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## BENNINGTON-RUTLAND SUPERVISORY UNION

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PAWLET  
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**METTAWEE SCHOOL DISTRICT •• TACONIC AND GREEN REGIONAL SCHOOL DISTRICT •• WINHALL SCHOOL DISTRICT**

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September 2022

Dear BRSU Families,

I want to take the opportunity to inform you of the work we are doing BRSU-wide in the area of school safety. This is a topic we are deeply committed to, and as such, we have been working hard over the last several years to review our practices and further enhance our school safety procedures, training, and infrastructure. Included in this letter is a summary of some of the work we have been doing.

I will be holding a virtual community meeting on **September 27, 2022 at 5:00pm** and I invite you to participate in this event. This meeting will be an opportunity to discuss in more detail some of our infrastructure upgrades, the threat assessment process, drills, as well as our planning process. If you have questions you would like me to address at the meeting, please email us at [info@brsu.org](mailto:info@brsu.org) by *September 23*. [Here is the virtual link for the meeting](#).

As always, please feel free to reach out if you have any questions.

Sincerely,  
Randi Lowe, Superintendent

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### Summary of School Safety

#### Planning

Schools are required to have an Emergency Operations Plan. We have developed comprehensive Emergency Operations Plans for each of our schools (Currier Memorial School, The Dorset School, Flood Brook School, Manchester Elementary Middle School, Mettawee Community School and Sunderland Elementary School). These plans take into account both the unique infrastructure needs and location of the individual schools. Plans are reviewed and updated annually. We have established good working relationships with our emergency response agencies across the Supervisory Union (SU) to ensure they are familiar with our emergency response plans and have included these agencies in our training and exercise plans. Please understand that in order to maintain security, we cannot share the details of each plan with the general public.

#### Environmental Design

We have redesigned the entrances to our schools to include a vestibule area at the entrance to each building. We are continuing to add cameras to our schools to increase visibility across a range of common spaces inside and outside of our buildings. We have revised general traffic flow for pick-up and drop off at all of our schools over the last few years.

#### Hazing, Harassment and Bullying Investigator

The BRSU has a Hazing, Harassment and Bullying (HHB) investigator who conducts HHB investigations at our schools. This person also works with students to develop restorative skills and to learn strategies for working through conflicts with peers. The intent of this position is to help build preventative skills and to respond to issues that occur.

### **Behavioral Threat Assessment Team**

The state recommends that every school and SU have a Behavioral Threat Assessment Team and we have teams established at each school. Our schools have identified people who respond to verbal or written threats or other actions displayed by students, staff or others that may negatively impact our schools. Our SU team consists of SU leaders, school psychologists, technology and building and maintenance. School teams include school principals, school counselors, special education representatives, and local law enforcement as appropriate.

### **See Something, Say Something**

We know that 74% of all attacks that have been averted were due to someone coming forward with information. We will be re-teaching and reinforcing this approach with our staff and students at the start of the school year and will continue to do so annually. We continue to partner with the “See Something, Say Something” Campaign to encourage individuals to come forward that may have concerning information. 1-844-84-VTIPS or [www.vtips.us](http://www.vtips.us)

### **Infrastructure**

- **Locking mechanisms** - Classroom door locking systems vary from school to school, but safety procedures are in place to ensure classroom doors can be shut and locked quickly as needed.
- **Security Cameras** - Cameras have been installed throughout the schools with plans to replace older cameras as well as adding additional cameras..
- **Window Shading** - Classroom door windows along with many exterior windows have been covered with window shades or coated with a window tint to reduce visibility from the outside.
- **Security Systems** - We are in the process of updating our school alarm systems at all schools.

### **Access Control**

We continue to work to refine our access control/visitor management policy/procedures throughout the SU. We want and encourage the community to visit our schools, while ensuring we know who is in our schools at all times. We updated our Access Control and Visitor Management procedure as we began the 2022-23 school year and one of our protocols is that parents/guardians will not be allowed to enter school at student arrival and dismissal times.

### **Visitor Management**

All visitors shall display a temporary visitor ID badge while they are in any school building or on school grounds during school hours. Visitors shall enter all facilities via the school’s main entrance and immediately report to the school office to register and receive a temporary visitor ID badge. Visitors who do not comply with this policy/procedure will be asked to leave school property. School staff members who observe visitors without a visitor's badge shall ask the individual to report to the main office immediately and notify the main office of their pending arrival. In the event an individual refuses to comply with the visitor policy and refuses to leave the property, police shall be notified and the building principal or appropriate designee shall determine whether the emergency response protocol shall be initiated.

- No visitors are to enter the building with students during arrival. All visitors to our schools are strongly encouraged to have an appointment to enter the building. Entry may be denied without an appointment.
- Visitors will need to access the building through the school’s main entrance and use the intercom system. It is expected that all visitors will state the purpose of their visit and/or specify who they have an appointment with.
- If the visitor is granted access to the school, they will stop at the main office immediately upon entry.
- Visitors may be required to show photo identification, and will be required to sign in to obtain a visitor’s pass.
- It is important that visitors do not hold the door open for others behind them. Each visitor shall be acknowledged individually through the intercom system.
- Upon entry, visitors will be escorted to their point of contact or their point of contact will be asked to come to reception to receive the visitor. The contact will then be responsible for them while they are on site.
- Upon leaving, visitors must sign out from the main office and exit from the school’s main entrance.

- Visitors are not to enter the building during dismissal. If you will be picking your child up early, you must notify the office in writing prior to dismissal. If there is an emergency, call the main office to notify the school.

### **School Safety Drills and Exercises**

We take an all hazards approach to emergency preparedness. As an SU we recognize that some of these drills may induce anxiety in some people so we approach our drills from a trauma informed perspective. Drills we conduct over the course of the school year include:

- Fire Drills
- Bus Evacuation Drills
- Options-Based Drills (previously only lockdown drills--additional information will be forthcoming)
- Evacuation Drills
- Relocation Drills

We appreciate your partnership in keeping our schools safe and working to support respectful and aware school communities. We are assessing school safety on an ongoing basis and appreciate you sharing observations and concerns with us, should they arise.

**Anonymous Tip Line:** <https://safe4vt.org/> or call (844)723-3488