

Dear Parents/Guardians,

As part of our ongoing efforts to keep our learning community safe, this year XXX will be adopting a new protocol for responding to an active threat in our schools. At the recommendation of the Vermont School Safety Center, Vermont's Agency of Education and Department of Public Safety and the U.S Department of Homeland Security, we will begin the transition to what is known as an "options based" response protocol for addressing the unlikely event of an active threat in our schools. An options-based protocol empowers people to choose a response to an active threat situation based on the information they have in the moment, known as situational awareness. It teaches individuals to use the information at their disposal to do what they think is best to keep themselves and others safe.

In a few weeks, our (XXXXXX) will be learning about the options based protocol, "Run / Hide / Fight". The training, which will occur through the fall and winter, will consist of facilitated group discussions about the protocol and how to apply it to various scenarios. We feel strongly that while older students are aware of the possibility of school violence and can benefit from this training as an important life skill, younger students need only be instructed - as they are now - to follow the direction of their teacher as quickly and quietly as possible. Therefore, in our PreK - 8th grade schools, these facilitated discussions will involve adults only and will take place during staff professional development time. Though PreK-8 students will participate in the regular and required "lockdown" drills throughout the year, for now, these drills will look and feel the same as in previous years.

The Homeland Security website about the Run / Hide / Fight protocol can be found [at this link](#). The District will be hosting an information session for parents in (XXXX) to provide an overview of the protocol and answer any questions you may have. High school parents will be notified before and after each training session involving students. Our school counselors and guidance departments will be providing accommodations for students who may be especially sensitive to these discussions.

School violence is not something anyone wants to think about, but in today's world we must do the best we can to be prepared. Thank you for your support in this effort and continue to look for further communications from us in the next few weeks.