

## LETTER 4.2: SCHOOL SECURITY MEASURES

A brief letter to parents concerning the security measures in a school can help to lend reassurance and avoid misunderstandings.

Dear Parents:

To protect our students and staff, we ask that all Alexander Hamilton Elementary School parents, guests, and visitors use the following procedures:

- Go to the office, sign in, present identification if necessary, and obtain a pass before visiting halls or classrooms.
- Enter the school *only* by the front doors.

Please note that the outside doors will be locked at all times during the school day after the tardy bell rings each morning. Students and staff can exit through all outside doors, but entry will not be possible.

Outside and inside security drills will be held occasionally to help ensure the safety of our students. We will inform you of any further security measures that are developed by our staff.

We realize that these security procedures may be somewhat inconvenient for parents, students, and staff. However, it is necessary for us to take these special precautions to protect our children.

## LETTER 4.3: NOTICE OF EMERGENCY PREPAREDNESS PLANS

The superintendent of a large urban school district wrote this letter to parents at a time when preparations for a major event in the city were being made. The plans envision a high level of security.

Dear Parents:

The Hamilton City School District, in conjunction with the Hamilton City Police Department, is working to ensure that its schools are safe and employees are ready to respond to emergencies. The district has developed comprehensive emergency preparedness plans, and police officers will be training district administrators how to respond and keep students and employees safe during a variety of emergency situations.

Every school in the Hamilton City School District has a comprehensive emergency preparedness plan, which lists what to do and whom to call in the event of an emergency. The plan covers natural disasters, such as fires and earthquakes, and emergencies made by people, including bomb threats, intrusions, and hazardous material spills. The plan includes maps with evacuation routes and locations clearly marked.

The police department has reviewed these plans, and SWAT team leaders have toured the schools in an effort to become familiar with the layout and design of each school. In addition, the police department has secured grant money to print a quick-reference guide, which lists four basic steps to take during an emergency. These guides will be distributed to each school and should be kept by the phones in offices and classrooms.

Realizing that written plans and guides are not enough, the district is teaming with the police department to offer training to school administrators. The administrators will be trained how to respond in critical situations and what steps to take to keep students and employees safe. Principals will then share the information they learn with their teachers and staff members.

We do not expect principals or teachers to pull these plans off the shelves and begin reading when an emergency happens. Rather, the plans and training are learning tools. By reviewing the plans on a regular basis and taking part in the police training, administrators will have the knowledge and confidence to respond quickly and correctly in the event of an emergency.

Communication is a vital tool in emergency situations, and the district has taken steps to improve communication between schools and the police. After meeting with district technicians, Hamilton City police officers now have the ability to patch directly into the district's two-way radio system. That connection will facilitate instant communication between the police and school leaders and will allow the police to respond appropriately. The district has successfully conducted several emergency radio drills and intends to include the police in future drills. The district has also supplied the police department the number and location of every phone in the district. If the police officers need to reach a certain classroom or office, they will have the correct phone number.

We are grateful to the Hamilton City Police Department for its willingness to help make our schools safer. As we have worked together to improve our security plans, we have established a positive relationship that I believe will last well into the future and will be a great benefit to the city, its citizens, and children.