

St. James Major Catholic School

14608 Hwy 38, Sharbot Lake, Ontario K0H 2P0

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September 5, 2023

Dear Parent/Guardian: The Algonquin and Lakeshore Catholic District School Board (ALCDSB) and our community partners are committed to providing safe and caring school communities and learning environments for students, staff, school visitors and community members. We believe that each person should be able to study, work and attend our Catholic schools in an environment that is safe and free from threats of violence. The ALCDSB acknowledges the importance of promoting and supporting appropriate and positive student behaviours in schools. It is our hope that all members of our community demonstrate respect for the dignity of all persons.

In 2011, the ALCDSB and its community partners adopted the ALCDSB Community Threat Assessment Protocol (CTAP). This risk/threat assessment process is designed to be a proactive and multi-disciplinary approach to developing intervention plans that address threats of violence, threatening behaviour and instances where the emotional and/or physical safety of individuals may be at risk. Recognizing that violence prevention in our schools and neighbourhoods is a community responsibility, the risk/threat assessment process will be initiated by school administration and/or community partners when behaviours have been identified that pose a potential risk to an individual or to others.

Providing notice to parents/guardians of the risk/threat assessment process ensures that parents/guardians are aware that threatening or high-risk behaviours will be investigated. This also recognizes the important role that the parents/guardians have in supporting and participating in the process itself. For further information, the Community Threat Assessment Protocol (CTAP) document may be found on our website at <http://www.alcdsb.on.ca/Board/Policies/Lists/Documents/CTAP2016.pdf>.

Sincerely,

Carey Smith-Dewey
Superintendent of Education

Message to Parents, Guardians

Re: Procedures for Threats to School Safety Keeping Our Students and Staff Safe

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 this 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 and when it is safe to do so.

For the safety of our students and staff, two lockdown practice drills and one Bomb Threat practice will be held during the school year. The practice lockdown drills are scheduled for: Wednesday, September 20 @ 10:00 Wednesday, May 15, @ 2:00.

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

Sincerely, Mr. Wells Vice Principal

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