

Montgomery County Public Schools (MCPS) has been a leader in school emergency preparedness. For well over a decade, Code Blue and Code Red procedures have been used to keep students safe during emergencies that occur on or near school grounds.

Federal safety guidelines contained in the **National Incident Management System (NIMS)** have since been adopted by both Maryland and Montgomery County. An important component of these guidelines is the use of plain, easily understood language to communicate during an emergency.

Lockdown—Evacuate—Shelter, or LES, is MCPS' updated emergency preparedness program. The program complies with NIMS guidelines and was implemented in the 2011-2012 school year.

Here's how it works.

LES will use the terms lockdown, evacuate, and shelter to identify the type of response that is appropriate to the emergency situation.

Additional information is available by calling the MCPS Department of School Safety and Security at 301-279-3066 or on the MCPS website at www.montgomeryschoolsmd.org/



EMERGENCY PREPAREDNESS

Information for Students, Parents, and Guardians

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MONTGOMERY COUNTY PUBLIC SCHOOLS
Rockville, Maryland

MCPS Prepares for Emergencies

LOCKDOWN • EVACUATE • SHELTER

Lockdown—Evacuate—Shelter (LES)

The new program will use the terms lockdown, evacuate, and shelter to identify the response that has been implemented during an emergency.

▲ **Lockdown** is an emergency alert and response to imminent danger in the school or on campus. Students, staff, and visitors report to the nearest securable location under adult supervision. An administrator ensures that 911 is called to request immediate assistance. Students, staff, and visitors remain secured until police have controlled the situation.

▲ **Evacuate** is an emergency alert and response called by an administrator when it is too dangerous to remain in the building. During a fire evacuation, students, staff, and visitors must leave by the nearest exit and go to a location at least 50 feet away from the building. In other than a fire emergency, an administrator may call a directed evacuation which requires students, staff, and visitors to move to a location that is at least 300 feet away from the building.

▲ **Shelter** is an emergency alert and response called by an administrator when it is too dangerous to leave the school. There are three types of shelter alerts:

- **Public Safety Shelter** is used if there are public safety actions occurring in the community near the school. Exterior doors are secured, and classroom instruction continues. Public safety officials will notify the school when the situation is under control.

- **Severe Weather Shelter** is used when a high wind warning has been issued for the community near the school. All students, staff, and visitors—including those located in

relocatable classrooms—are brought into the school's main building. Everyone in the building reports to the designated weather-safe areas. Staff monitors the weather reports.

- **Outside Hazardous Materials Release** requires students, staff, and visitors to be brought into the main building; however, relocatable classrooms are evacuated to the main building only if safe to do so and in consultation with public safety officials. Exterior doors and windows are secured. Ventilation systems are shut down. Public safety officials will notify the school when the situation is under control.

Parent/Child Reunification Guidelines

The MCPS Parent/Child Reunification Plan guidelines are important information that parents and guardians need to know before there is an emergency at your child's school.

A school may experience an emergency that requires that students be dismissed from school other than the usual time or location. In these rare instances, MCPS will use a procedure known as the Parent/Child Reunification (PCR) Plan. This plan is designed to be a safe and orderly procedure used to reunite students and parents in the event of an emergency. Depending on the situation, the PCR plan could be implemented at your child's school or at an off-site location if the school building is unsafe.

When a PCR is necessary, MCPS will use several means of communicating the necessary information to the parents and guardians by using Connect-ED phone calls, QuickNotes, press releases, Twitter accounts, and the MCPS website. During an emergency, the child's parent may not be available

to pick up the child; therefore, it is prudent for parents and guardians to obtain from their school an Authorization for Release form. The parent or guardian can complete this form, in advance of an emergency, in order to authorize a family member, friend, neighbor, etc., to pick up the child in case the parent or guardian is not available to do so. Be sure to notify whomever you have authorized to pick up your child.

In addition, parents, guardians, and authorized individuals can help facilitate a safe and orderly PCR by adhering to the following procedures:

Subscribe to the communication tools on the MCPS website: <http://www.montgomeryschoolsmd.org>.

Come to school only after MCPS has notified you that the school is ready to begin the PCR process.

Bring personal identification to assist school staff who will be identifying people that have been approved to pick up students. Custody issues remain in effect.

Park only in approved areas—do not park in the bus loop; do not block entrances or exits.

Follow instructions from school staff members as you enter and leave the building.

Safety and security is an MCPS priority. Your child's school always will take precautions to prevent an emergency; however, if an emergency does occur, MCPS staff members will protect and shelter your children until they are reunited with you.

