



Middle School 53

1045 Nameoke Street, Far Rockaway N.Y. 11691

Phone: (718) 471-6900

Fax: (718) 471-6955

Zoanne Wilkins, Principal

Grace Kump, Assistant Principal

Christina Mulero, Assistant Principal

September 11, 2026

Dear Parents/ Guardians,

I am writing to provide you with information about the Emergency Readiness Initiatives that are in place in all NYC Public Schools.

Every school currently has procedures for emergencies. In 2000, New York State Education Law Section 2801 was enacted requiring schools to develop safety plans regarding emergency response. In July of 2001, the law was amended to require that plans include information for evacuation and sheltering. In accordance with this, "schools need to conduct drills and other exercises to test components of the emergency response plan." In July of 2024, the Education Law was revised to include Trauma-Informed Care in the training and practice of all emergency drills.

Our school has a Building Response Team that is trained to activate and respond to different incidents that may occur at our school. In addition, school staff members are trained in various procedures that are outlined in the School Safety Plan and we currently conduct a variety of drills throughout the year to prepare our staff and students. Section 807 of the New York State Education Law requires all schools to conduct a minimum of 12 emergency drills each year. Section 917 of the State Education Law states that schools are required to provide and maintain automated external defibrillator (AED) equipment, and drills are conducted during the year to assess the use of AED units in an emergency. In accordance with Section 3623 of the State Education Law, drills are also conducted at schools that focus on safety on a school bus.

Under the General Response Protocol (GRP), every school will conduct specific drills designed to help prepare all school communities for four different types of response to emergencies that may occur: evacuation, shelter-in, hold, and lockdown.

Emergency readiness training in schools takes place in September and continues for staff and students throughout the school year. Student training is designed by grade level to ensure that students understand the importance of these drills without causing unnecessary alarm. In accordance with our Trauma Informed Care approach, our drills will not include any props, actors, simulations, or other tactics intended to mimic a school shooting, incident of violence, or other emergency. Our staff will review the proper actions in either an evacuation or lockdown drill to discuss any concerns or fears a student may have and we will provide notice to parents and those in parental relations regarding drills within one week before each drill. Drills will not occur until after annual training in emergency procedures has been provided to students and staff.

It is important for families to update the Emergency Contact Cards that are on file in our main office. You are also encouraged to create and maintain an accurate NYC Schools Account. This information includes providing and updating information indicating phone numbers, and the names of adults to whom the school may release children in an emergency. Families are also encouraged to register with Notify NYC (<https://a858-nycnotify.nyc.gov/notifynyc/>) to receive information about emergency events, and call 311 for additional information about a school during an emergency.

We encourage you to play a role in our trauma informed approach by reviewing the General Response Protocols attached to this letter. Opportunities for parent engagement are available at our school to ensure that families are involved in our school-based emergency readiness program. Parent versions of the School Safety Plan are available upon request in the main office, and information explaining the GRP is included with this letter. Many other important resources for families are also available by visiting <https://www.schools.nyc.gov/school-life/safe-schools>.

Sincerely,
Z. Wilkins,
Principal

GRP Summary Sheet for Teachers and Students

The General Response Protocol (GRP) has been designed (in collaboration with the “i love U guys” Foundation) to provide all schools with the direction they will take when an emergency incident occurs. At its core is the use of **common language** to identify the initial measures all school communities will take **until first responders arrive**. In every incident, school administrators will need to assess the unique circumstances that will affect how the GRP is implemented.

Each protocol has specific staff and student actions that are unique to each response. In the event that a student or staff member identifies the initial threat, calling 911 and administration is required.



Lockdown (Soft/Hard) – *Soft Lockdown* implies that there is no identified imminent danger to the sweep teams. Administrative teams, Building Response Teams, and School Safety Agents will mobilize to the designated command post for further direction. *Hard Lockdown* implies that imminent danger is known and NO ONE will engage in any building sweep activity. All individuals, including School Safety Agents will take appropriate lockdown action and await the arrival of first responders.

“Attention: We are now in Soft/Hard Lockdown. Take proper action.” (Repeated twice over the PA system.)

Students are trained to:

1. Move out of sight and maintain silence.

Teachers are trained to:

1. Check the hallway outside of their classrooms for students, lock classroom doors, and turn the lights off.
2. Move away from sight and maintain silence.
3. Wait for First Responders to open door, or until hearing the “All Clear” message: **“The Lockdown has been lifted”**, followed by specific directions.
4. Take attendance and account for missing students by contacting the main office.



Evacuate – The fire alarm system is the initial alert for staff and students to initiate an evacuation. However, there may be times when the PA system and specific directions will serve as the alert initiating an evacuation. Announcements will begin with “Attention”, followed by specific directions. (Repeated twice over the PA system.)

Students are trained to:

1. Leave belongings behind and form a single file line. In cold weather, students should be reminded to take their coats when leaving the classroom. ***Students in physical education attire WILL NOT return to the locker room.*** Students without proper outdoor attire will be secured in a warm location as immediately as possible.

Teachers are trained to:

1. Grab evacuation folder (with attendance sheet and Assembly Cards).
2. Lead students to evacuation location as identified on Fire Drill Posters. **ALWAYS LISTEN FOR ADDITIONAL DIRECTIONS.**
3. Take attendance and account for students.
4. Report injuries, problems, or missing students to school staff and first responders using Assembly Cards.



Shelter-In – “Attention. This is a Shelter-In. Secure all exit doors.” (Repeated twice over the PA system.)

Students are trained to:

1. Remain inside of the building.
2. Conduct business as usual.
3. Respond to specific staff directions.

Teachers are trained to:

1. Increase situational awareness.
2. Conduct business as usual.
3. The Shelter-In directive will remain in effect until hearing the “All Clear” message: **“The Shelter-In has been lifted”**, followed by specific directions.

BRT members, floor wardens, and Shelter-In staff will secure all exits and report to specific post assignments.



HOLD:

No movement throughout the building. Everyone must remain where they are until hearing the “All Clear.”

Hold is initiated when there is a condition inside the school building, and the immediate need to address the condition **requires staff, students, and visitors to remain in place and conduct business as usual until the “All Clear” is announced.**

Hold might be initiated to manage an incident in the building that **does not** place the school community in danger, or whenever directed by First Responders

Hold does not replace a soft or hard lockdown.

The Building Response Team and School Safety Agents will sweep the building. Anyone found in the restrooms, hallways, stairwells, or the lobby will be taken to a designated area until the “All Clear” announcement is made.

Announcements must be made to remind everyone to disregard any “end of class” signals. No one may enter or leave their room or office until the announcement is made indicating that the “All Clear” has been issued and the building can return to regular operation.

During a Hold, anyone entering the school must be informed of the Hold. If students are returning from lunch, they must be escorted to a designated area where they can remain, with proper supervision, until the “All Clear” announcement is made.

Public Address:

The public address announcement for Hold is, **“Attention, This is a Hold. All staff, students, and visitors are to remain where they are until they hear the All Clear.”** This is repeated twice each time the announcement is made.

When Hold is used, additional announcements must be made to:

- provide information to staff,
- remind everyone to disregard the bell signaling the end of the class, and
- remind teachers/staff that they may continue with instruction/business but may not let students/staff in or out of the room.

Actions: Upon hearing the Hold announcement:

Staff must:

- Lock the door.
- Hold in their current location.
- Contact the main office to report any students who were out of the class when the Hold was announced.

Students/staff must:

- Remain where they are until the “All Clear” announcement is made.
- Ignore any bells that usually signal the end of the class.
- Remember that there is no use of the classroom pass and everyone must remain in place until the Hold is lifted.