



Keeping Students Safe **Frequently Asked Questions**

Are our schools safe?

Yes. According to studies, school remains the safest place a child will likely ever be. There are over 50 million school children in America and the chances of a fatality at school are about one in 2 million¹. Saint Paul Public Schools (SPPS) is committed to making schools a safe place for our children to learn and grow.

Do all schools have emergency plans?

Yes. Each school has a safety plan – created specifically for that school – that is reviewed and updated at the beginning of every school year. One-on-one meetings between school administrators and the district's Security and Emergency Management staff are also held to address specific site needs.

Are guns allowed in SPPS?

No. SPPS Board Policy 903.00 forbids any person from carrying a weapon on a school location. Exceptions may be made for:

- An active, licensed law enforcement officer
- Security personnel on the job for the school district
- An individual with written permission from the Superintendent.

Strict action will be taken against anyone who violates this policy.

Has SPPS considered getting metal detectors for the main entrances to schools?

Safety options for all SPPS sites are continually reviewed and updated. Based on best practices and industry standards across the nation, as well as working closely with our own law enforcement partners, we have determined that hand-held metal detection is a better option and is used in schools, buildings and events as needed.

Are all doors to schools, except for the main entrances, locked from the outside during the day?

Yes. This is part of each school's security plan. However, some programs or buildings may have a more restrictive system in place as needed.

Are visitors required to check-in and wear ID?

Yes. This is required at all schools.

What can be done to control who gets in and out of our buildings?

Safety options for all SPPS sites are continually reviewed and updated. Access to buildings is continually being upgraded through staffing, technology solutions and capital improvement efforts.

Why are all doors not locked at all times? As noted earlier, schools attempt to balance the safety and security of our staff and students with the desire to provide a welcoming environment to families and the community. However, safety will always be the first consideration.

Do the classroom doors lock?

Yes.

Are there phones in every classroom?

Yes.

Are there police officers or security guards working in our schools?

Yes. We have 10 Saint Paul Police School Resource Officers (SROs) who work directly with Saint Paul Public Schools. Some of these officers are assigned to specific schools, while others are mobile and available to respond to calls throughout the school system. SPPS also has a number of security guards that assist at sites, on buses and at the district command/dispatch level.

Do schools have video surveillance cameras?

Yes. Video surveillance is used at a number of locations throughout Saint Paul Public Schools.

Do schools have drills so staff and students know what to do if there is an intruder or someone actively using a weapon? How often?

Yes. All SPPS schools are required to conduct a minimum of five such drills throughout the school year. Each school is also required to conduct a minimum of five fire drills and one severe weather drill. Each drill is scheduled by the site administrators/principals and reported, recorded and evaluated by Security and Emergency Management (SEM) staff.

What are elementary students taught during these types of drills?

The main message is to remain calm and quiet and follow the instructions of their classroom teachers. Procedures involve locking classroom and entrance doors, pulling down window shades and moving children to the least visible areas in the room.

Are there any services available to children and parents who may need additional assistance in recovering from a traumatic event?

Yes. Crisis Response Teams are specially trained and available 24 hours a day, seven days a week. School social workers and counselors will work directly with those in need or facilitate services through the appropriate community partners.

Are there more school shootings today, or are we just hearing more about them?

Deadly shootings in schools are rare; in fact, you have a better chance of getting struck by lightning (1 in 700,000)ⁱⁱ. After reaching a high of 63 deaths in the 2006-2007 school year, the number of people killed in "school-associated" incidents dropped to 33 in 2009-2010 — the lowest in two decades, according to the U.S. Department of Education.

Where can I get more information about SPPS safety and security?

<http://safety.spps.org>

ⁱ According to James Alan Fox, a professor of criminology, law and public policy at Northeastern University, as quoted in USA Today 12/14/2012 <http://www.usatoday.com/story/news/nation/2012/12/14/school-shooting-connecticut/1769367/>

ⁱⁱ http://news.nationalgeographic.com/news/2004/06/0623_040623_lightningfacts.html