

Tara Mager, MA, LPC, LBSW

Merrill MS/HS Principal
mager@merrillschools.org

Sarah Kettelhohn
Merrill Community Schools, Superintendent
kettelhohn@merrillschools.org

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Dear Families and Friends of Merrill Community Schools:

Thank you for choosing Merrill Community Schools to fostering the academic growth of your child. The safety of your child is a 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.

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

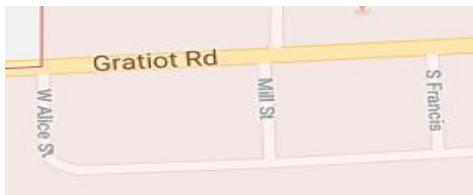
- The students and staff of our school practice 4 primary emergency drills each year. They are "FIRE DRILLS"; "LOCKDOWN DRILLS"; "SECURE MODE DRILLS", and "TORNADO DRILLS". Each type of drill is explained below.
- **MCS Security Committee:** This committee focuses on evaluating and updating crisis planning and management for the Middle and High 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. Our regularly scheduled safety drills in the areas of fire, tornado, secure mode, and lockdown, exceed requirements established by the state of Michigan. Drills occur during both structured classroom time, and passing time to ensure students are able to respond effectively during a real event. A copy of these drills can be found on our school website at www.merrillschools.org.
- **Physical Security Improvements:** Our buildings have 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, or the 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:** Each building has a team of staff members who 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 a positive and tolerant school community:** Tolerance classroom activities and assemblies are scheduled throughout the year to foster a community of acceptance and respect. Bystander education, empathy, character education, and conflict resolution are examples of topics discussed. In partnership with the Michigan State Police, students have awareness of cybersecurity.

Please be aware of the following Middle and High procedures designed to ensure the safety of our students:

1. **Morning drop off:** Parent/family drop off will use the Merrill High School main entrance. All entrance doors will be locked at all times, even during morning drop off. Middle School entrances will no longer be open for morning drop off. We understand the inconvenience this will create for our middle school students, but need to have the entrances monitored for safety. Bus drop offs will continue to occur outside of the MHS gym entrance.
2. **Eastbound family drop off:** Families dropping students off must do so driving East (stopping on the curb/sidewalk side of Alice St.). Westbound 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 (to Francis St and from Francis St. to Saginaw St./Gratiot Rd) and will be enforcing this “No Stopping -Standing-Parking Zone”.



Please consider attending a presentation by **OK2SAY**, in the MS/HS Media Center on Tuesday, September 25 , to learn more about the one of the many measures in place to ensure the safety and security of our students.

We welcome the opportunity to discuss any additional safety questions or concerns you may have. I can be reached via email at mager@merrillschools.org or via phone at 989.643.7231.

Warmest Regards,

Tara Mager
Principal