

# Southern York County School District

## School Safety Preparedness

Providing a safe and caring environment for our students and staff is a priority of the Board and administration at the Southern York County School District.

According to several studies and experts in the field\*, school climate is key to preventing violence in schools. Our District strives to create a safe and caring environment through the following measures:

- We strive to build positive relationships with each and every student. This includes training for all staff including administrators, teachers, food service staff, and bus drivers.
- School counselors play an important role in our schools, therefore we have a lower school counselor-to-student ratio than what is recommended.
- The District has a social worker who works as a liaison to help students and families connect to needed resources.
- Our administrators emphasize the use of restorative practices for discipline.
- We have three psychologists on staff to provide risk assessments.
- Each school has a school-wide bullying prevention program, positive interventions and supports.
- We partner with multiple agencies to provide school- based counseling services to students, as needed.
- We connect at-risk students with community mentors to provide these students with another positive relationship in addition to our staff.
- We encourage our students to speak to an adult if they see or know of anything alarming in school, in the community, or online.

In addition to maintaining a positive culture and climate in our schools, we work in cooperation with York County Emergency Management, York County Sheriff's Office, Pennsylvania State Police, Southern Regional Police, and our Emergency Procedures Committee to make certain we are following best practices in school security.

We want you to know that we have many District-wide measures in place to help support and safeguard our students and staff. Some of these measures include:

- **Threat Assessment:** In an effort to maintain safe learning environments for all students, the Southern York County School District has implemented Threat Assessment Teams to assess threats directed at or by students of our district. The District implements the Comprehensive Student Threat Assessment model, which draws on administrative, legal, and psychological resources to determine severity of the threat and develop a response. All threatening statements should be reported to a student's administration or counselor immediately to initiate an investigation and to ensure the safety of our schools.
- The District contracts with the Southern Regional Police Department for a school resource officer, which is an armed commissioned officer trained to work in schools. We also contract with Southern Regional Police Department to provide additional safety and security support throughout the District.
- The District also employs a full-time school security officer who is visible on all campuses throughout the school day and is connected to 911 calls.
- All doors and entrances are locked throughout the day and visitors must be cleared for entrance at the offices. All doors are checked regularly throughout the day.
- The District continues to expand the use of video surveillance equipment and monitoring.
- There are panic buttons in all our buildings.
- Detailed emergency plans including building floor plans and aerial views of our buildings and grounds are shared with all emergency responders to help coordinate police efforts.
- Monthly building-wide drills are conducted with all students and staff, which allow students to practice our safety procedures including when to run, when to hide, and when it may be necessary to defend oneself against unavoidable danger.
- All buildings conduct ongoing tabletop exercises. These exercises are designed to involve multiple stakeholders in 'testing' the District response to potential emergency situations.

We continuously review the safety measures in place and make recommendations for upgrades based upon the most recent research.

Our goal is to ensure that Southern York County School District is a place where our students and staff feel safe so that they may learn and grow to their fullest potential.

We value your input and your feedback. Please contact your child's principal or the Superintendent's office (717-235-4811 x7233) with any questions or concerns you may have about school safety.

\*Studies include the Safe Schools Initiative (5/2/2002) and the Call for Action to Prevent Gun Violence in the United States of America (2/28/2018).