

School Safety at Hill View Montessori

The safety, well-being, and security of our students is truly our top priority. Below, please find information about many of the efforts we have made to establish the safest possible learning environment.

- We have a Crisis Management Team and a comprehensive Crisis Management Plan that is communicated to staff annually and also reviewed periodically throughout the year during staff meetings. The written plan is available for review at any time by all staff members.
- We have written plans for many types of emergencies including those necessitating shelter-in-place, school evacuation, and lockdown procedures.
- Each year, in addition to regularly scheduled fire drills, each classroom practices three School Safety Drills*. These drills are guided by protocols developed by the US Department of Homeland Security, the New York Police Department (NYPD) and [ALICE](#) training practices. *Faculty, caregivers, and students will always be notified ahead of time that a School Safety Drill will take place on a particular day, to maximize preparedness and minimize fear in students.*
- We believe that *words matter* and that *all young people deserve to feel safe in their school community*. For these reasons, we use the terms “School Safety” and “School Safety Drills” rather than “Lockdown,” “Active Shooter” or other more frightening terms.
- Per professional guidelines, we emphasize to students that when the designated "Stop, Look & Listen" signal is given, it is essential that they immediately listen to and follow adult directions. Please review this important message with your child as well.
- All outside doors of our school are locked during school hours with only the main entrance door enabled to receive visitors.
- All visitors to Hill View Montessori are required to sign in at the front desk and to wear a Visitor name badge whenever they are in the building.
- All classroom doors can be locked and teachers are trained to do so during certain emergencies.
- Staff provide close supervision of recess areas and all transitions to and from the school building. When outside on school grounds for recess or outdoor learning, staff carry walkie-talkies to enable communication with the main office.
- We have four trained and certified/licensed mental health professionals on staff who can provide students and families with assistance in social-emotional matters.
- We have a parent notification system to notify families of important information and events. In the case of an emergency requiring evacuation, information would include where to meet and reunify with your child. I would strongly encourage you to ensure your contact information is updated regularly.
- Lastly, Massachusetts has some of the strictest gun laws in the nation. These laws include a ban on assault-type weapons, which includes the AR-15. Furthermore, people who possess firearms must be licensed with the local police department, and if there are any concerns or violation of the law, the Police Chief can suspend the license and order the surrender of the weapons.

Below, please find several resources that may be of interest as you think about how to speak with your child about school safety. If your child is demonstrating significant anxiety or fear around school safety, please feel free to contact me, Carla Vaughan (School Social Worker, Grades 4-8) or Bridget Sears (School Counselor, Grades K-3).

- [Talking to Kids About School Safety](#)
- [How to Talk to Young Kids About School Safety--Even if You Think It's Too Early to Start](#)
- [Talking to Children About Violence: Tips for Parents & Teachers](#)