

APS Lockdown Protocol

The safety of our students and staff is our primary concern every day in Akron Public Schools. We utilize internal security measures and rely on the vast expertise of local law enforcement to assist when necessary. We extend every effort available to ensure a safe and secure environment.

It is the policy of Akron Public Schools, with the support of the Akron Police Department and all local emergency responders, that we notify parents and guardians of APS students about security concerns encountered on school property during school hours. Notification may come in the form of a written note sent home with students or delivered by other means. It may also come as a telephone call from APS to parents and guardians. In many instances, APS issues written notifications and places telephone calls.

We rely on local law enforcement and emergency response personnel working with our security professionals to guide the evaluation and response process.

APS works closely with all of Akron's emergency responders including police, SWAT, fire and EMS. Those same emergency responders worked side by side with APS when we developed our emergency crisis response plans to ensure strong coordination.

Therefore, when APS staff and administrators are given information, receive threatening phone calls or find things such as graffiti messages – based on the nature of the threat – APS works to determine the credibility of the threat. Quite often this determination is made in partnership with Akron police officers either already in our schools as resource officers or other officers we work with on a regular basis.

These are security experts with the experience and training required to determine if threats are *credible* and what actions are necessary to maintain safety for students and staff.

If any danger is present from a threat, gas leak or anything else that may cause harm, APS follows all actions as directed by emergency forces and our crisis plans.

If actions require disruption of the school day such as early dismissal, extended lockdown, or extended evacuation or moving students to another site, APS would then initiate communication to parents and guardians, informing them of the incident as quickly as possible.

The vast majority of threats, whether via social media, phone messages, graffiti or other sources, are not credible. All are investigated and taken seriously; but our law enforcement partners determine credibility, and we act accordingly for minimum disruption of the school day while maintaining the safety of students and staff.

When schools face a potential compromise to security, it does not serve the safety of students, staff or community to have additional persons arriving on school property. While we understand the concern of parents for their children, we perform our duties to keep students safe best when we follow a strict and consistent protocol. Most often, that means we secure the property and focus on the situation at hand.

This is why, absent what law enforcement deems to be a *credible* threat, we notify parents and guardians after a return to normalcy and not during the law enforcement investigation.

This protocol has served our students, staff and the community well. We hope you will support us as we continue to put your children's safety first in Akron Public Schools.