



127 East 22nd Street | New York, NY 10010 | (212) 475-8086 Voice | (212) 475-8086 Fax | info@sof.edu | <http://www.sof.edu>

Dear SOF Families,

The tragic shooting that took place in Parkland, Florida is devastating to all of us on many levels. Not only are we heartbroken for the lives lost, for the survivors and for the victims' families, we understand that events like this remind us of our own fears about the safety of our students and teachers. Many of us are also considering how we want to contribute to the national discussion on gun control reignited by the activism of the Parkland students. We want to address both safety and activism in this letter.

First, here are our safety protocols: Our Safety Team meets monthly to discuss the safety measures that are in place at SoF. Our Safety Team consists of the administration, Dean, custodial staff, office staff, school safety agents, the parent coordinator, and the school nurse. Throughout the year we conduct twelve safety drills. These include evacuation drills, shelter-in drills, and lockdowns. We review protocols for each drill with students and staff periodically. We have had twelve fire drills and four lock down drills with the fourth drill happening Wednesday, March 7th.

There is only one formal entrance/exit to our building and there are two safety agents in the building with one of them always positioned at the front door. The side door is locked at all times and has an alarm. Only the custodians have access to this door. Visitors check in with security, show state ID and the party they are visiting confirms their appointment. We feel our building is very safe, but we will continue to review protocols, assess current ones, and make necessary changes when needed. We work closely with officers from the 13th precinct, the fire department and our school safety agents. Our agents, Braithwaite and Southerland know all of our students well and are valuable members of our community.

In terms of activism, in grades six through ten, we have discussed the Parkland shooting and the activism of the Parkland students during our weekly Circles. Juniors and Seniors have discussed it in class. Students have shared their feelings about school shootings, gun violence and some of their opinions on the gun control debate. Reflecting the discourse in America, SoF students have varying opinions about gun control and we encourage students to engage respectfully with one another. Many

students also have questions about safety protocols and it is important to us that we take time to address them.

Our students have expressed interest in participating in the National School Walkout on March 14th at 10am. The safety committee has collaborated with students and teachers to craft an SOF walkout plan for those who choose to participate as well as arrangements for those who choose not to. As of now, those who participate will walk to, under the guidance of teachers, and surround Gramercy Park and stand in silence for seventeen minutes in honor of those who died in the Parkland Shooting. We also have teachers who will remain in the building to be with students who choose not to participate. Some students will have made signs expressing their views and we will likely read about different perspectives on the issue of gun violence as we want our students to be informed, active citizens. Parents are invited to join at 10 am. We will send updates to the March 14th plan as they unfold.

While current events add layers of complexity and intensity to our work as a school, we remain committed to the emotional and physical safety of our students. And we are inspired to embrace the complexities of our reality to help our students authentically prepare to impact the world.

Please reach out with any thoughts or questions.

Warmly,

Stacy and John