



Office of the Principal

DIAMOND ELEMENTARY SCHOOL

4 MARQUIS DRIVE • GAITHERSBURG, MD 20878

PHONE: 240-740-2120 • FAX: 301-840-4506

EXCELLENCE THROUGH EFFORT!

September 15, 2025

Dear Diamond ES Parents & Guardians,

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 safety/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 that is on each child's emergency card information***. The emergency card information form was sent home the first week of school for all parents to update and return to school. On the form, it requests information regarding parent-child reunification. 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 five times during the school year. The first fire drill is conducted during the first few days of the school 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 **Hold, Secure, Lockdown, Evacuate, Shelter** procedures. A **Hold** procedure is where you stay in the school building in your room/area and clear the halls. A **Secure** procedure is where you get inside the school building, remain in your classrooms/assigned area, and the school ensures outside doors are locked. A **Lockdown** procedure is where you lock the room you are in, turn off lights and stay out of sight. An **Evacuate** procedure is where students and staff evacuate the building to a specific location outside of the school. A **Shelter** procedure is a hazard-safety strategy where there could be danger with public safety in the larger community, severe weather, or outside hazardous materials released. **Hold/Secure/Evacuate/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/her designee) of MCPS. When it has been determined by the appropriate authorities that the danger to the school no longer exists, the **Hold/Secure/Evacuate/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/her 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.

If any of these situations extend beyond the regular school day, delay dismissal and/or 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 designated area while a staff member escorts the child(ren) 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 Ridgeview Middle 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>

We ask that parents please use this opportunity to remind your child that school is a safe place to be and we do drills so that we are prepared in the event we need to quickly leave the building. Please know that we take school safety very seriously and any potential threats to school safety are looked into. We also ask that you take this time to speak to your children about how educating on safety can ease some of the anxiety and emotions that some students might have during such events. The safety of our school is our most important responsibility.

Please remind your child to always report concerns about safety to a trusted adult at school. As always, students or parents with concerns about safety should contact any of our administrators or school counselors. MCPS recommends if you ***See Something, Say Something***, and when it comes to social media, ***Report It, Don't Repeat It***.

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 ParentSquare email and phone system. If you have any questions about these procedures, please contact your child's teacher or the main office team.

Sincerely,

Daniel Walder
Principal