

Good morning SJS Community,

When I talk to parents at orientations and on tours, I stress that every child at St. John School will be loved and safe. These are two of the core pieces of our culture, along with a rigorous academic program. Today was a day when we were thinking about and practicing safety. Each year at St. John School, we perform three different safety drills a few times a year to be prepared for an emergency. We already did a fire drill (evacuation of the building) and a shelter in place (for a medical emergency within the school) this year. Today, we practiced our lock down procedures. Practicing lockdowns is a necessary part of our safety plan and ensures preparedness for emergency situations. These drills can also be stressful and difficult for students and teachers. With this in mind, your child may come home today and want to talk about the lockdown, or the procedures put in place. These conversations at home with parents are very important, ensuring that all students feel safe at St. John School.

Last year, all faculty and staff at St. John School received training from Ratio Risk Services, a partner of the Archdiocese of Boston Office of Risk Management. The goal was to enhance adaptability and critical thinking in emergency situations by providing teachers confidence in their ability to protect themselves and those they care for in the face of a violent situation. With this in mind, we have changed our lockdown policies a bit at St. John School this year and added “go buckets” to every classroom. In our training, teachers were told to have four frames of mind during lockdowns/intruders in the building. First, locate the concern. Second, lockdown your classroom. Third, leave with your class if possible and escape the building (this is new this year). Fourth, live. This is the reality of the world we live in – teachers were told that if the situation warrants, you must fight to live. This is not something we discuss with students, but something that teachers must be aware of.

We have also added “go buckets” to every class this year. These are buckets aimed at helping teachers and students respond to lock down situations. The classroom bucket includes a first aid kit, gauze, cold packs, drinking water, rubber gloves, scissors, duct tape, a tarp, rope, foil blankets, toilet paper, and doorstops. These are useful tools, as is the actual bucket, in certain situations. In our older grades, teachers may have discussed these go buckets with students. We have chosen not to address these buckets in younger grades.

My last thought for you today is that your children are safe at St. John School and we are creating a culture of safety and preparedness for any situation. Please let me know if you have any questions or comments.

Chris