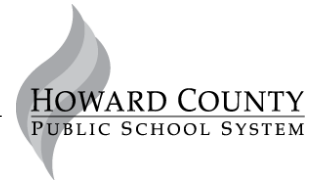


ATHOLTON ELEMENTARY SCHOOL

6700 Seneca Drive • Columbia, MD 21046 • 410-313-6853 • (F) 410-313-7410 • www.hcpss.org/aes



Denise Lancaster, Principal

Melanie Secula, Assistant Principal

September 19, 2014

Dear Parent/Guardian,

The safety of your children, our staff, and our school will always be our highest priority. Every year, with the help of Central Office, we develop an Emergency Operations Plan. In the event of an emergency situation at Atholton Elementary School or one of the areas adjacent to it, the plan provides a framework for emergency operations that will enhance our ability to protect students, staff, visitors, and school facilities. Additionally, the plan sets forth the staff members' responsibilities during and after a wide range of emergency and disaster situations that may occur. This plan is not intended to restrict options, describe or mandate every action that should be taken during the response to an emergency, or limit judgment. It has been prepared in compliance with legal requirements and in cooperation with the Howard County Public School System's Safety, Environment, & Risk Management Office.

This year, our school will hold sixteen emergency drills, with the scheduling and scenario for each drill determined by the administration. At least four of these drills must be "no notice" drills-i.e. no one other than the administrators may know the precise date or time for the drill before it occurs. The drills shall not be held on the same day or at the same time as other drills, and they must be run at various times both during and after school hours. All building occupants must obey the instructions given when the alarm sounds or drill notification is made.

In the event of an emergency situation at our school or one of the areas adjacent to it, the administration may implement one of the following procedures. An administrator serves as Incident Commander until Howard County emergency response personnel arrive at the school.

Duck, Cover, and Hold: In the event of a situation where we need to take cover, students will duck under their desks or tables, cover their heads with their arms and hands, and remain in place until they get the "all clear" signal from administration. All visitors, parents, or staff must participate in this procedure. In most situations, the building will evacuate after the incident has subsided.

Lockdown: In a lockdown, exterior and interior doors are locked. Students are told to stay away from windows and keep low. Curtains or blinds are closed. Lights are off. Only quiet talking is allowed. If the threat is outside, students and staff who are outside at recess or in a PE class, will come back into the building. Signs are posted on doors instructing anyone who tries to get inside the building to leave the school premises immediately. If the threat is inside, then students and staff who are outside will move away from the building.

Modified Lockdown: The modified lockdown takes similar precautions, but allows more movement within the building. Students may continue to work at their desks with lights on. They may go to the restroom. Access to the building will be restricted.

Evacuation – In the event of a situation where we need to evacuate the building, students, staff, and all other occupants will exit the building via the closest safe exit and assemble in the following predetermined locations: Back blacktop or sidewalk near entrance/exit of the front door (depending on location in the building). Students

and staff outside the building will assemble in the following predetermined locations: students/staff on the playground will assemble on the blacktop, students and staff in the outdoor classroom will assemble at the front of the school. Staff shall take roll and indicate to the administrator if all students and adults are present. Students and staff remain in the evacuation area and await instructions from the command post administrator.

Off-Site Evacuation: In this response, we may determine that we need to evacuate the students further away from the building to ensure their safety. We have designated three locations for our off-site evacuation and transportation to those sites may be provided by HCPSS if necessary. Our sites are: Atholton High School and Oakland Mills High School. The Christ Memorial Presbyterian Church will be used if we need to walk to the evacuation site. Students will be released, through “release gates,” to parents or other individuals listed on the student’s emergency form. Please keep in mind that no student is released to any individual who is not specifically listed on the student’s emergency form, including an older sibling. All adults must show photo identification when picking up a student.

Shelter-in-Place: These procedures involve housing students in the building until the danger has passed. The direction to Shelter-in-Place will only be implemented in a situation where the environment is so critically dangerous that it would be unsafe for parents to travel to schools and for schools to open their doors thereby exposing those inside to an external hazard. In order to maintain the safety of our students and staff during this type of situation we will not be releasing students until we are directed that the environment is safe.

Reverse Evacuation: In this procedure, the Building has been evacuated to the school grounds and conditions on the exterior of the school become quickly unstable. This could occur during severe weather or a manmade violent threat. Students/staff should be alert for the secondary emergency command and be prepared to go into another immediate emergency action depending upon the type of threat. This may include lock down, modified lock down, or shelter-in-place.

Parents can help by:

- Giving the most accurate, up-to-date health and emergency information on your child to our school office and your child’s teacher
- Register to receive e-communications from Atholton and HCPSS
- Ensuring your own safety
- Do not call the school during an emergency situation; it jams the phone lines
- Rushing to the school to pick up your child in the event of an emergency creates congestion and can delay the tasks of emergency responders and school staff in responding to the emergency.
- Tuning in to local radio and television stations and checking the HCPSS website at <http://www.hcpss.org>

Once again, we want to assure you that in cooperation with the HCPSS and local agencies, we are doing everything possible to ensure the safety of students, staff, and community. We thank you for all you do in support of Atholton Elementary School and this community.

Denise Lancaster, Principal

Melanie Secula, Assistant Principal