

QUEEN ELIZABETH ANNEX

4275 Crown Street, Vancouver BC V6S 2K3 Tel: 604-713-5482

28 April 2017

Re: Student Release Drill Thursday, May 4

Dear Parents/Guardians of QEA,

This Thursday, May 4th all Vancouver schools will be participating in our annual district-wide earthquake preparedness drill. Typically, the drill directly involves only the students and staff of the school. We rehearse personal safety precautions, safe evacuation and marshalling outside, and staff review both our emergency provisions and equipment as well as our emergency response and communication procedures. The drill begins at 2pm and students are usually back in their classrooms well before 3 pm.

This year, the district is starting to implement a new student release/family reunification protocol and procedure that is based on best practices recommended, encouraged and used by emergency agencies across North America. Vancouver schools are being asked to include this recommended protocol as part of this year's drill. Given our connection with Jules-Quesnel, we are aligning with them and asking for parents in **GRADE 3** only to volunteer to participate with us. **This is completely voluntary, the school does not expect parents to take time off work to participate.** Interested parents of grade 3 students are asked to RSVP to Nancy Yuen-Chan if you are able to participate.

The new reunification protocol would be enacted during an emergency incident where we need to ensure custody of students is safely and directly transferred only to a parent or approved designate. Parents can appreciate that it is essential that we only release a child to that child's legal guardian or to an adult for whom we have permission on record—no one would want us releasing a child to just any adult, even where it might seem convenient, like to a neighbour or a family member where we don't have specific permission on record. **Students will only be released to the parent/guardians or emergency contacts the school has on record.**

The new protocol follows a "two-gated system": Students are gathered and safely looked after in an enclosed area. Parents or emergency contact will fill out a brief form and present personal photo identification (i.e. driver's license) to school staff at the first "gate" or Check-In Station. Staff then pick up your child from the marshalling area and bring him/her to you at the second "gate" where upon verification of your ID, your child is released to you. You are then requested to leave the area entirely to avoid congestion and any resulting confusion to others. The process requires and relies on parents' patience, cooperation and understanding. The process may seem slow or overly cumbersome especially in an anxious situation, but it does take time and steps to ensure students are released only to the right adults and that students are all safely accounted for. It also underlines why it is important for parents to ensure the school has updated information on the adults to whom we can release your child in an emergency.

On Thursday, May 4th, we would like as many parents from Division 3 as possible to participate in this rehearsal with us.

- If you are participating, please be at the school for 2:30PM

We have prepared two scenarios, depending on the weather.

No Rain:

- Children will be marshalled on the field
- Parents/guardians will line up at Check-In Station, located at NW corner of the parking lot – close to the Staff Entrance door. Please note that no adults other than school staff will be allowed to enter the field in order for us to conduct an orderly reunification drill (it will be the same case in the event of an earthquake).
- **Make sure you bring photo ID!**
- Once ID has been confirmed, parents will move to the second gate, at SW corner of the Parking lot to receive their child(ren)

Rain

- Children will be marshalled in the Gym
- Parents/guardians will line up at Check-In Station, located at the front door of the school, across from the portables. Please note that no adults other than school staff will be allowed to enter the gym in order for us to conduct an orderly reunification drill (it will be the same case in the event of an earthquake).
- **Make sure you bring photo ID!**
- Once ID has been confirmed, parents will move to the second “gate”, the green doors at SE corner of the Gym to receive their child(ren)

For both scenarios:

- Please follow the instructions of school staff.
- Once your child is released to you, you may go home with your child.
- The reunification portion of our drill will end at 3PM regardless of whether we have gotten through everyone or not; any students remaining in the gym or on the field will be accompanied to the courtyard for regular pick up

Our hope is to have as many parents as possible participate with us so we can learn as much as possible (both what worked well and what didn't), prior to implementing and communicating our procedures school-wide.

I hope you are able to join us at 2:30 on Thursday and help us learn how to best protect your kids!

Thank you.

