



## Sheffield City Schools

### *A Commitment to Quality Education*

Dr. Keith Davis  
Superintendent

Dr. Carlos Nelson  
Deputy Superintendent

July 2019

Dear Parents/Guardians:

The mission of Sheffield City Schools is to collaborate with families and community members to produce graduates prepared for success through innovative, rigorous, student-centered learning experiences and high expectations for all, including the safety of our students. In the event of a crisis, natural disaster, or inclement weather situation, our school system has one goal which is to keep our students and staff safe. In an effort to communicate with stakeholders our expectations during a safety event, this letter lists some of the steps and procedures we have implemented.

Sheffield City Schools annually updates our emergency response procedures and trains our faculty, staff, and students how to respond to various events. These trainings include severe weather, natural disasters and possible crisis situations that might occur in and around our schools. In addition, we regularly conduct emergency response drills to practice and to improve the effectiveness of our response to the various situations.

The Raptor Visitor Management System is utilized in all Sheffield City schools to strengthen campus safety for students and faculty. Knowing who is in our buildings at all times is part of keeping our students and faculty safe; the Raptor System allows us to do that. It also enables us to screen visitors, contractors, and volunteers to provide us with a safer school environment.

The school district has a joint agreement with the City of Sheffield that provides our school system with School Resource Officers (SRO's). As part of this agreement, SRO's and Sheffield Police regularly train in our schools and have access that enables them to respond without delay in any situation.

Communication is vital in any safety situation. Sheffield City Schools uses School Cast, a telephone messaging service that will allow us to make calls very quickly, to provide important information to parents. It is imperative that parents/guardians keep their telephone/cell number, email, and home address updated in all schools. Sheffield City Schools will also communicate via social media (Facebook and Twitter). We recommend you follow our district/school Facebook and Twitter pages.

Listed below are the following **terms and descriptions** that we use with our students and staff. Sheffield City Schools understands that it is important for you to know these terms and how to properly respond to each event.

**Shelter In Place:** This phrase might be encountered during inclement weather or a hazardous material release. A tornado warning will require schools to take our students to an inner hallway or a room with

few or no windows, and stay there until it is safe to release students. These areas have been reviewed and approved by the Colbert County Emergency Management Agency. Please note that we cease operations such as checkouts during an active tornado warning. Should we ever encounter a hazardous material release, we have made precautions to limit the amount of exposure students have with the outside environment. Additionally, students at schools within the hazardous area might need to be relocated.

**Secured Perimeter:** This term is used when we are notified of a concern or when a potential threat is identified in the vicinity of the school. **If you are notified of a Secured Perimeter, do not go to the school.** Instruction will continue with restricted entry and limited supervised movement within the building. These situations are often very short lived. If the situation allows and is of a lengthy period of time, the school will make notification to parents via their normal communication methods, such as School Cast and Social Media. Entries and exits are monitored during this situation; students will not be released outside the building until we receive an all clear by the appropriate agency.

**Lockdown:** A lockdown takes place if a threat or possible threat is identified inside the school or on the campus. **Instruction and all movement is halted.** All exterior and interior doors are locked, and students are secured in their classrooms. No one (except appropriate emergency response personnel) will be allowed to enter or leave the building/campus to avoid hindering emergency response teams arriving at the school. We ask that you monitor School Cast or local news for information about any possible evacuation of the building and parent reunification site. Please note that we conduct an annual lockdown audit and review of lockdown procedures at each school.

**Heightened Awareness:** This means a potential threat may exist for an unusual situation. This status may be used when there is an event in the community or on the state or national level. Instruction will continue but the system/school will be instructed to report any suspicious or unusual activity.

**What is Parent Staging for Reunification?** When students have been removed from the school or when an emergency has occurred that affects the ability to have a normal dismissal, a parent staging area will be established. At this location, parents will be updated concerning the situation and the plans for reunification with their child. Remember, a student can only be released to an adult who is listed as an emergency contact on school records, so be sure to keep that list updated. Anyone attempting to pick up a student must show proper photo identification. In cases where students will be released from the school, students that have obtained a parking permit will be able to sign themselves out at the time of the release.

#### **What you can do now?**

- Be sure your school office always has updated phone numbers for your family.
- Ask your school for the School Cast student profile page that allows you to add any additional emergency contact numbers into the School Cast system.
- Read this letter and become familiar with the procedures listed above.
- Talk with your child about taking our drills seriously and remaining calm in a crisis situation.
- As always, speak with your building administration if you have any safety concerns.