

# ***PRINCIPAL'S BULLETIN***

## ***SCHOOL SAFETY***

We all remember participating in fire and earthquake drills when we were in elementary school, ducking underneath our desks or evacuating the classroom to line up outside with the rest of the student body. Through the naive eyes of a child it seemed innocent and almost fun. Through the eyes of each staff member this was a time to practice safety procedures they hoped they would never have to use, while imagining scenarios that they hoped would never become real.

More than ever before, schools must be prepared to handle all types of emergencies. In addition to the basic fire, earthquake and evacuation situations, schools must prepare for chemical spills, power failures, intruders, civil disturbances, and any other event that interrupts regular school activity.

Teachers and staff must be prepared for lockdown procedures, search and rescue, first aid, evacuation and dismissal for hundreds of children. In the case of a major disaster, schools must also have enough staff, equipment and resources to house students for up to 3 days.

Fox Elementary School is part of the Safe Schools Program which is facilitated by the Belmont Police Department. Police and school representatives meet monthly to discuss safety ideas and share best practices. Participants also work together to create a comprehensive Emergency/Disaster Plan. These essential plans are reviewed by the Belmont Police and updated annually. Scenarios covered in the plan include, but are not limited, to lockdown procedures, long term supervision and eventually, a school-wide evacuation. The Fox School staff will continue to work with Safe Schools program to ensure the safety of our students.

### **What should parents do?**

Keeping our campus safe is the responsibility of the entire Fox School community. We ask all parents to prominently display their visitor's pass, obtained from the office whenever they are on school grounds. Also, please report any potential dangers or suspicious behaviors on or near our campus to the office or Police Department, immediately.

In an emergency, communication is essential. It is vitally important to make sure that the information on your child's yellow emergency card and the PTA phone tree is kept current. This includes your home, work, and cell numbers, as well as your emergency designee. You may update numbers on the PTA Phone Tree or change emergency information by emailing or calling the school secretary Nan Hirahara [nhirahara@brssd.org](mailto:nhirahara@brssd.org) 650-637-4850.

## **What if there was a real emergency?**

In the case of a major emergency, it is very important that parents follow these guidelines.

1. **Remain calm.** Do not panic. The Fox staff will supervise your child(ren) and keep them safe for however long it takes for you to reunite them. Come to school to pick up your child as soon as possible, but drive safely.
2. **No student will be dismissed from school.** They will not be allowed to leave campus, unless they are checked out by their parent or emergency designee. We have a procedure to account for and dismiss each student. Make sure that all emergency designees are listed on the back of your child's yellow emergency card and updated when needed.
3. **Do not call the school.** We must have the phone lines open for emergency calls. Also, we may not be in the office if we have to evacuate the building.
4. **The PTA Phone Tree will be initiated** You will get called if we need to contact you about the situation at school. The tree has been created and marked in the PTA database which can be accessed on the website on our new [Phone tree](#) page. The page can be found on the About, Parents and News tabs.
5. **Park on Benson.** The driveway and parking lot will need to stay open and cleared for emergency vehicles. Parents will most likely need to park on Benson Way or Hallmark Dr. and then walk up.
6. **If it is necessary to evacuate** all students and staff will relocate to Ralston Middle School (2675 Ralston Ave., 3 blocks from Fox School)
7. **Share this information** Anyone who is listed as an emergency designee should understand the procedures. This includes babysitters, grandparents and husbands.

The safety and supervision of our students is of utmost importance. If you have any questions or suggestions feel free to contact me.

Thank you for your help.

Chris Marchetti