



SHERIFF John O'Hagan  
ADMIN 231-723-8393  
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SHERIFF'S OFFICE • 1525 E. Parkdale Ave. • Manistee, MI 49660

Dear Parents,

As we approach this upcoming school year, I wanted to take this opportunity to speak with you about school safety and what we are doing to continue to improve our safety procedures throughout the county. First and foremost, you should know that the safety of our children is something that we are passionate about and have placed at the top of our list as public safety providers.

Keeping with that commitment to safety, I have partnered with our Manistee County Schools, as well as local partners in law enforcement and other related fields to establish the Manistee County School Safety Committee. The first task this committee has undertaken is to ensure that each school within our county is handling safety procedures in the same manner. Uniformity throughout the county allows for a more streamlined response to potential safety concerns at our schools and allows for a uniform law enforcement response as well.

Part of the discussion during the initial meeting was a desire to provide you, the parents of our students, with information regarding what we are doing with your students when safety concerns arise. The following are the terms that we will be using to address safety concerns along with a brief description of what they mean.

**LOCKDOWN** – A lockdown may be initiated for several reasons. Typically, lockdowns are initiated in instances where there is violence in the building, or the potential threat of violence inside the school building. In certain cases, the school may be put in lockdown due to a threat at a neighboring school until the threat can be adequately investigated.

During a lockdown, classrooms doors are locked, lights are turned off, and students are gathered inside the classroom out of view from the hallways. Teachers and staff have received training to begin to barricade classroom doors if they believe violence is occurring inside the building. These drills are exercised at least three times during the school year and our schools have become well versed in their responsibilities during a lockdown.

It's important to remember that the very worst thing you can do if your student's school goes into lockdown is to respond to the school. Every time there is a lockdown, we see several parents who arrive at the school and demand entry. This causes valuable law enforcement resources to be expended on parents responding to the school rather than conducting the investigation into the potential threat. If your child's school goes into lockdown and needs to be picked up, the school will notify parents of the reunification location as soon as possible.

**SECURE MODE** – Secure Mode may be activated if there is a safety concern at another school or in the area of the school. For instance, if an officer makes a traffic stop near a school and the suspect runs, the school may be put into secure mode. Another instance may be if there was a security concern at a neighboring school, secure mode may be initiated to increase the security of the school.

During Secure Mode, access to the school building is restricted. Students will not be allowed outside the building (recess, etc.). Although Secure Mode allows for increased physical security, it allows for "business as usual" inside the classrooms.

As with Lockdowns, if the school goes into Secure Mode, please do not respond to the school campus. The school will notify you as soon as possible regarding the reasoning for going into Secure Mode.



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School safety is something that your local law enforcement partners as well as the staff and administration of your schools take very seriously. We are constantly looking to improve our response to potential threats and violence within our schools. I have made myself a point of contact for all out-county schools who have questions or concerns about potential safety and security issues within their buildings. The Manistee City Police Department also has this same one-point of contact for safety and security concerns in the buildings within their jurisdictions. This communication is taking place on a consistent basis to address safety and security concerns regarding our schools.

If you have questions regarding school safety and how law enforcement has been working with our schools to improve our response, I encourage you to reach out to me at the Sheriff's Office. My direct line at the Sheriff's Office is 231-723-9970.

Thank you,

Lt. Brian Gutowski

Emergency Management Coordinator

**Law Enforcement Partners**

Sheriff John O'Hagan

Manistee County Sheriff's Office

Director Robert Medacco

LRBOI Department of Public Safety

Chief Tim Kozal

Manistee City Police Department

Lieutenant Frank Keck

Michigan State Police