

Safe Welcome Program -Background-

In December 2012 the Provincial Government announced its intention to enhance security measures in elementary schools across Ontario. This announcement was prompted by a tragedy that occurred in an elementary school in Newtown, Connecticut. The Safe Welcome initiative involves the locking of all doors in elementary schools. This initiative is being implemented in nearly all school districts across Ontario.

The Waterloo Region District School Board is committed to the safety and security of students and staff. Implementation of this initiative is occurring at our elementary schools throughout the 2013-2014 school year. All visitors (parents, vendors, central Board staff, etc.) to elementary schools will access the main doors to the school using an intercom system. The system will integrate the needs of before/after school programs, child care locations and those sites with portables.

A 'Pilot project' was set up at one of our elementary schools. Implementation at the pilot site has been successful. This pilot permitted the testing of all equipment (intercom system, monitors, phone system). In addition, the development of procedures/practices has occurred. These documents will support schools through the implementation phase. Communications for school staff and the parent community have also been developed.

It is recognized that having all school doors locked will be new for our school community. Our students, parents and staff will need to work together collaboratively as this initiative is implemented at our school.

We know that the first priority of everyone in our school community is the safety of our students. We appreciate everyone's support and commitment to keeping our kids safe through the Safe Welcome program.

Media inquiries regarding this project should be directed to Lynsey Meikle, Communications and Web Assistant, Communications Office, lynsey_meikle@wrdsb.on.ca.