Thomas S. Wootton High School

Family-Submitted Questions & Answers

QUESTION	ANSWER
Why did the school resume operations the next day (Feb. 10)?	Returning to school provided students and staff access to counseling, mental health professionals, trusted adults and peer support in a structured and supervised environment. Research shows that connection and support reduce trauma and help communities heal. The day focused on emotional support and well-being rather than academic instruction.
How did the weapon get into the building?	The circumstances surrounding the shooting remain part of the ongoing police investigation. MCPS and law enforcement are reviewing all available information, including security systems and procedures. Updates will be shared when appropriate.
What safety measures are being implemented immediately at Wootton High School?	MCPS has already taken the following steps at Wootton High School: • Increased on-site security staffing from six to 10 MCPS security personnel. • Maintained daily police presence at the school. • Upgraded camera coverage and addressed blind spots. • Improved electronic door-locking systems. • Reinforced expectations regarding secured entry procedures. • Reviewed lockdown protocols with all students. • Ensured students receive emergency alerts during incidents. • Expanded mental health supports. Safety improvements are ongoing and will continue.
Will MCPS install metal detectors or weapons detection systems?	MCPS is actively reviewing weapons detection technologies and will pilot a system this spring in three MCPS high schools. These tools require careful review because they involve staffing, infrastructure, effectiveness and community impact considerations. There is no single solution that eliminates all risk. MCPS uses a comprehensive safety approach that includes physical security, trained staff, emergency procedures, partnerships with law enforcement and strong school relationships.
What are standard entry security procedures at Wootton High School?	Standard procedures include secured entry points, controlled building access, surveillance systems, staff supervision and expectations that exterior doors remain secured. These procedures are currently being reviewed and reinforced.

Is this a Wootton-specific issue or a systemwide safety concern?	School safety is a systemwide priority across Montgomery County Public Schools. In response to recent safety audits conducted at schools throughout the district, MCPS is actively implementing recommended improvements related to building security, emergency procedures and operational practices. We have also strengthened and reinforced our Standard Response Protocol (SRP) across all schools. This includes regular training and practice of the five core emergency responses: • LOCKDOWN — immediate protection from a threat inside or near the building. • SECURE — secured building with normal operations inside. • HOLD — maintaining students in classrooms or areas until conditions are safe. • EVACUATE — moving students and staff to a safe location. • SHELTER — protection from environmental or external hazards. These protocols are practiced regularly with students and staff and are designed to provide clear, consistent responses to emergencies in every school. MCPS continuously reviews safety procedures, implements audit findings, and strengthens security measures across all schools to ensure safe and supportive learning environments. Families can learn more about MCPS emergency response protocols [here](). Also review: [Emergency Preparedness in MCPS]() Help Information about the [MCPS Standard Response Protocol]()
Will new school facilities or buildings include enhanced security features?	Safety and security are foundational considerations in new school construction and existing school operations. All schools are designed and operated using multiple layers of protection, including: • Security vestibules at each school to control and monitor building entry. • A required Visitor Management System, which screens visitors and conducts criminal background checks at the time of check-in before granting access. • Implementation of MCPS' Standard Response Protocols (LOCKDOWN, SECURE, HOLD, EVACUATE, SHELTER), which are regularly practiced by students and staff. • Trained school staff who are prepared to follow established safety and emergency procedures. • Dedicated security teams at high schools, with expanded security staffing to support middle and elementary schools as needed.

How many police and security staff will be present moving forward?	As mentioned above, MCPS has increased on-site security at Wootton from six to 10 MCPS security team members, and this increased staffing level will remain in place for the remainder of the school year at Wootton High School. In addition, there will be an increased and continued police presence at the school for the foreseeable future. MCPS will continue to work closely with local law enforcement and regularly review safety needs to ensure appropriate security measures remain in place.
What can parents do to help improve school safety?	Safety is a shared responsibility. Families can play an important role in prevention by: • Encouraging students to report concerns to trusted adults. Reinforce the message that reporting concerns helps keep everyone safe. • Monitoring social media and online activity. • Reinforcing school safety expectations. • Using the Safe Schools Maryland tip line (1-833-MD-B-SAFE).
Why is there limited information about this incident on the MCPS website?	MCPS has shared information directly with students, staff and families through multiple communications beginning on the day of the shooting and continuing in the days that followed. These updates were sent by the school principal, the Superintendent of Schools, and the President of the Board of Education to ensure the school community received timely information, guidance and available resources. Communication will continue regularly as the school community heals, supports students and staff, and works toward a return to normal operations. Information specifically related to the criminal investigation — including details about the incident itself — will be communicated by law enforcement agencies, including the Rockville City Police Department and the Montgomery County State's Attorney's Office. MCPS will continue to share verified information and school-related updates as they become available and appropriate to communicate.