

South Lake Elementary School

**18201 Contour Road
Gaithersburg, Maryland 20877
Telephone: (301) 670-2229**

Dear Parents/Guardians:

Throughout the year, we will be conducting a practice Code Red drill for our entire student body. All MCPS Schools are now required to conduct at least two drills each year.

- 1. Code Red is a term used to describe an emergency/crisis at an MCPS facility. Code Red alerts staff that imminent danger exists inside or outside the building, and requires moving to an immediate lockdown mode. It requires all students to be accounted for and under supervision. During a Code Red no one, including parents, may enter the building. During a Code Red the telephone will not be answered.**

The staff will follow the procedures listed below:

- When the administrator announces a Code Red, the immediate area outside the classroom will be scanned for any students and staff, allowing them in the classroom. The classroom door will then be immediately locked.**
- If a Code Red is announced and there is no key available to lock the classroom door, students will be safely moved to the nearest location that can be secured or locked.**
- If staff and students are outside the classroom when a Code Red is called, students will be safely moved to the nearest location that can be secured or locked.**
- If moving to the nearest secured classroom/area is not feasible, the room will be made to look "unoccupied" by closing the door, turning off the lights, closing/covering the windows and blinds, moving away from the doors and windows, and remaining silent.**
- When students are in a secured location, lights will be turned off, windows and blinds closed/covered and students moved away from the doors and windows. Everyone will be directed to remain calm and quiet.**
- Staff will document attendance and report any discrepancies to an administrator/designee when it is safe to do so.**

2. Code Blue is a term used to alert staff that an emergency/crisis exist at or near an MCPS facility. It requires all students to be accounted for and under supervision. Administrators may activate a team and set up a command post when appropriate.

- During a Code Blue, classroom lockdown is not required.
- During a Code Blue, exterior doors may be required to be locked.
- During a Code Blue, outdoor classes may be asked to continue instruction inside the building.
- Staff and students ignore bells and wait for instructions.

Please discuss the procedures with your children. We are depending on all students to cooperate so that everyone will be informed as to what to do should an emergency situation occur. We appreciate your support.

SCHOOL CLOSINGS/DELAYS

Emergency Closing/Late Opening

When hazardous road conditions or other emergencies make it advisable to delay the opening of school, or not open at all, MCPS will notify radio stations by 7:00 AM. Buses will usually run two hours later than the usual schedule.

Sometimes, schools close early because of weather conditions, including excessive heat, or other emergencies such as failure of the water supply or heating plant. This is also announced over radio stations and usually means a two-hour early dismissal. It is important that the school know of alternative person(s) responsible for the supervision of a student if no parent is to be at home during the day. Parents should discuss with their child procedures the child is to follow in these emergency situations, especially if the parent might not be at home.

Tune to one of these radio stations for complete information in regard to MCPS closings or delayed openings due to weather: WPGC (1580 AM and 95.5 FM); WMAL (630 AM); WASH (97.1); WTOP (1500 AM). PTA members have found that WTOP radio and WJLA, TV Channel 7, carry up-to-date information as early as 6 AM on snow days. Please avoid calling schools, radio and TV stations, or police (it ties up lines.)

An **Emergency Evacuation Information Plan** card which will be sent to all parents sometime during the early part of the school year. Parents have one of two choices to make: (1) your child is to go on the bus or walk as usual, or (2) your child is to go on the bus or walk to an emergency person at another address within our school district. It is not possible for students to telephone parents or to plan to use the pay telephone—emergency conditions may preclude telephone use.

IMPORTANT: Should it become necessary to evacuate the school building because of an impending disaster and where there may not be time to transport students to their homes, the students will be escorted by the South Lake School staff to the Gaithersburg Library located at the intersection of Montgomery Village and Christopher Avenues. For information regarding such emergencies, stay tuned to your radio or TV.

INFORMATION HOTLINE: For a recorded message with current news about the public schools, call 279-3673. This 24-hour service includes summaries of school board meetings, news of emergency closings, and other items of interest.

Parent-Student Reunification Plan

In response to the continued national warnings about potential acts of terrorism, our school has developed a plan for parent reunification in the event that a crisis situation arises in which parents will be allowed to pick up their children from school. In this event, a large number of parents likely would arrive at the school at the same time. We ask that parents remain calm as they come in through the main door in the front of the school and form a line in the hallway along the side of the main office. Teachers and other assistants will be present to bring your child or children from the classroom to you. Please remember to bring an identification card to verify that you are the child's parent.

If you wish for your child to be picked-up by another adult member of the family or a friend, you must already have provided us with a signed statement giving the school permission to release the child to that particular individual. We will be checking our Emergency Cards and our Emergency Evacuation Information Forms to verify that you have authorized that person to pick-up your child. All individuals coming to pick-up a child who are not the child's parent must come through the front door and report to the Media Center.

Parents should know that access to schools during an incident might be restricted for a variety of reasons beyond our control. Each emergency incident will involve a multitude of factors and our response strategies will depend on the nature and scope of the incident and prevailing conditions. Parents should monitor public notices on radio, television, and the Internet about emergency procedures and updates.

Please make sure that you have filled out an Emergency Card ; and the Emergency Evacuation Information Form and that all the information is current. Completing or updating this information now will ensure a smooth dismissal, should the need arise.

Thank you for your continued support and I will continue to keep you informed and to provide updates for students, parents, and staff as necessary. Please call us if you have any questions or concerns.