



Dr. Jerry D. Weast, superintendent of schools, and staff discuss problem-solving strategies with the chiefs of Montgomery County public safety agencies during a recent MCPS emergency/crisis exercise.

## Four Phases of the Emergency and Crisis Management Process



# Emergency and Crisis Preparedness

information for students, parents, and guardians

The Montgomery County Public Schools (MCPS) is prepared to effectively and efficiently respond to a multitude of emergency/crisis situations that may impact students, staff, and parents or guardians. A systemwide plan, the MCPS Emergency Response Plan, in addition to emergency/crisis plans tailored to the individual school, enables MCPS to respond to and manage a multitude of emergencies/crises. The systemwide MCPS Emergency Response Plan is continually reviewed and updated.

**Schools are required to practice fire evacuation drills and Code Red and Code Blue drills throughout the year.**

Each year schools update their emergency/crisis plans, which are then reviewed and approved by the Department of School Safety and Security. Schools are required to practice fire evacuation drills and Code Red and Code Blue drills throughout the year. Each school establishes an on-site emergency team (OSET) composed of school administrators and staff who receive basic and enhanced levels of emergency/crisis preparedness training, conducted by the Department of School Safety and Security.

This publication was created to inform students, parents, guardians, and the community about the emergency/crisis preparedness procedures that are in place to protect students and staff. If you have questions or need additional information, contact your school and/or:

**Department of School Safety and Security  
MONTGOMERY COUNTY PUBLIC SCHOOLS**

850 Hungerford Drive, Suite 207  
Rockville, Maryland 20850  
301-279-3066

or  
visit the MCPS Web site:

**[www.montgomeryschoolsmd.org](http://www.montgomeryschoolsmd.org)**

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**MONTGOMERY COUNTY PUBLIC SCHOOLS**  
Rockville, Maryland

# MCPS Emergency/Crisis Procedures

## Code Red

Code Red is a term used to describe the existence of an emergency/crisis at a Montgomery County Public Schools (MCPS) facility. Code Red alerts students and staff that imminent danger exists inside or outside the school or facility and requires moving to an immediate lockdown mode. It requires that students are accounted for and under supervision. Montgomery County public safety agencies are notified.

## Code Blue

Code Blue is a term used to alert students and staff that an emergency/crisis exists at or near an MCPS facility requiring an enhanced level of safety and security. It requires students to be accounted for and under supervision. Classroom instruction may continue in most cases. Code Blue raises the level of control of the school, and principals may activate the on-site emergency team (OSET) if needed. OSET members have been identified, trained, and assigned duties according to their skills. Public safety agencies are notified as needed.

## Code Blue Shelter-in-Place

Code Blue Shelter-in-Place is a procedure used when it is necessary to immediately secure students and staff indoors. This enhanced level of Code Blue is used in the possibility that the outside atmosphere is hazardous due to a suspected chemical, biological, or radiological incident. Initially, parents or guardians will not be allowed to enter the school until public safety agencies declare it is safe to do so. This procedure is necessary to ensure the safety and well-being of students and staff.

**Each school has an on-site emergency team (OSET) to assist the principal in managing an emergency/crisis.**

## Resources for Emergency Communication

Parents or guardians have access to several resources to get current information on emergency situations taking place in MCPS—from individual school closings to systemwide problems. These include MCPS Television, cable Channel 34; the MCPS information line—301-279-3673; the MCPS Call Center—301-309-6277 (English and Spanish); local radio and television news stations; and the MCPS Web site home page ([www.montgomeryschoolsmd.org](http://www.montgomeryschoolsmd.org)). Parents or guardians can receive automatic alerts to their computers on MCPS breaking news by subscribing to the MCPS newsfeed. Go to [www.montgomeryschoolsmd.org/info/newsfeed/](http://www.montgomeryschoolsmd.org/info/newsfeed/) to obtain more information and subscribe free. Parents or guardians can also receive automatic alerts via e-mail from MCPS by subscribing to the MCPS QuickNotes e-mail service. Go to the MCPS home page to sign up.

## Parent/Child Reunification

Parent/child reunification (PCR) is a systematic process used by the Montgomery County Public Schools during an emergency/crisis to assist the school in effectively and efficiently reuniting students with their parents or guardians. This process will facilitate a calm and orderly reunification. Parents and guardians will need to bring identification to assist the school during the PCR process. Parents or guardians may identify, in advance to the school, adults who are authorized to pick up their children in the event that the parent or guardian is unavailable during an emergency/crisis. Also, parents and guardians are encouraged to consult with their schools to become familiar with and remain informed regarding their school's emergency/crisis plan and preparedness efforts, including the PCR process.



*MCPS security staff use two-way radios to maintain communication with school administrators and staff.*

