

## SAFETY CONSIDERATIONS FOR FAMILIES AT SCHOOL AND AT HOME

Whether you have an easy morning getting your child ready for school or it is World War III exploding in your front room, there is always a sigh of relief when you get them out the door.

I take great pride in overcoming our battles every morning, and also in the warm embraces we share when we part for the day. I have come to trust the people that teach my son during his daily routine and I have faith that my child is in good hands.

But there is always one lingering thought that often stays with me throughout the day. I want to know that my child is safe.

I am sure that this is a concern that all parents share.

We watch the news and see tragedies happening all over the United States; from natural disasters, to suicidal shooters in the school. Our hearts open as we watch how lives are changed in just one moment.

Some of us get angry and question the systems that these schools had in place for such emergencies. Some of us wonder what we can do here at home. The thought of a similar tragedy happening in North Mason is not something we like to think about. But what would we do if it happened?

Are we comfortable with the school plans in place? Do we trust the people who hold the safety of our children, our dearest treasures, in their hands? Do we, as parents, have a plan? Are we prepared to take care of our families?

As a school board director for North Mason School District, I participate with Superintendent Dana Rosenbach and other school officials in school safety and security training sessions with Sheriff Casey Salisbury of the Mason County Sherriff's Office. At these sessions, we work to align all the school districts and local emergency officials with the most effective plan to follow in the event that the unthinkable emergency or threat does occur.

We discuss items ranging from preventing incidents by addressing bullying and depression to ensuring the school's technology is up-to-date in case of earthquakes or other natural disasters.

I am proud of the individuals that work so hard to ensure our kids come home safely every day. It makes me feel good that all these people care.

While the school district is doing their part to keep up on the most current systems for school safety, what are we doing at home? It is key that our children know what can hurt them, what

they can do about it and who to trust. Practicing drills at home is just as important as doing them at school. So, parents, please – take the time to make a plan.

On the Office of Superintendent of Public Instruction (OSPI) website, you will find some great resources that cover safety in our schools. Visit [www.k12.wa.us/SafetyCenter](http://www.k12.wa.us/SafetyCenter). The School Safety Center provides resources to help in the development of emergency operations and safety plans. Additionally, if you have an incident to report you can go to the North Mason School District website, click on Parents/Community tab then on Safe Schools Alert link.

The safety of all students is the #1 concern for the North Mason School District.

Together with you, our community, we strive for excellence in protecting our youth.

Sending warm thoughts from our house to yours during this holiday season. Be safe!

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