

February 22, 2006

Dear Parents/Guardians and Staff,

Re: "Shelter in Place" Procedures

Periodically, I have written to you about safety and security measures that we have developed within our schools to protect our students and staff. This correspondence is intended to advise you about planning we have been conducting in the event of a large scale, regional or national catastrophic event that precludes safe transport of our children to their homes.

Please know that school personnel regularly conduct drills with the assistance of local law enforcement, fire, and emergency service agencies. Most preparations are for responses to localized situations that directly affect our school students, staff and buildings. These emergencies, which call primarily for the direct protection of students and staff, often necessitate removal from their school if it is in an area of danger or crisis.

In the event, however, of an extreme national disaster, particularly one in the region of New York City, including environmental, biological, or radiological harm, we may be faced with the following potential critical conditions locally:

1. Exposure to environmental threats,
2. Breakdown of telecommunications systems,
3. Traffic jams of monumental proportions

Under these circumstances, conditions may exist in which:

- Parents may not be able to contact school personnel and vice versa due to either extraordinary call volume and/or telephone system breakdowns.
- School buses (which conduct at least two separate runs each morning and each afternoon) may not be able to deliver students to their homes effectively or on a predictable schedule.
- Children on delayed school buses held up in traffic for long periods may be without the comfort and security of home or school.
- Children left outdoors or in buses may be more acutely exposed to environmental dangers.

In response to these and other similar potential conditions, school personnel are prepared to supervise and safeguard every child, as long as may be necessary, within the confines of

their school. This response, known as “**Shelter in Place**,” will provide assurance to every parent that their children are safe and cared for during the period of crisis.

In the event that a “**Shelter in Place**” emergency is declared, your child will be kept in school, under the guidance of the principal and key staff, until parents or approved guardians are able to personally retrieve them. Children will be provided with food, drinks, and activities to comfort them. This system can be extended for up to 48 hours, if necessary.

In the event of any environmental concerns, children will be kept indoors, air exchange systems will be shut off, and windows closed. Schools will be prepared to receive parents to pick up their children quickly and efficiently and the principals and I will ensure sufficient staff as may be necessary to care for students.

The only exception to this procedure will be high school students who drive to school. They will be allowed (subject to parental discretion) to drive home immediately upon the announcement of a “**Shelter in Place**” emergency, if conditions permit.

As we refine the specific plans and protocols for this emergency procedure, we welcome your comments and suggestions at our email address, comments@acsdny.org. For other safety related information, please access our website, www.arlingtonschools.org, “*School Closings, Delays and Student Safety.*”

Sincerely,

Frank V. Pepe, Jr.
Superintendent of Schools