

Good afternoon, Kensington Parkwood families,

As we get ready for the 2025-2026 school year, we want to share some key updates that will help make this a safe, engaging, and successful year for all students. We are looking forward to the year ahead and are committed to ensuring our students have the best possible experience.

To ensure a safe, engaging, and successful year for all students, we are implementing a few key changes. These new policies will take effect on the first day of school, August 26, 2025. We'll spend the first few weeks making sure every student and family understands these updates.

Below, you'll find important information about:

- The Student Code of Conduct
- Changes to our Cell Phone Policy
- Curriculum and Textbook Transparency
- Emergency Preparedness

The Student Code of Conduct

This year, we've updated our Student Code of Conduct to help create a safe, supportive, and respectful learning environment for all students. Please [click here](#) to review the MCPS Student Code of Conduct with your child.

These changes are focused on three key areas:

- **Restorative Practices**: We are shifting our approach to discipline by focusing on repairing harm and rebuilding trust. Instead of just using punishment, we will use "restorative practices" to help students take responsibility for their actions and understand the impact of their choices. Our staff will receive ongoing training to lead these important conversations.
- **Clear Expectations and Consequences**: The updated code outlines five levels of consequences for misbehavior, so students and families will have a clear understanding of what to expect if a poor choice is made. We will also consistently use supportive tools like behavior plans, mentoring, and counseling to help your child succeed. You can review the full Code of Conduct [here](#).
- **Home-School Collaboration**: We believe that addressing student behavior is a team effort. If a student is suspended, a mandatory conference will be required with staff, families, and the student to ensure everyone is on the same page and that the student gets the support they need to get back on track.

Student conduct is everyone's responsibility. When expectations aren't met, we must respond as a team, bringing together staff, families, and students to ensure the behavior is addressed and learning continues. The consistent application of the Code of Conduct is vitally important; equally important is consistency with the tools we will use to respond to events and support each child. The supports outlined in the revised Code behavior (intervention plans, check-ins, restorative circles, mentoring, and counseling) are not optional.

Changes to the Cell Phone Policy

We've updated our policy on cell phones and other mobile devices to reduce distractions and increase instructional focus.

- Elementary School Rules: Away all Day! Phones and smart watches should be turned off and put away for the entire school day.

Consequences: If a student does not follow the rules, it could result in a referral to the office, confiscation of the phone, and a required conference with a parent or guardian.

If you have any questions or would like to learn more about these updates, please don't hesitate to review [Regulation COG-RA Personal Mobile Devices](#).

Curriculum and Textbook Transparency

MCPS is taking steps to enhance transparency and ensure consistent implementation of core instructional texts. We are committed to providing you with a clear view of what your children are learning.

- Textbook Lists: Lists of the instructional material to be used in the core areas of instruction will be made available for your review no later than the first week of each quarter. You can review these lists and even schedule an appointment to see the physical books at school.
- Religious Exemptions: If a text on the list conflicts with your families' religious beliefs, you can request that your child be excused from the instruction. A request form will be available on our school webpage soon. If your request is granted, your child will be excused and given other academic work to complete during that time.

There will be more specific information coming soon with links to and instructions for completing the request form.


Emergency Preparedness: The Standard Response Protocol

The safety of our students is always our top priority. As part of this work, this school year, MCPS has adopted the nationally recognized Standard Response Protocol, developed by the [I Love U Guys Foundation](#). This provides a shared language for students, staff, and first responders to use during different types of emergencies.

Communication During a Lockdown

- **What is a Lockdown?** A lockdown is used when there's an immediate, serious threat inside or near the school. Staff will be trained to follow the "locks, lights, out of sight" procedure.
- **What to Expect:** The school will first call 911. We will then provide updates to our school community approximately every 20 minutes (when possible) through our district communication system.
- **Your Role as a Parent: Please do not come to the school or call/text your child during a lockdown.** This can interfere with emergency responders and put you or others at risk. We will provide detailed instructions for a reunification process if needed after the event.

Below is a breakdown of what to do before, during, and after a lockdown for students, staff, and parents.



STANDARD RESPONSE PROTOCOL


INFORMATION FOR PARENTS AND GUARDIANS
Our school has adopted The "I Love U Guys" Foundation's Standard Response Protocol (SRP). Students and staff will be training, practicing, and drilling the protocol.

COMMON LANGUAGE
The Standard Response Protocol (SRP) is based on an all-hazards approach as opposed to individual scenarios. Like the Incident Command System (ICS), SRP utilizes clear common language while allowing for flexibility in protocol.

The premise is simple - there are five specific actions that can be performed during an incident. When communicating these, the action is labeled with a "Term of Art" and is then followed by a "Directive." Execution of the action is performed by active participants, including students, staff, teachers and first responders. The SRP is based on the following actions: Hold, Secure, Lockdown, Evacuate, and Shelter.

LOCKDOWN

"Locks, Lights, Out of Sight"



Students are trained to:


- Move away from sight
- Maintain silence
- Do not open the door

Adults and staff are trained to:

- Recover students from hallway if possible
- Lock the classroom door
- Turn out the lights
- Move away from sight
- Maintain silence
- Do not open the door
- Prepare to evade or defend

EVACUATE

"To a Location"



Students are trained to:


- Leave stuff behind if required to
- If possible, bring their phone
- Follow instructions

Adults and staff are trained to:

- Bring roll sheet and Go Bag (unless instructed not to bring anything with them, dependent on reason for evacuation.)
- Lead students to Evacuation location
- Account for students and adults
- Report injuries or problems using Red Card/Green Card method.

HOLD

"In Your Classroom or Area"



Students are trained to:


- Clear the hallways and remain in their area or room until the "All Clear" is announced
- Do business as usual

Adults and staff are trained to:

- Close and lock the door
- Account for students and adults
- Do business as usual

SECURE

"Get Inside. Lock outside doors"



Students are trained to:


- Return to inside of building
- Do business as usual

Adults and staff are trained to:

- Bring everyone indoors
- Lock the outside doors
- Increase situational awareness
- Account for students and adults
- Do business as usual

SHELTER

"State Hazard and Safety Strategy"



Hazards might include:

- Tornado
- Hazmat
- Earthquake
- Tsunami

Safety Strategies might include:

- Evacuate to shelter area
- Seal the room
- Drop, cover and hold
- Get to high ground

Students are trained in:

- Appropriate Hazards and Safety Strategies

Adults and staff are trained in:

- Appropriate Hazards and Safety Strategies
- Accounting for students and adults
- Report injuries or problems using Red Card/Green Card method.

Staff Responsibilities

- **Before:** Understand emergency protocols, have your classroom set up for safety, and participate in all drills.
- **During:** Lock and secure doors, turn off lights, and move students to a safe, hidden location. Do not respond to fire alarms or knocks on the door unless directed by authorities.
- **After:** Remain in lockdown until an "All Clear" is given. Provide emotional support to students and avoid giving tests or quizzes immediately after the event.

Student Responsibilities

- **Before:** Actively participate in all emergency drills and talk with your parents about what you've learned.
- **During:** Move quickly to the safe area in your classroom or the nearest secure room. Silence your phone and follow all instructions from staff members. Stay calm and quiet.
- **After:** Talk with your parents or a trusted adult about how you're feeling and ask for help if you're feeling overwhelmed or anxious.

Parent Responsibilities

- **Before:** Make sure your emergency contact information is up to date and talk with your child about the importance of safety drills.
- **During:** Do not come to the school. Avoid calling or texting your child, as this could be a distraction. Wait for communication from the school or district.
- **After:** Listen to your child's concerns and reassure them that they are safe. If they continue to show signs of stress, please reach out to school staff or a mental health professional for support.

Our goal is simple: a safe, structured, and engaging school year where every student can succeed.

Thank you for your partnership.

Principal Ross

Kensington Parkwood Elementary School

