



# EDMUND J. O'NEAL MIDDLE SCHOOL OF EXCELLENCE

50 North Lark Street • Albany, NY • 12210

**David Bernsley**, *Principal*  
**Timitra Rose** and **April Stokes**, *Assistant Principals*

---

Oct. 22, 2019

Dear Families:

**The safety of students, staff and faculty is a priority for Edmund J. O'Neal Middle School of Excellence and the City School District of Albany, which responds immediately to threats of any kind.** I am writing to update you on an incident that happened Tuesday that affected our school.

Staff received a report of the possibility of a student with a weapon, and the school went into lockdown at 10:18 a.m. as a safety precaution. During a lockdown, students and staff remain locked in classrooms. No is allowed to enter or leave the building. The lockout was lifted at 10:42 a.m., after Albany police and school and district security teams determined the report was not credible.

Your student may be upset by the emergency protocols the school followed on Tuesday as the investigation unfolded. Staff will be available to support students at school if needed, but here are some tips on how to help from home.

### **Talk to your student about school safety**

Tuesday's event provides an opportunity for you to discuss emergency safety procedures at school. In addition to talking to your student, we encourage you to review the school's Emergency Response procedures, which are on the last page of this letter.

Consider emphasizing these points:

- Schools are safe places. School staff works with parents and public safety providers (local police and fire departments, emergency responders, hospitals, etc.) to keep you safe.
- The school building is safe because we have preventative measures to ensure that our learning environment promotes optimal learning. We frequently train all staff on universal emergency response protocol.
- Our director and assistant director of safe schools and violence prevention work with over 125 safety and security monitors on how to build trusting relationships with students and how to best secure our buildings each day.
- The district enjoys a strong relationship with many important community partners, all focused on providing a safe and secure learning environment with opportunities for wrap-around services.

As you talk to your student about school safety procedures, observe his or her emotional state. Some students may not express their concerns verbally. Changes in behavior, appetite, and sleep patterns can also indicate a student's level of anxiety or discomfort. In most students, these symptoms will ease with reassurance and time. However, some students may be at risk for more intense reactions.

(over)

### **Support a student who may have experienced trauma**

- Stay calm and stabilize your own emotions.
- Avoid spreading rumors. Provide facts and be selective of appropriate information in the news reports for sharing with your student.
- Let your student feel accepted and supported. Respect his or her feelings. They are genuine even if they are different from yours. Never deny or mock a student's fears and worries.
- Listen to your student's concerns and needs. Do not forbid the student to mention or talk about the incident. Suppressing feelings may have aversive effects in the long run.
- Offer opportunities for your student to share what he or she fears and worries most. Discuss arrangements that will make him or her feel more secure, e.g. keeping him or her company.
- Encourage your student to express their feelings.
- Do express words of comfort but do not be anxious to give advice. Excessive concern can result in undue stress.
- Encourage your student to continue with normal routines as far as possible.
- Arrange activities that are good for the body and mind, such as listening to music, doing sports and helping them to relax. Encourage your student to focus on other matters.
- Observe and monitor your student's progress.
- Reach out to a community mental health professional for support. A list of providers is included.

### **Encourage your student to 'Speak Up, Speak Out'**

- *Speak Up, Speak Out* is a campaign to empower voices within the school community, including students, staff, families and community partners. The school district empowers staff, students and families to cultivate a safe and secure community. If something doesn't appear to be safe, *Speak Up, Speak Out*.
- The district recognizes the importance of encouraging the school community to *Speak Up, Speak Out* to access the layers of support available within and outside of the school setting.
- We all play a role in the school safety. Be observant and let an adult know if you see or hear something that makes you feel uncomfortable, nervous or frightened.
- There is a difference between reporting, tattling or gossiping. You can provide important information that may prevent harm either directly or anonymously by telling a trusted adult what you know or hear.
- Although there is no absolute guarantee that something bad will never happen, it is important to understand the difference between the possibility of something happening and probability that it will affect you (our school community).

Please be assured that the safety of students, faculty and staff is of paramount importance to Edmund J. O'Neal Middle School of Excellence and throughout our school district. The district will continue to assure that threats of any kind are reported to the proper authorities, thoroughly investigated and accurately communicated to students, families, faculty and staff.

If you have any questions or would like additional information or services for your student, please call the school at 518-475-6600.

Sincerely,



David Bernsley  
Principal

### Community Mental Health Resources

<b>Albany County Children's Mental Health</b> Individual/family counseling, medication management Open intake hours: M/W 9:30-12:00	(518) 447-4550 260 South Pearl Street, Albany, NY, 12202
<b>Albany Med Child &amp; Adolescent Psychiatry</b> Outpatient mental health, behavioral support, medication management	(518) 262-5511 AMC South Clinical Campus, 2 <sup>nd</sup> Fl. Albany, NY, 12208
<b>Capital Counseling</b> Individual/family counseling, district EAP provider <a href="http://capitalcounseling.org/">http://capitalcounseling.org/</a>	(518) 462-6531 Various Locations 650 Warren St., Albany NY, 12208
<b>Capital District Behavioral Health</b> Individual/family counseling and psychological assessments <a href="http://www.cdbehavioralhealth.com/">http://www.cdbehavioralhealth.com/</a>	(518) 785-7283 20 Century Hill Drive, Suite 202 Latham, NY, 12110
<b>Capital District Psychiatric Center</b> Child and Adolescent Services Clinic Mobile Crisis: 549-6500	(518) 549-6929 75 New Scotland Ave., Albany, NY, 12208
<b>Center for Disability Services</b> Developmental Disabilities & mental health <a href="http://www.cfdsny.org">www.cfdsny.org</a>	(518) 437-5900 314 South Manning Blvd., Albany, NY, 12208
<b>Choices Counseling &amp; Consulting</b> Individual/family counseling, LGBTQ <a href="http://choicesconsulting.com/">http://choicesconsulting.com/</a>	(518) 438-2222 533 Western Ave., Albany, NY, 12203
<b>The Consultation Center</b> Individual & spiritual counseling <a href="https://www.rcda.org/offices/consultation-center">https://www.rcda.org/offices/consultation-center</a>	(518) 489-4431 790 Lancaster St., Albany, NY, 12203
<b>Counseling Care &amp; Services</b> Individual/family counseling <a href="http://www.counselingcareandservices.org/">www.counselingcareandservices.org/</a>	(518) 237-4263 405 Vliet Blvd. Cohoes, NY, 12047
<b>Crime Victim and Sexual Violence Center</b> Advocacy & counseling services Emergency (518)447-7716.	(518)447-5500 112 State Street-Room 1100 Albany, NY, 12207
<b>Developing Minds Upstate Physicians Services</b> Individual counseling, behavioral consultation, medication management <a href="https://www.upstatedevelopingminds.com/">https://www.upstatedevelopingminds.com/</a>	(518) 486-8591 (Delmar) (518) 687-1960 (Troy) Various Locations 2001 Fifth Ave., Troy, NY, 12180
<b>Ellis Outpatient Child/Adolescent Psychiatry</b> Outpatient mental health, medication management Crisis: 243-4000; ER: 243-3300 <a href="http://www.ellishospital.org/">www.ellishospital.org/</a>	(518) 382-2290 624 McClellan St.,- Suite 202 Schenectady, NY, 12305
<b>Equinox-Clearview Center</b> Outpatient mental health, substance abuse	(518) 435-9931 102 Hackett Blvd. Albany, NY, 12209
<b>Four Winds Saratoga</b> Hospital, Outpatient Treatment <a href="http://www.fourwindshospital.com">www.fourwindshospital.com</a>	(518) 584-3600 30 Crescent Ave., Saratoga Springs, NY, 2866
<b>HPA Livewell</b> Eating disorders & Mental Health <a href="http://hpalivewell.com/">http://hpalivewell.com/</a>	(518) 218-1188 260 Washington Ave Ext #101 Albany, NY, 12203

<b>Vera Imperiale, APRN</b> Psychiatric Nurse Practitioner	(518) 456-3614 401 New Karner Rd., Albany, NY, 12205
<b>Jewish Family Services</b> Individual counseling, grief support <a href="http://www.jfsnyny.org/programsservices/counseling/">http://www.jfsnyny.org/programsservices/counseling/</a>	(518) 482-8856 877 Madison Ave., Albany, NY, 12208
<b>Karner Psychological Services</b> Individual/family counseling, psychological assessments <a href="http://www.karnercare.com/">http://www.karnercare.com/</a>	(518) 456-5056 Various Locations 2280 Western Ave., Guilderland, NY, 12084
<b>LaSalle Counseling Center</b> Outpatient Clinic <a href="http://www.lasalle-school.org/programs-services/the-counseling-center-at-lasalle/">www.lasalle-school.org/programs-services/the-counseling-center-at-lasalle/</a>	(518) 242-4731, ex. 240 391 Western Ave., Albany, NY, 12203
<b>Northeast Psychological Associates</b> Individual/family counseling, psychological assessments <a href="http://neppsych.com/">http://neppsych.com/</a>	(518) 456-2060 435 New Karner Rd., Albany, NY, 12205
<b>Parsons Child &amp; Family Guidance Clinic</b> Individual/family counseling, Medication management Mobile Crisis Team: (518) 292-5499 or (518) 549-6500	(518) 431-1650 401 New Karner Rd., 2 <sup>nd</sup> Floor Albany, NY, 12205
<b>Pinnacle Behavioral Health</b> Outpatient clinic, medication management <a href="http://www.pinnaclebehavioralhealth.com/">http://www.pinnaclebehavioralhealth.com/</a>	(518) 689-0244 1 Pinnacle Place Albany, NY, 12203
<b>St. Peter's Outpatient Psychiatry</b> 18 years and older, Mental health and medication management. Must participate in primary care network. <a href="http://www.sphcs.org/outpatientpsychiatrycounseling">www.sphcs.org/outpatientpsychiatrycounseling</a>	(518) 525-1304 315 S. Manning Blvd., Albany, NY, 12208
<b>Samaritan Counseling Center</b> Individual and family counseling <a href="http://www.samaritancounselingcenter.org/family-counseling">www.samaritancounselingcenter.org/family-counseling</a>	(518) 374-3514 Various Locations
<b>SUNY Albany Psychological Service Center</b> Individual counseling, psychological assessments <a href="http://www.albany.edu/psc">www.albany.edu/psc</a>	(518) 422-4900 299 Washington Ave., Albany, NY, 12206
<b>Synergy Counseling Associates</b> Individual/family counseling	(518) 221-6554 1 Pinnacle Pl # 202 Albany, NY, 12203
<b>Vitality Physician's Group</b> Mental health & medication management <a href="http://www.vitalitypractice.org/">http://www.vitalitypractice.org/</a>	(518) 691-0732 4 Pine West Plaza #403 Albany, NY, 12205
<b>Whitney Young</b> Counseling & medication management <a href="http://www.wmyhealth.org/">http://www.wmyhealth.org/</a>	(518) 465-4771 920 Lark St., Albany, NY, 12207

# Emergency Response

Address for 911: Edmund J. O'Neal Middle School, 50 North Lark St.

## Shelter-In-Place



Used to shelter students and staff inside the building.

- Listen for instructions about the situation and your actions.
- Students in hallways should return to assigned classroom, if possible.
- Classroom teachers, take attendance.
- All other staff assist students, as needed.
- Move away from windows, if situation warrants.
- If instructed, move out of classroom to designated safe area. Stay together at all times.
- Take Attendance.
- Listen for updates.

## Hold-In-Place



Used to limit movement of students and staff while dealing with short term emergencies.

- Listen for instructions about the situation and your actions.
- Students in hallways should return to assigned classroom, if possible.
- Classroom teachers, take attendance.
- All other staff assist students, as needed.
- Listen for updates.

## Evacuate



Used to evacuate students and staff from the building.

- Listen for instructions about the situation and your actions.
- Lead students to designated assembly or announced assembly area. Use secondary route, if necessary.
- Bring attendance list and class roster.
- Close the classroom door after exiting.
- Take attendance when safe to do so.
- If evacuating off site, take attendance before moving from and upon arrival at off site location.
- Listen for Updates.

## Lockout



Used to secure school buildings and grounds during incidents that pose an imminent concern outside of the school.

- Listen for instructions regarding the situation and your actions.
- Lock all exterior windows.
- Leave blinds/lights as they are.
- Take Attendance.
- After initial instructions listen for updates.
- Classroom instruction continues as normal.
- All outdoor activities are terminated.
- Listen for updates.

## Lockdown



Used to secure school buildings and grounds during incidents that pose an immediate threat of violence in or around the school.

- When you hear lockdown announced, you should move quickly to execute the following actions.
- If safe, gather students from hallways and common areas near your classroom.
- Secure your door.
- Move students to a safe area in the classroom out of site of the door.
- Leave windows, blinds/lights as they are.
- Keep everyone quiet, silence cell phones.
- Take attendance, if possible.
- Do not communicate through door or phone.
- Do not respond to P.A. announcements or fire alarm
- Stay hidden until physically released by law enforcement personnel.