

St. James Major Catholic School

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September 28, 2020

Dear Parents/Guardians:

The **Algonquin and Lakeshore Catholic District School Board** has a primary responsibility to ensure the safety of students and staff inside Board buildings and on Board property. In partnership with emergency services in the area, a board-wide plan has been developed to address threats to school safety. This plan includes procedures known as **Evacuation, Shelter in Place, Hold and Secure, Bomb Threat/Explosive Incident, and Lockdown.**

An **Evacuation** occurs when all students and staff are removed from the school (e.g. a fire or gas leak in the school). A **Shelter in Place** occurs when there is an environmental or weather related situation in the area (e.g. chemical spill). A **Hold and Secure** is initiated when there are circumstances in the vicinity of the school that could endanger the safety of students and/or staff (e.g. criminal event near the school but not on school property). A **Bomb Threat and Explosive Incident** procedures are initiated when a threat of a bomb or explosive device is received by a school either by phone or some other means (mail or social media for example). **Lockdown** procedures are initiated when there is a threat of violence within the school (e.g. student with a weapon).

In order for all students and staff to become familiar with expectations during a threat to school safety, our school will be practicing threat response procedures as we have normally done with fire drills. In a real emergency situation, signs will be posted on the entrance doors indicating that the school has activated a **Shelter in Place** or **Hold and Secure**. The doors will be locked, and no one will be allowed into the school. In a real **Lockdown** situation, the school will not be able to post signs and lock doors because the imminent threat is in the school building and all staff and students will be actively responding to the threat. If an **Evacuation** should occur, emergency services will secure the school site.

I understand that a parent or guardian would be concerned for their child during a response to a potential threat to school safety. I want to assure you that the school is prepared for any of these risks. However, if a real emergency is in effect, you will be unable to contact your child or school personnel while the situation is being resolved. If our school should activate the Threats to School Safety Procedures because of an imminent threat, the Board's Communications Officer will use all media available to update families of the situation as it unfolds.

For the safety of our students and staff, **two Lockdown** practice drills and **one Bomb Threat** practice drill will be communicated and held when this option becomes available through our COVID-19 Protocols:

Lockdown Practice Drills:

1. TBD based on COVID-19 Protocols
2. TBD based on COVID-19 Protocols

Bomb Threat Practice Drill:

1. TBD based on COVID-19 Protocols

Please call me at the school if you should have questions.

Sincerely,

Katie Williamson
Vice-Principal

