

SCHOOL UNION 76

BROOKLIN – DEER ISLE-STONINGTON CSD – SEDGWICK

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Office of the Superintendent

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"It takes a whole community to educate a child."

Superintendent's Memo

To: Sedgwick Elementary School Parents & Guardians
From: Christian M. Elkington
Re: School Safety Update
Date: 3-12-18

Today, I write to you about a very sad topic, one that is always on my mind, school safety. As some of you may know I have a son who goes to college in Pennsylvania. Each time I drive to visit and then drive back I have to pass exits for Newtown and Sandy Hook. Two towns that will always be fixed in my mind for the terror and suffering they experienced and still remind us of today.

Events such as these and more recently the shooting in Parkland, help to shape how we think about life, who we are and how we care. Please know that at Sedgwick Elementary School we are continuing to review our present procedures, look at ways to improve our safety supports, check to make sure what is planned works and, if needed, to order materials to upgrade the safety in our building. Please also know that the staff at Sedgwick Elementary School continues to be focused on the safety of your/our children by making sure doors to the outside are shut and locked, that visitors sign in and show identification if deemed necessary and that students know and practice procedures in our school and their classrooms. As I shared previously, school safety is always #1 on our mind and will continue to be.

I think we all know that today's world is very, very polarized. The lack of trust that we see at the national level is what we also see in our own communities in Maine. The lack of trust and willingness of some to believe in the first rumor or comment made by someone on Facebook or through a text or Snapchat continues to grow and is out of control. The speed with which technology can spread true or false information is staggering. The speed with which people can attack ideas, each other or our young people is also staggering and disheartening and leaves me feeling helpless to support both our students and staff at times.

After the Parkland Shooting, and over the last few weeks I have been disturbed by the vitriol and negativity spewed on Facebook at some of our students and between parents

and community members. There is a culture war going on through the internet and everyone, including our students, can sometimes be a target.

As you have probably heard there is a planned, national student “Walk-out” to recognize the 17 students, victims killed in Parkland, Florida along with the importance of school safety. This walkout is to take place on March 14th at 10:00 AM. A noble gesture first created by students for students as they say they are sick of the inactivity on school safety. **We believe this is a grass-roots, student-led, effort and must stay that way.** The staff of Sedgwick Elementary School is not encouraging, supporting, or facilitating if middle school students plan to join this walk-out.

Since we know there is a chance this may take place at our school we will be taking the following precautions to best as possible protect our students and staff:

- Students planning to participate during this time will need:
 - o An organized focus on school safety, developed and directed by students
 - o A place to gather within each school, as outside will be a safety concern that we can't properly supervise
- Students who choose to join the walkout will still be supervised by Sedgwick School Staff, but not directed by us
- Parents or visitors will not be allowed to join students who may be protesting
- Only volunteers who regularly volunteer in our school at this time of the day will be allowed to enter before 9:50 or after 10:30
- **If you need your child for an appointment please collect them before 9:50 or after 10:30** as we will be practicing a safety drill during this time
- Safety Drill Reminders:
 - o During any and all safety drills the drill will not be interrupted as its practice is what is most important
 - o It is our practice that when parents or guardians, wishing to collect their child for an appointment, come to school during a drill they must wait until the drill is over to collect their son or daughter.

As we work together during a very sad time in our nation's history I need to thank everyone in advance for your support of our schools' safety precautions both this week and throughout the rest of our school year. I also want to thank you for any and all positive efforts and actions that you take to support our students, staff and Sedgwick Elementary School throughout the remainder of our school year. Together we will keep our schools' as respectful and safe as possible!