**Charleroi Area School District Safety and Security**

**Services and Support**

No topic is more important than the safety and security of our students and school staff. Whether it is prevention and mitigation, preparedness, response, or recovery, our district strives to manage every phase of emergency readiness competently and effectively. Our work to strengthen the safety and security measures at Charleroi Area School District is ongoing. We focus on reflective practice and continuous improvement in all that we do.

**Safety and Security Measures**

Due to our strong commitment to safety and security preparedness, the Charleroi Area School District has the following structures in place:

* **All-Hazards Plan**-Our All-Hazards Plan provides a framework from which we build a safe and secure learning environment with the ability to respond promptly and appropriately in the event of an emergency. This plan is *revisited annually* and follows any critical incidents in our district or across the nation.
* **Districtwide Safety & Security Committee**-This committee is comprised of internal stakeholders to review current structures, practices, and procedures and make recommendations to the administration and the school board. This committee also assists with the screening of training provided to staff and students.
* **District Safety and Security Officer**-Working in coordination with our Superintendent and other school leaders, including our building principals, the District Safety and School Resource Officer spearheads efforts focused on promoting the safety of our schools.
* **Emergency Management Coordination**-We are grateful to maintain close working relationships with local law enforcement and emergency management services.
* **Memorandum of Understanding**-Our district maintains agreements with community organizations to access shelter locations should there be a need to evacuate a school beyond our district facilities.
* **School Resource Officer (SRO)**-This is a Charleroi Regional Police Department Officer who is assigned to Charleroi Area High School during the school year. The main goal of the SRO is to provide a highly visible presence that promotes positive relationships between youth and law enforcement that, in turn, helps prevent juvenile delinquency. In addition, our school district employs a full-time security officer in the middle school and a full-time police officer at the Elementary Center.

**General Practices & Procedures**

* **Building Visitor Procedures**-We require visitors to present photo identification upon arrival at any of our school buildings. Using Raptor software, our buildings log visitors and retrieve data from multiple databases to help our employees make informed decisions about who to admit to our schools.
* **Security Locks**-Extra heavy-duty classroom Intruder cylinder security lever locks for schools have been installed on every interior and exterior door in our district.
* **Installation of New Public Announcement Systems**-School PA systems is used for operational and emergency communications within our schools. Our public address system has the capability of covering each building. This would include all the classrooms and interior public areas and the outside amphitheater.
* **Security Fence Installed -** The Charleroi Middle/High School provides an open campus as students transition from Music, Choir, Physical Education, Technology Education, and Art classes. Recently, an additional layer of safety has been implemented to ensure staff and students' health, safety, and welfare. An eight-foot-high safety and security fence has been installed around the perimeter layer of the Charleroi Area Middle/High School exterior areas. Our goal for the fencing project is to delineate a clear boundary between what falls inside and outside of our school’s physical campus. The main physical security objective is to protect staff and students transitioning between classes, detect threats, and delay them to the best extent possible. Research reveals that when a school effectively protects its grounds perimeter layer with robust detection and delay capabilities, it reduces the chance that threats will progress inward to affect other, subsequent layers of our campus.
* **Security Vestibules**-Security planning and implementation is critical to keep students and staff safe in our school facilities. In each Charleroi School, vestibules are secured spaces with two or more sets of doors that only allow visitors access to one space within the building. They limit and regulate entrances, allowing for more efficient screening of people entering a facility.
  + In addition to the added security of knowing who is visiting the school, a security vestibule also serves as a single point of entrance for students who are late to school or coming from an appointment, as all other doors to the school remain locked while school is in session.
* **Model Door Numbering System-**When emergencies occur, the rapid response of emergency workers to the incident can be critical. Our schools have dozens of doors providing entrances and exits to our buildings. During an emergency, responders may need to gain access through the door closest to the emergency scene. Numbering external doors is extremely valuable to emergency responders to assist our students and staff in positioning themselves at door locations in case of an emergency.
* **Security Window Film**-installed on all district buildings' ground-level windows. Possible intruders are unable to see inside the window.
* **District Exterior Doors -** New high safety-rated exterior doors have been installed on all district buildings.
* **Surveillance Camera Systems**-Cameras are positioned in our buildings and on school buses and are evaluated regularly and upgraded over time.
* **Professional Development**-We provide teaching and learning opportunities for staff related to things such as [A.L.I.C.E. Response Procedures](https://www.alicetraining.com/) (Alert, Lockdown, Inform, Counter, Evacuate) and steps to be taken in more general critical incident scenarios like severe weather events.
* **Go Buckets**-To prepare for a lockdown, our school district has created a Go Bucket for all interior classrooms that are filled with emergency preparedness items.
  + **Learning Experiences for Students-Various fire drills, severe weather drills, and lockdown or evacuation drills are examples ool of measures our schools take** to prepare students for an emergency. We recognize developmental differences among our K-12 students and attempt to tailor these training and drills appropriately in an effort to prepare students without frightening them.
* **Open Invitation**-We want students to grow up seeing police officers as resources, not as individuals to fear. Therefore, we extend an open invitation to our police partners to visit and walk our buildings and interact with students and staff. We believe this is critical to promoting healthy relationships between the school and law enforcement communities.
* **Social & Emotional Supports**-Our Future Ready Comprehensive Plan focuses on addressing students’ social and emotional health, which ties closely to maintaining safe, secure school environments. The framework used for academic and behavioral interventions included tiered support systems, school-wide positive behavior plans, anti-bullying initiatives, and [protocols for handling a concern.](https://www.hempfieldsd.org/cms/lib/PA01000122/Centricity/Domain/6/Handling%20a%20Concern%202020.pdf)
* **Administrative Searches**-As one facet of providing a safe and secure learning environment for our students, we take proactive measures to prevent illegal materials from being present in our schools. All hallway and gym lockers are the school's property and are loaned to our students. Thus, school officials may search student lockers if the building administrator reasonably believes that a student's locker contains an article that violates federal, state, or local law, school policies, or regulations. Per our school board policy, these searches may include the use of canine units. Any illegal materials found resulting from a search may be used as evidence against the student in disciplinary, juvenile, or criminal proceedings.
  + Additionally, cars located in permitted parking lots are subject to search without additional prior notice. These searches may also include the use of canine units. The search of a student's person and personal property will be permitted when there is a reasonable belief that the student has on his or her personal items in violation of federal, state, or local laws. If a search requires a pat-down, the search shall be conducted by a designated school official of the same sex in the presence of another school staff member. The designated school official may use additional security devices to aid in the search. Our desire is that students continue to be part of the solution in helping to make our schools safe places to learn by reporting any illegal materials to an adult.
* **Social-Emotional Learning Grades K-12**-Social and Emotional Learning (SEL) is an integral part of education and human development. SEL is the process through which all young people and adults acquire and apply the knowledge, skills, and attitudes to develop healthy identities, manage emotions and achieve personal and collective goals, feel and show empathy for others, establish and maintain supportive relationships, and make responsible and caring decisions.
  + SEL advances educational equity and excellence through authentic school-family-community partnerships to establish learning environments and experiences that feature trusting and collaborative relationships, rigorous and meaningful curriculum and instruction, and ongoing evaluation. SEL can help address various forms of inequity and empower young people and adults to co-create thriving schools and contribute to safe, healthy, and just communities.

**Shared Safety Language**

* **Faculty Hold**-A health emergency hold is used for a variety of situations, such as clearing the halls during medical emergencies or maintaining privacy during investigations. There is no imminent threat of danger during a Faculty Hold. This practice allows students and staff to remain where they are so that other essential activities can occur.
* **Lockdown**-If we believe there is an internal or external threat of harm to students or staff, the building will initiate a lockdown to minimize access to the school and secure staff and students in rooms. As part of this procedure, students may utilize the skills learned during A.L.I.C.E. training.
* **Reunification- This is a procedure used when the school is evacuated or closed due to** an accident, school violence, threat, or attack. A designated location will be established for parents to reunite with their children following an emergency. This reunification site may be at the school, or it may be at an alternative location in cases where the school building has been evacuated.
* **Shelter in Place**-This is a precaution aimed at keeping students and staff safe while remaining indoors. Situations that may require students and staff to shelter in place include natural disasters, severe weather, accidental or intentional chemical, biological or radiological material release, or an emergency safety situation in the community.

**Reporting Concerns**

* Often, the most important piece of safety and security is obtaining key information before someone makes the decision to commit a harmful act. Receiving tips and information in advance of anything happening allows us to investigate and take proactive steps to prevent harm from occurring. We encourage anyone to report the concern if something does not look, sound, or feel right.
* There are numerous ways for students and parents/guardians to report concerns, including:
  + Tell an adult (teacher, staff member, administrator)
  + Send a message to your building principal/assistant principal/principal of student services.
  + Submit an anonymous tip using Pennsylvania's [Safe2Say Something website](https://www.safe2saypa.org/) or mobile app.
* Contact the local police department for an immediate response if something happens outside of the school day.
* When fielding concerns, school administrators start with an investigation. During investigations, administrators look for specific details - time, location, and individuals involved. The more specific, the better. Timely reporting is also key to investigations.
* School actions or discipline are based upon board policy, the Student Code of Conduct, and federal/state regulations by which schools must abide, such as IDEA.

**How We Communicate During Emergencies**

* We work very intentionally to develop and send messages that keep our many stakeholders informed. We focus on providing clear and accurate information before releasing it to the public. While we understand that people may want immediate details, our goal is to provide information as timely as possible, ensuring that what we release is accurate. We also coordinate with our local police departments to ensure that shared information is clear and consistent.
* We use official district communication channels for releasing information, such as the district website, send it messaging system, and for events that warrant it, we will use the district's emergency communications system to deploy emails, robocalls, and/or text messages.

**Talking to Children about Violence**

* We encourage parents/guardians to conduct mental and emotional check-ins with their children. It is important to allow children to learn and process information in an age-appropriate manner while also preventing any media messages from feeding fears.
* There is no topic more important than the safety and security of our students and the staff who work with them in our schools. Whether it is prevention and mitigation, preparedness, response, or recovery, our district strives to manage every phase of emergency readiness competently and effectively. Our work to strengthen the safety and security measures at Charleroi Area School District is ongoing. We focus on reflective practice and continuous improvement in all that we do.