



Oyster Pond Academy

10583 Highway 7
Oyster Pond, NS B0J 2L0

Phone: 902-889-4300 Fax: 902-889-4310 Website: www.opa.ednet.ns.ca

Re: School Emergency Planning for Student Safety

Dear Families:

We are writing to you today about some of the measures we use to keep students and staff safe while at school.

Firstly, we host a series of **drills**, including fire, lockdown and 'hold and secure' drills. Most of us grew up with fire drills, and they haven't changed much since then; six/year is required by the Province. During a lockdown, doors are shut and locked, windows are covered, and activity is paused while the drill occurs. Students gather together, with their teachers, until the drill is done. We are required to host two of these each year. A 'hold and secure' is similar to a lockdown in that doors locked, but activity happens within the class as usual until the end of the drill. Each of these drills takes less than five minutes of our day to practice.

Secondly, it is required that all **visitors** to the school have an appointment or reason for their visit. When arriving at the school, please report **directly** to the office for a visitors badge and give the reason for your visit to the Administrative Assistant, who will assist you before proceeding throughout the building.

Thirdly, in the event of a school or bus cancellation ([School and Bus Cancellation Policy \(B.012\)](#)), the decision to cancel school is made by Steve Gallagher, **not principals**, and will usually be made as close to 6:00am as possible. This info is communicated on local radio stations, the HRCE website, through the school cancellation number (902-464-4626 or via automated text (visit HRCE.ca for details). **Please note: we belong to Eastern Shore Family of Schools.**

If buses are cancelled and school are open, families must use their own discretion with regard to transporting their children to school. Students who are unable to attend due to inclement weather and/or bus cancellation will not be penalized because of assignments given or due that day. **If you opt to bring your child to school, please know you must also pick them up at days' end.**

Each year, we organize the information we have on file to support the safe dismissal of students during a midday cancellation. You will hear from us to confirm instructions if we are unsure of what was indicated on your child's registration form. **We asked that the info shared be simple: home, daycare, alternate bus stop on route (as indicated in BusPlanner), or pick up**, rather than multistep instructions or many phone numbers to call. As we are sure you understand, with as many students as we have to send home, the simpler the instructions, the better for all. From this info, we create lists of students to make for a safe, smooth and efficient dismissal. **Please know we reach out FIRST via email** to indicate the school will be closing and, if we do not receive a reply, we **THEN will phone you** before we EVER put your children on a bus. **If the info on file remains unclear, please understand we will keep them at school for you to pick up.** See the HRCE site for added info: <https://www.hrce.ca/weather>

Fourthly, though improbable, it is not impossible that we may occasionally have to relocate students to another site. Our first site is the nearest church, if for some reason they are unable to accept us, our secondary relocation site is rink. Parents are discouraged from meeting at the church; you're children will not be released to you there. Buses will pick up children and get them home to you.

Finally, though unrelated to safety as such, we also wanted to take the opportunity to encourage families to regularly check their children for headlice (ideally once/week and after sleepovers), notify the school as necessary and encourage students to 'not share' brushes, combs, hats, etc., and to put their hats in their sleeves or backpacks when taking them off. More information is available on our website under 'Student Health' and linked here: <https://muc.hrce.ca/muc/parents/student-health>.

Thank you for your support and understanding in helping us promote student safety-

Robin Legge and Your OPA Family

Principal: Robin Legge

Vice Principal: Kelly Hale

Guidance: Dan Caya