

Dear Parents,

I am sure many of you have been saddened by the several school shootings across the country in recent weeks. As the person ultimately responsible for all 150 children at EHS, watching these events unfold has been particularly chilling and disturbing for me. While I can't imagine such events unfolding in Hardwick, I also can't afford to be wrong.

So, I thought I would drop you a note that briefly touches on both sides of the emergency planning issue - the prevention and/or response to a tragedy. As you should expect from EHS, we have gone to great lengths to protect our students and our school community from similar events. On the prevention side of the equation, we have in place protections such as a formal guest registration policy, 24-hour awake security, tracking/screening programs on all email and instant messaging over school-owned servers, faculty living on each dormitory floor, other on-campus administrative and faculty housing, required background checks on all employees and volunteers, frequent and coordinated patrols by/through campus by Hardwick police, among many, many other protective measures.

Of course, there is no foolproof way to insulate any home or school against a determined lunatic. Accordingly, EHS has a published emergency response plan that specifically identifies what steps need to be taken in case of an emergency and who will be responsible for such action. A copy of that plan has been attached to the school policies section of the parent community website for your review. Fortunately, the only time we have had to enact the emergency response plan in my fourteen years at EHS was on the morning of 9/11/01. We opened school on September 10th, and many of our families flew out of Logan Airport the following morning. Remarkably, and thankfully, we did not have any families on the planes that were hijacked. I am pleased to say that our emergency plan worked efficiently and effectively on that day.

Above all else, I want you to know that we are thinking about student safety at all times, and that we have and will take all necessary and prudent measures to protect your children.

Regards, PJ