

MARYLAND CENTER for SCHOOL SAFETY

Standard Response Protocols A Guide for Parents

The information and terms in this document align with the [“I Love You Guys” Standard Response Protocol program](#). Maryland promotes the use of the “I Love You Guys Foundation” standard response protocols. Parents should confirm with their school that they use the protocols outlined in this document. **Decisions** about using a protocol are made by school leaders when they have information about an event happening inside or outside of the school. As a situation evolves, school leaders use real-time information to implement or adjust protocols to keep students and staff safe.

School staff and students are taught the NAME of the protocol and the STEPS to take as part of safety efforts in school to prepare for emergencies. **This guide is designed for parents** with the NAME of each protocol and STEPS parents should take to support the school during different situations. It also provides examples of when a protocol might be used to help parents better understand how schools respond to different types of hazards.

A protocol DOES NOT always mean that your child is unsafe or impacted by what is happening.

SHELTER



Teachers stop teaching and tell students to take steps that keep them safe depending on the type of hazard.

Students follow teacher directions.

Parent Actions

- Take actions to protect yourself.
- Monitor official communication channels and listen to them for confirmed information.
- Follow any specific directions provided by local emergency notifications and school communications.

A SHELTER is Used When:

School leaders are given information about a hazard that is impacting or may impact the school location. Examples include:

- A notification from the National Weather Service is issued for a tornado.
- A tanker carrying chemicals overturns on a nearby interstate.
- Local flash flooding causes a sudden rise in water surrounding or into the school.

HOLD



Teachers teach in the named place.

Students learn and move freely in the named place, engaging with the teacher and other students.

Parent Actions

- Allow the regular schedule to continue.
- Monitor official communication channels and listen to them for confirmed information.
- Follow any specific directions provided.
- Maintain your existing plans for early pick-ups, as a hold generally does not change them.

A HOLD is Used When:

It is best to have students and staff remain in one location, not the hallways or bathrooms, while a situation, either in the school or in the community, is resolved.

Examples include:

- Staff are cleaning a bodily fluid spill in the hallway.
- A staff member or student is having a medical emergency and being transported to the hospital.
- A situation is happening outside of the school in the community and school staff are waiting for more details.

Outside doors are always locked at a school but a situation may occur that increases the security level to keep everyone inside the building (secure).

SECURE



Teachers teach and follow the regular schedule with everything happening inside the school building.

Students learn and move within the building as they usually do.

Parent Actions

- Allow the regular schedule to continue.
- Monitor official communication channels and listen to them for confirmed information.
- Prepare for changes to early dismissals, meetings, or volunteer activities, as these may be impacted.
- Be prepared for extra security measures if you need to enter the school building, and possibly the school campus. You may not be allowed to enter during a secure, depending upon the situation.

A SECURE is Used When:

There is an active threat or the possibility of a threat OUTSIDE of the school building. School personnel are limiting or stopping people outside from entering.

Examples include:

- A violent crime occurred in the neighborhood and the police are searching for the person.
- An injured animal is seen near the playground and animal control is on the way.

LOCKDOWN

Locks, Lights,
Out of Sight



Teachers stop all activity, immediately turn off the lights, make sure the classroom door is locked, take attendance, and remain silent with students in the area of the classroom identified to be most safe.

Students stop any activity and immediately move to a defined area of the classroom. They must stay silent and wait in this position until a school leader or police officer opens the locked door. If in the hallway or bathroom, students are taught to find the closest area to find cover.

Parent Actions

- Stay calm, trust school officials and local emergency responders.
- Do not go to the school. Be ready to follow directions given by officials.
- Follow any specific directions provided by the school, system, and law enforcement.
- Avoid listening to and sharing unconfirmed information.
- Monitor official communication channels and listen to them for confirmed information.

A LOCKDOWN is Used When:

There is an active threat INSIDE of the school.

Examples include:

- A person in the school who is trying to hurt others.
- A person in the school with unknown intent and not following adult directions.

Lockdown Drills & Trainings

Students and staff practice the steps for all protocols through drills and training. Practice helps to make sure people know what to do during an actual emergency. Maryland public schools have specific things they must do when having a lockdown DRILL. At the beginning of the school year parents should be given a general schedule of when drills will occur. Parents must also be told immediately after a lockdown drill happens at school. This lets parents know to check-in with students about the drill.

For more information about lockdown drills in Maryland go to the Maryland Center for School Safety resource page. <https://schoolsafety.maryland.gov/Pages/RES-AAEP.aspx>

Maryland is conducting a research study on the emotional and psychological impact of lockdown drills. Parents can participate in the study by completing a simple survey.



EVACUATE



Teachers give directions to students to move them to the named location quietly and quickly. Teachers take with them emergency contact information.

Students follow teacher directions and move to the named location quietly and quickly.

Parent Actions

- Follow any specific directions provided by the school.
- Avoid listening to and sharing unconfirmed information.
- Monitor official communication channels and listen to them for confirmed information.
- Depending upon the situation prepare for changes to the end of day routine.

EVACUATE is Used When:

There is something inside the school building that makes it not safe to stay there.

Examples include:

- A fire in the building.
- A chemical odor throughout the building that makes people sick.
- A crime happened in the building that requires student to leave the school.
- A transition from another protocol, such as a lockdown or hold.

An evacuation may lead school officials to conduct a process where a student is handed over to a parent, one at a time. This protocol is called “reunification” and could happen on the school property or at a location away from the school.

REUNIFICATION



Teachers take attendance, provide supervision and direction to students at the location. Teachers remain with students until the parent arrives to take them.

Students follow teacher directions and wait to get picked up by their parents. Students are entertained and can interact with their peers while waiting.

Parent Actions

- Follow any specific directions provided by the school about where to go to pick up.
- When arriving at the given location, follow signs for parking and entry.
- Be prepared to complete a simple sheet with your child’s information.
- Have your identification with you.
- Be patient and understand that the process will take time to occur safely.