



Partners in Student Safety: A Message to our Parents/Guardians

The safety of students and staff is always of the highest importance to the Langley School District and the relationship with the district and the Langley Detachment of the RCMP is key to safe and secure schools. As partners working together to provide the safest schools possible, the school district and Langley RCMP are committed to cooperation and collaboration in the planning and implementation of emergency procedures and protocols. As such, this document has been created to outline for parents and guardians some of those procedures and protocols as they relate to communicating community safety concerns and emergency response.

In the event of an incident in the school or community where the safety of students may be compromised, the first priority is the immediate protection of students from harm. For example, if a student were threatened on the way to school, the immediate concern is to shelter the student in a safe environment and protect them within the school. In the event of a potential threat within the school, the school may be placed in a lockdown. The reasoning is simple: protect the students first and allow the RCMP to investigate or respond as warranted by the situation. The Police and School District fully understand the need for parents to get timely information during an evolving situation and that has been factored into our planning for these potential situations. While it is sometimes desirable to have immediate access to information, it is also crucial that it is factual information and it can sometimes take time to secure the facts during emergency events. It is imperative that the school community defer to those that have specific training and trust that they will do what is in the best interests of the community. Once the immediate safety of students is achieved, further questions about 'what happened?' or 'why did this happen?' may be addressed.

For parents and guardians, being a partner in school safety involves cooperating with Langley RCMP and the Langley School District. If a crime has been committed or suspicious activity has been witnessed, report it to the RCMP and allow them to investigate. Reporting an incident to school administration or a trusted teacher is only the first step as, though school staff will support you in your efforts, they cannot act on your behalf. The RCMP need to have first-hand information to verify and investigate a suspected crime. Vigilance, common sense and continued cooperation between all the partners in school and community safety will make our neighbourhoods safer for everyone. If a public safety message is warranted after the RCMP have verified a reported incident, the RCMP and the Langley School District will make every effort to notify the community. Being a good parent/guardian partner in school safety includes acting responsibly when there are rumours online and in the community about school-related incidents. It is important to keep in mind that rumours on social media both during and after events of this nature do little to assist the RCMP in their enquiries and often only serve to instill fear and panic. It is crucial for the RCMP to verify the facts before a public warning is issued and that may take a little time. Again, it is a matter of trust in the RCMP professionals and their training. For parents/ guardians it is far more important to keep the lines of communication open with your child than posting or spreading rumours on social media. Talk to your children about how something as simple as a walk to school can be made safer by being aware of their surroundings, walking in pairs or groups and remaining vigilant of the surrounding area. Know what your children are posting to social media or involved in with friends. Get to know their friends, where they spend their time and what they are doing – the more you are involved and connected in your child's life, the more they will thrive.