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March 19, 2018

Dear Merrill Elementary Families and Friends,

The safety of our students and staff continues to remain our top priority. We employ a variety of security measures in our daily efforts to provide a safe and secure learning environment. These measures reflect our community's high expectations for school safety and are regularly reviewed to ensure efforts remain aligned with effective security practices.

Based upon safety recommendations, we are reminding you of the following Elementary procedures:

1. **Morning drop off:** Parent/family drop off will use the elementary main entrance. There is no street drop off. Please drive around the parking lot, keeping to the right which is the loop for drop off and pick up, so that your child can get out on the sidewalk. Street drop offs are dangerous for both the student and other drivers. The Village of Merrill is in the process of updating the signage to prohibit stopping, standing, or parking of vehicles on Alice street and the adjoining roads, and will be enforcing this "No Stopping -Standing-Parking Zone".
2. **Afternoon Pick Up:** Families are asked to use the loop around the outside of the parking lot to pick up the students. The loop circles to the right of the parking lot around the outside of the parking spots. The drivers are asked to pull around and up, as far as possible (to the stop line if you are the first car, or to the car in front of you). The stop line is further up the sidewalk, so that we can fit as many cars as possible into the loop and avoid backups on Alice St. The teachers that help direct the loop will direct your child to walk up as far as possible, in order to signal to you to keep pulling ahead as you move forward. You will not need to exit your vehicle unless you want your student to enter the car from the other side of the car, or you need to help with buckling the seat belt/car seat.

Then, when you exit, please look out for MS/HS or elementary students that need to cross our driveway in order to get to their destinations. This is tricky because of the congestion that happens during peak pick up times, and when the buses are pulling down, but I'm sure if we remain diligent and attentive we can ensure the safety of all.

Also, Remember to pull out to the right. This alleviates some of the congestion that happens if a driver tries to turn left, which is difficult when there is so much traffic.

We want everyone to get into the driveway as quickly as possible, and for pick up to happen as smoothly as possible, so we will continue to monitor the situation and update everyone along the way as needed.

It is also important to recognize the established security measures used to promote safety throughout our school community:

- **Merrill Elementary Security Committee:** This committee focuses on evaluating and updating crisis planning and management for the elementary school, as well as developing proactive community partnerships that assist with overall school safety.
- **Critical Incident Management Plan:** MCS has a Crisis Incident Management Plan in place at each school. This plan is developed through collaboration with Tom Mynsberge, a certified Critical Management Trainer.
- **Critical Incident Training:** All staff and students receive annual training on their specific roles to understand how to respond in the case of an emergency. Staff receive guidance and updates prior to each safety drill and specific training in responses to violence, securing against threats, bomb threats, shelter in place for hazardous materials, and hostage survival. Regularly scheduled safety drills in the areas of fire, tornado, secure, and lockdown, exceed requirements established by the state of Michigan. Drills occur during both structured classroom time and passing time to ensure students, teachers, administrators, and support staff would be able to respond effectively during a real event. A record of these drills can be found on our school website at www.merrillschools.org.
- **Physical Security Improvements:** Our building has many security and safety features including: automatic locking doors, interior and exterior cameras, and locked entry system that requires visitors to buzz into the building.
- **School Safety Tip Line:** OK2SAY is a State of Michigan program that ensures every student, parent, teacher, and community member has access to a safe and confidential way to report any concerns about their safety of others. OK2Say is a confidential way to report a safety threat 24 hours a day. Submit a tip using email, mobile app, telephone, text message, or through the OK2SAY website.
- **Crisis Intervention Team:** A team of elementary staff members have been certified in crisis response (CPI), CPR, and positive behavior intervention support. If a safety or medical issue arises within the school, these individuals have the training to take the necessary steps until first responders arrive.
- **Promoting positive behaviors and R.E.S.P.E.C.T. in our school community:** Positive Behavioral Intervention and Support activities and assemblies are scheduled throughout the year to foster a community of acceptance and respect. We have been focusing monthly on reminding the students how to show respect for each other. Bystander education, empathy, character education, and conflict resolution are examples of topics discussed.

Please consider attending a presentation by **Critical Incident Manager, Tom Mynsberge, on May 2nd, at 7PM,** in the MS/HS Media Center, to learn more about the procedures and structures in place at MCS to ensure the safety and security of our students. Together with Mrs. Tara Mager, MS/HS Principal, I will also be attending the Homeland Security Conference in May to learn with first responders throughout the state the most up to date procedures and protocols to incorporate into our safety planning.

We welcome the opportunity to discuss any additional safety questions or concerns you may have. I can be reached via email at glazier.gwen@merrillschools.org or via phone at 989.643.7283.

VANDAL PRIDE!

Gwen Glazier, Elementary Principal

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Merrill. Where You Belong.

