



GOOD SHEPHERD SCHOOL

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October, 2016

Dear Good Shepherd Parents,

This month, we will continue to practice Emergency Drills at Good Shepherd School. This will include fire and lockdown drills. Teachers will begin to introduce *Lockdown procedures* and we will practice a whole school drill on, **October 27th**.

In preparing this communication, I realize that even the mention of the word “lockdown” introduces an unwelcome thought and raises questions and concerns. Please find a series of Questions & Answers to further explain what a “lockdown” means and our procedures for addressing this scenario, however unlikely, in our school. I realize that an actual lockdown scenario is intensely stressful for everyone involved. While the incidence of threatening behaviors in our school is very, very low, I hope you will find this knowledge of our procedures to be reassuring. Please don’t hesitate to contact me directly with any questions: geraldinelavery@gsschoolnyc.org

What is a “school lockdown”?

A lockdown is an emergency procedure designed to protect occupants from external harm or contain the movement of occupants when an intruder, or a restricted weapon, is present in the building. In a school lockdown, only emergency response teams from law enforcement will enter the school. A “lockdown” means that people must stay where they are and cannot leave until escorted outside by response personnel.

How are faculty/staff prepared to handle a lockdown situation?

Good Shepherd faculty and staff are trained in how to recognize and respond to lockdown scenarios. In the weeks leading up to first whole school practice drill, your child may come home talking about “Red Light”. “Red Light” is the code for lockdown. Teachers will practice with your child what to do and where to hide when they hear “Red Light”. Teachers and staff know the procedure to end a lockdown.

Why do children have to practice a lockdown drill? Does it create a stressful situation?

Particularly in emergency situations, we are all more confident, less anxious, and better able to cope when we know there is a plan in place. An essential part of the lockdown drill in our school is for teachers to lead conversations about the experience before and afterwards to reassure the children and help them develop new coping and self-calming techniques for the future.

May I communicate with my child/school staff during a lockdown?

It's expected that many parents will feel an urgent need to contact their child in a lockdown situation. However, any sound from a cellphone during a lockdown can bring awareness to the presence of an individual or group, placing them, and everyone in their vicinity, at greater risk. For this reason, students and staff are not permitted to use cellphones during a lockdown situation. Communications both in and out of a school under lockdown are restricted to law enforcement personnel and their designates—including Father Robert, Mrs. Walsh, Mrs. Kennedy and myself.

Sincerely,

Mrs. G Lavery

Principal