



Willow Drive Elementary School

SUMTER SCHOOL DISTRICT

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February 28, 2018

Dear Members of Eagle Nation:

I am writing to share an update with you in response to the heightened state of alert regarding school safety. Our Core Leadership Team and School Safety Committee recently met to discuss the importance of school safety and to review & revise some of our safety procedures. Due to recent events that have occurred in our nation and threats against schools in our own community, we must maintain due diligence in preparing constantly and being vigilantly proactive about keeping our WDE safe. With that in mind, I want to review some of those procedures with you.

As part of my “Hopes and Dreams Listening Tour,” in which I met formally with 253 stakeholders, one of the four major changes we have made this year is in increasing the overall level of safety at Willow Drive Elementary and improving efficiency of our student drop-off & pick-up areas. Our school serves 700 scholars; of that, 525 come to Willow Drive Elementary every day either “on foot” or in a car. We are proud of the changes made at the two drop-off areas. Parent focus groups and parent surveys show a huge level of satisfaction with regards to these changes. All cars must display the blue ID card; if you do not have one, we will not release your scholar to the car. Additional cards can be requested at any time through parent note in the daily folder or by stopping by at the front office. The side drive-thru, reserved for grades PK-2 and older siblings, unloads/loads anywhere from 200-250 scholars each day while the front drive-thru, reserved for grades 3-5, serves about 175 scholars. We do all of this in 20 minutes on most days, and we ask for your continued cooperation.

All school doors are locked at all times. Classroom doors are closed and locked throughout the school day. It is my expectation that doors not be propped open. Lead teachers and staff members have keys to enter the building during designated hours, while we keep all gates except for the side parking lot exit gate open at designated times to enter the school building. Our gates are locked throughout the school day. We are working to relocate one gate so that no areas of vulnerability are exposed to offer entrance into the building. These keys also lock all exit doors. Teachers and staff members have to sign in using the same computer as parents, so please give them priority when signing in.

All visitors to our school must enter through the front office, controlled through a buzz-in system with a live video feed. Visitors are required to sign-in and wear their visitor badge at all times. Be prepared to show your ID card. If you are not listed on the scholar’s emergency card, we cannot release the child to you. Please make sure your most current information is updated with the front office. Visitors past the front office also have to be “buzzed in” to access the hallways. Supervision is not available for scholars until 6:50 am – please do not drop your scholar off before then. PERK parents are allowed to walk their child to class, but first must obtain a visitor’s badge in the front office.

We practice safety drills regularly—many of them requiring evacuation. We time our evacuations to the common “rally point,” and usually have all individuals out in three minutes with full accountability taking place in six minutes. After each safety drill, which is usually observed by first responders, we meet to debrief. We recently revised our Joint Emergency Action Plan, in collaboration with first responders. Our staff will continue to discuss school safety. If you see something that looks unsafe, please say something. We want your input. It takes everyone working together to keep our school safe.

In it together,

Trevor T. Ivey, NBCT; Principal