



Sun Prairie Area School District

Futures depend on us...every child, every day.

Dear Sun Prairie Families,

Our focus is always on making our schools safe and welcoming places for our students, staff, and visitors. The Sun Prairie Area School District has made and continues to make positive progress on addressing and supporting the safety and security of our students, staff, parents/guardians, and visitors. Safety and security are priorities for everyone in the district. We realize that when tragedy strikes, we all want reassurances that we are doing our best to keep everyone in our district safe.

We recognize that the best first step in creating a safe environment is to develop strong, positive relationships with our students, their families, and our staff members. We start at the very youngest ages and continue throughout the high school years to help our students understand and value their own gifts and the talents and contributions of others. We provide numerous opportunities for students to work with and learn from and about each other. We provide a diverse array of content areas to actively engage students, encouraging them to build on their interest areas.

We infuse our classes at all ages with social, emotional learning and positive behavioral interventions and support. Our [Student Services team](#) and our teaching staff members provide extensive support for students and their families. We use the [Wisconsin Comprehensive School Counseling Model](#) to further support our students. We are proud that our School Counselors, Psychologists, Social Workers, and Health Assistants are strong contributing partners in our students' total educational experience.

We know that adults would like advice on how to speak with their children about tragic events and thus we are providing a link to The [National Association of School Psychologists](#). This organization is an excellent resource for schools, parents/guardians, and community members. At the end of this document, we are providing the NASP's complete listing of suggestions on how to discuss violent situations with children at the end of this document.

We also wanted you to know the practical, day-to-day activities we are involved in to support safety and security. Creating a safe and secure environment includes a comprehensive program that impacts every component of our daily operations. Over the past four years we have made significant strides to increase the safety and security in our district including the following:

- Annually updating, distributing, and reviewing our Emergency Procedures in every building.
- Updating the Building Safety & Security Guides for each building.

- Our safety protocols are built on the following guidance: [National Incident Management System from the Federal Emergency Management Association](#), [Department of Emergency Management Risk Evaluation and Mitigation Strategy](#), [Department of Education Safe Schools](#), [Wisconsin Emergency Management Guidance](#), [Ready Wisconsin](#), [See Something. Say Something](#)
- Installation and enhancement of video surveillance at all district buildings that both the district and Sun Prairie Police can view.
- Installation of the Raptor entry system at Sun Prairie High School.
- The District has participating members in the [Wisconsin School Safety Coordinators Association](#)
 - Has a fully certified School Safety Coordinator
 - Has five additional district staff members becoming fully certified
 - Has a fully certified Chemical Hygiene Officer
 - Will be adding three additional chemical hygiene officers in 2018
 - Staff members participate in annual training
- Creation of a team of ten district, community, and county individuals who are certified to train staff in the [A.L.I.C.E.](#) protocols to respond to an active threat.
 - The district is sponsoring an [A.L.I.C.E. certification training in August](#) for all who are interested
 - Working in collaboration with the Dane County Sheriff's Office to sponsor training opportunities.
 - [Deputy Sheriff Josalyn Longley](#) has provided extensive training for community businesses, parochial schools, and organizations. She regularly trains as a member of our Sun Prairie Area School District team.
- Training all staff members 4K-12 & District Office in the [A.L.I.C.E.](#) protocols.
- Conducting training drills regularly in the following areas:
 - Fire (conducted every month when children are present in a school)
 - Conducted in collaboration with the Sun Prairie Fire Marshall
 - Severe Weather/Tornado (conducted at least once annually - APR)
 - Conducted with various emergency agencies
 - Active Threat (conducted at least twice annually, or more on request)
 - Conducted under the direction of the Sun Prairie Police and the Dane County Sheriff's office
 - Bus evacuation drills (conducted twice annually)
- Specialized drills that involve city Emergency Resources
- Regular inspections by the Sun Prairie Fire Marshall
- Conducting tabletop exercises with various groups and schools
- District wide training in [CPR](#), [CCR](#), [AED](#), and [First Aid](#)
 - Numerous staff members are certified in these areas
- The first district in Dane County to conduct training for [Stop the Bleed](#) Certified Trainers
- Working with the Sun Prairie Police Department and the bus company to create and distribute information on traffic safety for students, parents/guardians, and community members
- Creation and implementation of a District Safety and Security Oversight Committee that includes the following sub-committees:
 - Interagency Safety & Security Committee
 - Chemical Hygiene Committee
 - Human Resource Safety Committee

- Social, Emotional, and Mental Health Safety Committee
- Technology Safety & Security Committee
- Facilities & Warehouse Safety & Security Committee
- Ongoing inspections of air quality, vents, and hoods
- Close monitoring, and regular inspections of playground equipment by a Certified Playground Safety Inspector
- Ground crews are supervised by Certified Pesticide Applicators
- Pool operations are supervised by a Certified Pool Operator, Aquatics Facility Operator, Lifeguard and certified trainer for lifeguards

Safety of our students and staff is our highest priority. We commit to continually working to grow, improve, and learn in all areas of safety.

Thank you,
Brad Saron, Superintendent

Recommendations from the National Association of School Psychologists on talking to children about violence.

High profile acts of violence, particularly in schools, can confuse and frighten children who may feel in danger or worry that their friends or loved-ones are at risk. They will look to adults for information and guidance on how to react. Parents and school personnel can help children feel safe by establishing a sense of normalcy and security and talking with them about their fears.

1. **Reassure children that they are safe.** Emphasize that schools are very safe. Validate their feelings. Explain that all feelings are okay when a tragedy occurs. Let children talk about their feelings, help put them into perspective, and assist them in expressing these feelings appropriately.
2. **Make time to talk.** Let their questions be your guide as to how much information to provide. Be patient; children and youth do not always talk about their feelings readily. Watch for clues that they may want to talk, such as hovering around while you do the dishes or yard work. Some children prefer writing, playing music, or doing an art project as an outlet. Young children may need concrete activities (such as drawing, looking at picture books, or imaginative play) to help them identify and express their feelings.
3. **Keep your explanations developmentally appropriate.**
 - **Early elementary school** children need brief, simple information that should be balanced with reassurances that their school and homes are safe and that adults are there to protect them. Give simple examples of school safety like reminding children about exterior doors being locked, child monitoring efforts on the playground, and emergency drills practiced during the school day.
 - **Upper elementary and early middle school** children will be more vocal in asking questions about whether they truly are safe and what is being done at their school. They may need assistance separating reality from fantasy. Discuss efforts of school and community leaders to provide safe schools.
 - **Upper middle school and high school** students will have strong and varying opinions about the causes of violence in schools and society. They will share concrete suggestions about how to make school safer and how to prevent tragedies in society. Emphasize the role that students have in maintaining safe schools by following school safety guidelines (e.g. not providing building access to strangers, reporting strangers on campus, reporting threats to the school safety made by students or community members, etc.), communicating any personal safety concerns to school administrators, and accessing support for emotional needs.

4. **Review safety procedures.** This should include procedures and safeguards at school and at home. Help children identify at least one adult at school and in the community to whom they go if they feel threatened or at risk.
5. **Observe children's emotional state.** Some children may not express their concerns verbally. Changes in behavior, appetite, and sleep patterns can also indicate a child's level of anxiety or discomfort. In most children, these symptoms will ease with reassurance and time. However, some children may be at risk for more intense reactions. Children who have had a past traumatic experience or personal loss, suffer from depression or other mental illness, or with special needs may be at greater risk for severe reactions than others. Seek the help of mental health professional if you are at all concerned.
6. **Limit television viewing of these events.** Limit television viewing and be aware if the television is on in common areas. Developmentally inappropriate information can cause anxiety or confusion, particularly in young children. Adults also need to be mindful of the content of conversations that they have with each other in front of children, even teenagers, and limit their exposure to vengeful, hateful, and angry comments that might be misunderstood.
7. **Maintain a normal routine.** Keeping to a regular schedule can be reassuring and promote physical health. Ensure that children get plenty of sleep, regular meals, and exercise. Encourage them to keep up with their schoolwork and extracurricular activities but don't push them if they seem overwhelmed.

Suggested Points to Emphasize When Talking to Children

- Schools are safe places. School staff works with parents and public safety providers (local police and fire departments, emergency responders, hospitals, etc.) to keep you safe.
- The school building is safe because ... (cite specific school procedures). We all play a role in the school safety. Be observant and let an adult know if you see or hear something that makes you feel uncomfortable, nervous or frightened.
- There is a difference between reporting, tattling or gossiping. You can provide important information that may prevent harm either directly or anonymously by telling a trusted adult what you know or hear.
- Although there is no absolute guarantee that something bad will never happen, it is important to understand the difference between the **possibility** of something happening and **probability** that it will affect you (our school community).
- Senseless violence is hard for everyone to understand. Doing things that you enjoy, sticking to your normal routine, and being with friends and family help make us feel better and keep us from worrying about the event.
- Sometimes people do bad things that hurt others. They may be unable to handle their anger, under the influence of drugs or alcohol, or suffering from mental illness. Adults (parents, teachers, police officers, doctors, faith leaders) work very hard to get those people help and keep them from hurting others. It is important for all of us

to know how to get help if we feel really upset or angry and to stay away from drugs and alcohol.

- Stay away from guns and other weapons. Tell an adult if you know someone has a gun. Access to guns is one of the leading risk factors for deadly violence.
- Violence is never a solution to personal problems. Students can be part of the positive solution by participating in anti-violence programs at school, learning conflict mediation skills, and seeking help from an adult if they or a peer is struggling with anger, depression, or other emotions they cannot control.

NASP has additional information for parents and educators on school safety, violence prevention, children's trauma reactions, and crisis response at www.nasponline.org.