



July 17, 2020

Parent letter # 1 of 4

Dear Parents and Guardians,

I want to take this opportunity to welcome your child/children to Seminole County Public Schools for the 2020-21 school year. We are excited to have them back, regardless of which back to school option your family chooses, and are looking forward to a safe school year. **Please know that your child's safety and security has and will always be our number one priority.**

My name is Captain Rick Francis of the Seminole County Sheriff's Office, and I have the pleasure of being responsible for the safety and security of your child/children while they attend our schools. School safety is a responsibility that my team and I take very seriously. We are so fortunate in Seminole County to have open lines of communication and strong collaboration with our City Police agency partners, County Commissioners, School Board, State Attorney's Office, and the dedicated men and women of the Seminole County Public School District.

It may seem obvious to say that educational settings must be safe places, but safety in K-12 schools is a complicated matter. There are laws, mandates, and policies that guide each school and district regarding protection from danger, risk, and injury on our campuses and workplaces. When we talk about school safety, most people think of plans used in case of emergencies. However, there are many factors involved in creating safe learning environments. School safety is not achieved by purchasing a designated program or pieces of equipment (e.g., cameras); instead, it is achieved by implementing efforts that integrate school climate, effective discipline, social-emotional learning, positive behavior, mental health, and academics through a multi-tiered system of supports. Equally important, comprehensive school safety addresses the most common forms of harmful or violent behavior that undermine school safety, such as bullying, fighting, self-harm, and threat assessment.

Everyone plays a role in school safety. Students, staff, and community members are encouraged to be observant and report suspicious activity or anything that makes them feel uncomfortable, nervous, or frightened. If you ever have any doubt, do not hesitate to contact law enforcement immediately. Remember, if you *See Something, Say Something, Do Something*.

COVID 19- We have made modifications to our emergency drill practices to help us with social distancing and to ensure the overall safety of the school community.

In order to keep our families informed about safety and security, relevant information will be shared over the next few weeks. This information will be available on the district website, your school's website, and via the family access portal. If you have any questions, comments, or concerns about school safety and security, please send them directly to my attention @ (school_safety@scps.k12.fl.us).

Respectfully, Rick Francis