



SUMTER SCHOOL DISTRICT

1345 Wilson Hall Road • PO Drawer 2039 • Sumter, South Carolina 29151-2039 • (T) 803.469.6900 • (F) 803.469.3769

November 15, 2019

Dear Parents/Guardians,

The first and most important priority of Sumter School District is the safety of our students and staff. Any time a threat is made or a tragedy occurs in a school throughout the nation, it reminds us of how precious life is and the importance of emergency procedures and proper training. Certainly in this day and age we can never be absolutely protected against all circumstances, but we do educate our students and staff throughout the year and rely on our community to help us ensure we reinforce our own safety procedures.

Lately, several of our schools have received threats of violence through social media outlets. We pledge to our students, parents, employees and the community that we take any and all threats seriously. In all cases, we will work with law enforcement officials, and in some cases the FBI, to assist us with safeguarding our schools and to evaluate the situation and validity of the threat. As we identify the individual(s) responsible for making a threat or perpetuating a rumor, we promise swift and strong disciplinary action and will involve law enforcement. It is imperative that all students and staff feel safe at school and that we all protect the educational environment.

We ask for your support in the following ways: talk frequently with your children about what they are hearing and seeing at school or in the neighborhood; discuss with them the seriousness of playing a prank, teasing, making comments in jest, or spreading rumors; encourage them to report any suspicious activity to a trusted adult at school or to you; and notify the school if you hear of any potential problems or threats. Parents and students may also report information on Sprigeo, which is available on each school's website. Please do not forward or repost threats on social media, but instead, screenshot the post and forward immediately to the school/district and law enforcement. We also ask that you check your child's book bag regularly to ensure the book bag does not contain anything that could be harmful or perceived as harmful, and monitor your child's social media accounts.

Our joint emergency action plans were developed in accordance with state and federal guidelines and best practices in partnership with local public safety professionals. Law enforcement is a partner in the annual review of the plans, and they evaluate our implementation of emergency drills and provide training for school staff. The review of our plans reveal strengths and weaknesses, at which time procedures are revised or enhanced.

Each joint emergency action plan at the school level helps prepare school sites on lockdown drills, evacuation procedures, natural disaster precautions as well as communication with families, students, parents and communities during a crisis. School safety procedures also address the access of our buildings by the public. Training in school safety for school staff takes place throughout the year, and the school district also provides immediate crisis response training for the "Disturbance Intervention Response Team" and the "Mental Health Support Team."

Again, the safety and security of our students and staff is a top priority at all times. Working together, we can ensure that the educational process is allowed to continue in the safe, uninterrupted environment that our children deserve. We appreciate your continued support of a safe learning environment for all students.

For the Children,

Dr. Penelope Martin-Knox
Superintendent

Vision - Sumter School District will educate all students to embrace diversity, act responsibly, and contribute positively in a competitive, global society.

Mission - The mission of Sumter School District is to equip students to be responsible, successful, and productive citizens in a global society.

Sumter School District is an equal opportunity employer.