pdf>

If we are involved in any evacuations, Shelter or Lockdown emergency situations during the school year, you will be notified as soon as possible by the school through the Connect-Ed email and phone system. If you have any questions about these procedures, please contact your child’s teacher or the main office.

Sincerely,

Daniel Walder
Principal