



HERKIMER

CENTRAL SCHOOL DISTRICT

Dear Parents/Caregivers/Guardians,

As we approach the beginning of the 2024-2025 school year, Herkimer Central School District would like to inform you of some changes that the New York State Education Department's Board of Regents approved over the summer regarding school district safety drills.

In New York state, all schools are required to conduct eight evacuation drills (fire drills), four lockdown drills, and one early-release drill each school year. Also, six of the evacuation drills and two of the lockdown drills must be done before December 31st each school year.

Starting with the 2024-2025 school year, all schools in New York state must conduct their safety drills in a "trauma-informed manner." That means that our drills, such as fire or lockdown drills, need to avoid tactics that make it seem like an emergency, school shooting, or an act of violence is actually happening. This means we will never use props, actors, or simulations during our safety drills. The goal of our safety drills is to prepare, not scare our students.

To meet this new requirement, Herkimer Central School District will be making the following changes to how it conducts its safety drills:

- **Parental Notification:** A notice will be sent out within one week before any safety drill is conducted (at least one day and no more than seven days before the drill). This notification will not include the exact date and time of the safety drill.
- **Drill Announcements:** All drills (except for evacuation drills/fire drills) will be announced as drills. For example, a lockdown drill may be announced as "This is a drill. Lockdown, Lockdown, Lockdown. This is a drill."

Herkimer Central School District is a very safe place for our students. Safety drills help to keep our schools safe by letting us practice what to do should there be an emergency. Before we practice a drill, we teach students and staff what they need to do and talk about how the drill will be announced.

If you have any questions about the drills or other safety concerns, please contact: 315-866-2230 x1304.

Sincerely,

Kathleen A. Carney
Superintendent of Schools