

Dear Families,

This morning children came into school in a variety of moods. Some were excited to share their Halloween candy with our troops overseas (two children donated 100% of their trick or treat candy!) and to talk about their costumes. Others were more preoccupied with the incident on West Street and Chambers. Whether they talked about the event or not, all students knew something had happened. We know it is important to directly address concerns and news like this with students. We want them to know that we work diligently to keep them safe.

This morning all students had an opportunity to participate in community circles where questions and concerns were answered and safety protocols were reviewed again. Our staff was proud of our students for their thoughtful comments, concern, and empathy. Students were encouraged to speak to a school counselor or teacher if needed. While the staff was impressed with the students, they also expressed that many of the students were struck by the closeness of the event. We are watching the kids closely today and urge you to check in with your children as well.

Here are some resources to guide you in navigating these conversations with your children.

[National Child Traumatic Stress Center](#)

[How to Talk to Kids About Violence: A Response from Parenting Press](#)

[Child Mind Institute trauma resources](#)

Due to recent events you may be feeling overwhelmed with concerns, worry and questions. I would like to take this opportunity to re-visit our school emergency protocol, how to connect with school after hours, and resources available including tips for supporting your child.

I also want to review safety and emergency protocols with you.

### **Emergency protocols**

As Susan shared in an earlier email and we have 3 main safety protocols that we practice. The familiar fire drill (now called an evacuation drill), lock down drills (the scariest of the 3; we hide in classrooms with doors locked), and shelter in place (where the danger is outside the school building, we lock the doors, and keep things as normal as possible for the children.) Yesterday, we used the shelter in place protocol. Whenever we are instructed to use a safety protocol by the FDNY or NYPD, we are not allowed to lift it until we are given the go ahead. While this can be frustrating, it is done with the intention of keeping our community safe.

#### Communication from School to Home

If events happen during the school day, we will send out blasts through twitter (@terriryter), a blog post, email blasts (we had some technical issues yesterday and not all emails arrived at the destination) and through MailChimp. I am also working on finding an easy to use emergency group text service.

#### Communication from Home to School

If you have concerns, you can also call the school (remember that many parents might be calling and the phones may be busy) or Manhattan Youth if it is during after school hours.

School office: 212-266-5800

Brad Lewis – K through 5<sup>th</sup> 646-592-1233

Cynthia DeLeon – 6<sup>th</sup> through 8<sup>th</sup> 917-565-7249

Thank you for your support and courage during this time. Our community is a very strong and resilient one. One I am very proud of.

Terri.