

A Message from the Holmdel Township Board of Education

Holmdel School District Security

The Holmdel Board of Education and the School Administration consider the safety of the children and staff as a top priority. The following article will provide insight into some of the current safety measures being implemented at all of the Holmdel Schools as well as plans for continued safety enhancement going forward.

We all remember fire drills from our own school days. A time to line up with classmates in an orderly fashion and walk out of the school to a pre-assigned safe place. Now, however, in addition to fire drills, we have “security drills” and “table top drills,” which are defined in the excerpted material below. School Administration, in coordination with Holmdel Township Police Department and the district’s Director of Operations Mr. William Balicki set the schedules for the various drills in August. Representatives from the Holmdel Township Police Department attend each of the security drills and provide feedback after its completion.

The security plans are updated annually by the Director of Operations after attending security workshops, such as the School Safety and Security Plan Training held in mid-December (presented by the NJDOE School Safety and Security Unit). This valuable experience will provide insight for our next updated security plan. Excerpts from our School Security Drill Guide are provided below. The full document can be viewed on our Holmdel Schools website.

The Holmdel BOE and School Administration have also implemented enhanced security at all of our Holmdel schools. For example, exterior doors now remain closed and locked at the end of the school day. Until 4pm, parents and students needing access must be “buzzed” in by the Main Office Staff. After 4pm, access to the buildings for non Board approved activities will not be allowed. Students participating in sports will either be let in by school monitors or by coaches using their access card.

Entry into the school buildings on Saturday and Sunday is by card access only. No exterior doors will be left unlocked. The card access system provides an identity marker each time it is utilized. Therefore, there is an audit trail for School Administration to know who is entering the buildings and when. Board-approved user groups have designated personnel with swipe cards and time allotted for their use. It is necessary for a parent volunteer to monitor the exterior door and allow access. User groups accessing Holmdel buildings and facilities have been asked to assign a volunteer to the respective door. Exterior doors will not be unlocked, nor should they be propped open. This is certainly a small inconvenience for the sake of the safety and welfare of our children and staff.

Excerpts from **School Security Drill Guide**:

Definitions

School Security Drill: An exercise, other than a fire drill, to practice procedures that respond to an emergency situation including, but not limited to, non-fire evacuation, lockdown, or active shooter situation and that is similar in duration to a fire drill.

Tabletop Activity: This activity involves key personnel discussing simulated scenarios in an informal setting. Tabletops can be used to assess plans, policies, and procedures.

Full Scale Exercise: This is a multi-agency, multi-jurisdictional activity involving actual deployment of resources in a coordinated response as if a real incident had occurred. This exercise tests many components of one or more capabilities within emergency response and recovery, and is typically used to assess plans, procedures and coordinated response under crisis conditions.

Schools are required to conduct a school security drill within the first 15 days of the beginning of the school year.

Schools are required to hold a minimum of two of each of the following security drills annually:

- *Active shooter;*
- *Evacuation (non-fire);*
- *Bomb threat;*
- *Lockdown.*

Examples of other types of security drills:

- *Shelter-in-place;*
- *Reverse evacuation;*
- *Evacuation to relocation site;*
- *Testing of school's notification system and procedures;*
- *Testing of school's communication system and procedures;*
- *Tabletop exercise;*
- *Full scale exercise.*

Employee Training:

A training CD Rom, Critical Incident Response: Procedures for School Administrators, Faculty and Staff, was developed by the Office of Homeland Security & Preparedness in collaboration with the Department of Education to enhance regional and local training for school personnel on procedures to follow during an emergency. This resource was distributed to all schools during the summer of 2009 and fulfills the training requirement of the statute.

In Conclusion:

One of our most important considerations, as members of the Holmdel School Board of Education, and as parents, is to be ever vigilant with the safety and welfare of the children of Holmdel. It is clear that the recent enhancements to security, i.e., utilizing access cards, additional security drills, and the continued training of school personnel are measures to keep our children safe. We will continue to be vigilant and further investigate proactive measures to improve school security.

On behalf of our Board colleagues,

Dennis Pavlik, Chairperson of Building & Grounds

Victor DeSario, Board Member

There are two easy ways to stay informed of district/schools happenings. Please visit the district website at www.holmdelschools.org for event updates, school announcements, district progress reports, board meeting information, and much more. You can also subscribe to our E-Alert at <http://www.holmdel.k12.nj.us/home/joinlist.shtm> to receive email alerts on your choice of topics, such as school security alerts, committee notes, parent support group minutes, the district calendar, career opportunities, and school lunch menus.