



# Mount Olive Township School District

*"Children are our first priority"*

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All:

I am writing to provide the school community more information about security measures in the Mount Olive schools. All of us were shocked by the recent school shooting in Florida. Unfortunately, just since Sandy Hook in 2012, the New York Times reports that there have been 239 additional school shootings nationwide. There is reason for all of us to be concerned.

Over the last few years, based on this now growing trend, the Mount Olive Board of Education has authorized a number of defensive measures that have been implemented in our schools to minimize the chance of a shooting. These measures include:

- A signed memorandum of agreement between the Board of Education and the Mount Olive Police Department to ensure a close partnership and coordination of tactics.
- Hardened doors on every exterior door in every school building. (These doors cannot be easily opened without a key).
- Security film on all entry windows making them almost impossible to breach.
- Mantraps at every school point of entry (all students, staff, and visitors enter through a single point. That point has two doorways; both of which are locked after the opening of the school day).
- A security kiosk that prints identification badges at every school (the machine searches databases for any wants or warrants for any person seeking entry into the school).
- A video camera on every front door, a security employee manning the door to challenge all entrants, and two secure checks before any visitor is permitted in the buildings.
- Hundreds of cameras in our schools, all connected to the Mount Olive Police Department.
- Voice over I/P phone systems in every classroom (meaning any teacher with the proper code can call in an emergency message).
- Instantaneous notification systems in all schools. Whenever an alarm operates in non-drill mode, the Mount Olive Police are immediately notified.
- Four (4) armed, security officers on patrol at MOMS and MOHS.

- Frequent trainings for all students, faculty, and staff for emergency situations (the MO Police train in our buildings as well).
- Rapid response time from the Mount Olive Police with the enter first tactic (police rush to enter school facilities during emergencies, rather than setting up a perimeter).
- Lock down door magnets on every door (allowing each door to be locked almost immediately upon notice).
- Numbered classrooms and doors on outside windows (all entry ways are numbered and mapped for easy police access).
- Identified rally points at all schools (MOHS now has under cover rally points).

Maximizing the effectiveness of these measures is all about logistics and fidelity. The identification machines in our lobbies for instance, are only useful if they are consistently used. To this end, we are making a concerted effort to re-commit to already established security protocols. Where we see opened doors or lax security by students, community members, and staff, we will take corrective action. During lock down drills, we will train with more intense, realistic, and pervasive exercises to better prepare students for the unthinkable. We will challenge all visitors and deny entry to our schools to any unauthorized person with a package without a search of its contents.

While improving current practices will no doubt help, after consulting the Mount Olive Police Department, we will also implement additional, new, and more stringent measures. Some of these new measures may result in less access to our school facilities or more time to clear students for unscheduled departures. Due to safety concerns, we ask for your continued patience and understanding. We wish to keep our kids safe.

Planned improvements....

1. We plan to **employ four additional armed security personnel**, one for each elementary school building. The new people will control access to the school sites.
2. We plan to ask the Mount Olive Police Department to **deploy two fulltime police officers** (or equivalent) at MOHS and MOMS. Both schools have more than 1,000 students. An armed officer, working with our own armed security staff will drastically improve security in our two largest buildings.
3. We plan to construct new security walls at MOHS. These new walls will isolate intruders and better protect students.
4. We plan to upgrade our security identification kiosks in each school.
5. We plan to change the way our students and faculty drill for Code Reds, adding new procedures and training for new events.
6. We plan to enhance our armed security officers' capabilities with new tools (TBD).
7. We plan to increase security camera surveillance.
8. We plan to limit student access to unsecured areas during "free time periods".
9. We plan to reduce or eliminate public events in our schools that may present security concerns during the school day (such as elections).

While the planned improvements may take time, permission, and resources, there are some easy things parents and community members could help with...

There is sometimes too much “chatter” about our present security measures (online, in social media, etc.). People sharing sensitive information about how to get in our schools via the internet weakens our defenses and presents a danger to our children. We ask for much more forbearance in the way our school’s security plans are discussed. To be most effective, they should be secret. Explaining how to access our building or where our armed security officers are during the day only give potential threats valuable information that can be used against us. We realize that community members and parents sometimes have questions or concerns. We want to hear them. We ask that all such concerns be addressed privately with the appropriate school official. We answer all questions posed by caring parents.

Also, at present our schools get hundreds of visitors each month. Last month alone, Mount Olive Middle school was visited 400 times by parents and other community members. We ask that parents minimize such visits. The sheer number of visitors complicates our efforts to secure our schools. Checking on dozens of daily visitors robs the attention of our school personnel. If possible, kids should bring everything they need to school with them each morning.

Finally, we must understand the world we live in. Perhaps our best defense for tragic circumstance is getting everyone involved. Every year, serious threats are made in our schools. Such threats are quickly and immediately dealt with. In every instance, a student or parent knew of the threat and told someone. Their action led to the removal and treatment of the threat.

To further strengthen our capability in this area, the district is planning to implement the “**Say Something Campaign**” in all of our schools. The program, developed by the survivors of the Sandy Hook incident helps to empower students by equipping them with the right tools to proactively recognize the warning signs of potential violence. Our kids will come to understand that they have great power in controlling the spread of violence. They have the best insight as to who is or can be an actual threat to the school’s safety. We have seen that in 80% of all school shootings and in 70% of all suicides, at least one person knew of the perpetrators intentions but chose not to say anything. The “Say Something Campaign” will be aimed at prompting (grades 6-12) students to help keep all of us safe by talking to a trusted adult about potential concerns. If that someone happens to be you, we ask you to immediately call your school principal, Mount Olive Police, or me. We will investigate and act accordingly.

In matters such as these, we should take solace in that we have one another. We can make a difference if we support, encourage, and trust in one another. We ask for your help in keeping our schools safe.