

# KEEPING ALL STUDENTS SAFE



**S**chools are among the safest places a child can be. One reason is the extensive planning that schools do to protect the children in our care.

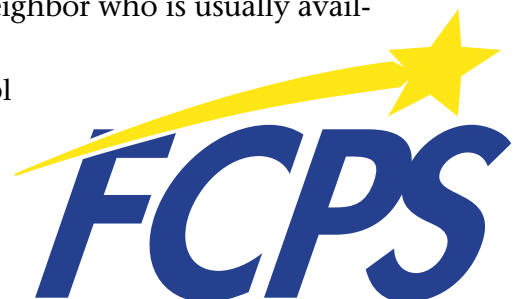
Every Frederick County public school has a student safety plan, with staff prepared to manage situations from severe weather incidents to power outages and more. In addition, local safety experts—including the Frederick County Office of Emergency Management, Sheriff's Department, police, fire marshal and many others—stand ready to assist as needed.

**Parents can help keep children safe by understanding and following these school security procedures:**

- **Shelter in place:** Sometimes schools protect students by keeping them indoors away from hazardous materials in the air outside. This might occur as a precaution, for example, if a truck carrying chemicals had an accident on the highway near a school.
  - In a **partial lockdown**, parents and authorized visitors may enter and leave the school. Schools conduct activities as usual inside the building, however, students are not allowed outside unsupervised.
  - In a **full lockdown**, school doors are locked. Students, staff and others are instructed not to enter or leave the school until the situation is clear. Parents will keep students safest by waiting until the lockdown is lifted, not coming to the school, and staying informed through methods described on the back of this page.
- **Evacuate students to an alternative location:** Every school has procedures for moving students out of the building as a safety precaution. This might happen, for example, if a fire alarm is activated. Several times each year, students have practice drills to evacuate the school and assemble at a safe distance until instructed it is safe to re-enter. In addition to outdoor locations, school staff or local safety officials may direct students to a nearby school or other community building.
- **Dismiss students early:** There are times when conditions such as a water or power outage may cause schools to dismiss students early.
  - Pre-arrange emergency back-up care with a neighbor or relative.
  - Teach your child what to do in case school closes when you are not at home.
  - Keep your child's Student Information Card emergency contact information current, including the name and number of a family member or neighbor who is usually available when you are not.

Bus drivers are responsible for monitoring elementary school riders to make sure they are not returning home to empty houses. If no one is home or at the emergency back-up location, students are returned to school and supervised until an emergency contact is located.

*(Please see additional information on the back)*



**How can parents get information in an emergency situation?**

FCPS communicates multiple ways in an emergency:

- ✓ **www.fcps.org** The school system's Web site home page displays emergency bulletins and updates.
- ✓ **Email:** Go to **www.fcps.org** and click on the blue envelope to subscribe to **Find Out First** email for emergency notices. Many parents find this a good way to get notices at work. FCPS sends messages about the whole school system dismissing early, such as closing due to inclement weather, to everyone subscribed for emergency email. For faster delivery, FCPS generally sends emergency email notices about a particular school only to subscribers who registered for news about that school. Keep your Find Out First school selections and grade levels up to date.
- ✓ **Radio/Television:** The FCPS Communication Services Division asks local radio and television stations, including FCPS-TV (cable channel 18), to announce urgent news. In the event of weather-related closing, the FCPS Transportation Department contacts numerous regional radio and TV stations.
- ✓ **Phone:** There may be times we have to ask parents not to call the school directly because we need to keep phone lines open to remain in touch with safety experts. If that happens, we will ask the news media to announce an alternative number for urgent communication.

**Keeping schools safe is everyone's responsibility.** That's why schools collaborate with local, state and federal health, safety and emergency personnel and parents. To communicate concerns about threats to school or student safety, please call your local school and speak with an administrator. Another useful resource is the Maryland Safe Schools Tip Hotline: 1-877-636-6332, toll-free.

