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Parkland School District to Participate in Active Shooter Drill with South Whitehall Township and Emergency Responders on August 9, 2023

(Allentown) – Parkland School District, in partnership with South Whitehall Township, will conduct an Active Shooter Full-Scale Exercise on Wednesday, August 9, 2023, at Orefield Middle School (2675 PA-309, Orefield, PA 18069). The exercise will take place from approximately 7 AM to 1 PM.

The Active Shooter Full-Scale Exercise (FSE) was designed to establish a learning environment for Lehigh County responders and Parkland School District Administrators who will exercise emergency response plans, policies, and procedures as they pertain to an active shooter event at a school.

The entire scenario is fictitious and is not based upon any specific threat. The exercise is sponsored by South Whitehall Township and is paid for using Commonwealth of Pennsylvania grant funds. A6A Associates, a Pennsylvania company, is coordinating and controlling the event.

Medically-trained students and volunteers will be posing as the group of teachers, students and staff impacted by the fictional violent event. Responders will take appropriate emergency actions to neutralize the threat, triage, stabilize, treat and transport wounded individuals and maintain safety for the impacted site and all treatment facilities involved. A Parkland School District Communications webpage will simulate school to public communication during the exercise. Additionally, the Parkland School District Administration will practice its Parent/Student Reunification Procedures, which have been created to address any situation that would warrant the evacuation of a school building.

No actual firearms will be used in the event and weapons safety is the top priority in pre-event preparations. There may be loud noises (such as realistic gunshots or explosive noises) and many emergency vehicles and emergency responders on site during the event. The public should not be alarmed, as this is only a practice drill and part of the simulation.

The entire Orefield Middle School campus will be closed for the duration of the exercise to all activities. Non-participating law enforcement and fire police will provide traffic control and security surrounding the site during the event. No road closures beyond those on the Orefield campus are anticipated.

No press will be allowed inside the school before, during or after the event due to the sensitive and realistic nature of the exercise. Township and Parkland staff may make themselves available for interviews upon conclusion of the exercise.

It is important to note that South Whitehall Township and Parkland School District officials have collaborated to train staff on “Run, Hide, Fight” principles and the importance of preparation as a key element in prevention. The last time an exercise of this nature occurred at Parkland was in August of 2012.

Dr. Mark J. Madson, Superintendent of Schools, stated, “Indeed, we never hope to encounter this kind of horrific situation, especially at a school, but it is something that we feel is important to practice so that we are prepared to respond. South Whitehall and Parkland School District take pride in fostering collaboration between the many agencies that serve this community to run a drill of this size and nature. If an event like this should ever occur, we know that our strong partnership, care and collaboration will be critical, and that is why we are choosing to participate in a realistic simulation of such a terrible tragedy.

South Whitehall response agencies are participating, as well as Parkland School District Staff, Lehigh County Dispatch/911, Emergency Medical Services (led by Cetronia Ambulance), Law Enforcement (local, State, Federal), Lehigh Valley Health Network Cedar Crest, Lehigh County Rescue Task Force, Sacred Heart Allentown, St. Luke’s Bethlehem, and other agencies.

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