

JOSH GREEN, M.D.  
GOVERNOR



KEITH T. HAYASHI  
SUPERINTENDENT

STATE OF HAWAII  
DEPARTMENT OF EDUCATION  
KA 'OIHANA HO'ONA'AUAO  
NIU VALLEY MIDDLE SCHOOL  
310 HALEMAUMAU STREET  
HONOLULU, HI 96821

September 21, 2023

Dear Niu Valley Middle Parents and Guardians,

Niu Valley Middle School and Friends of Niu Valley held a Virtual Town Hall on Tuesday, September 19, 2023 from 6:23-7:17 p.m. It was recorded but due to the contents of the meeting and identifiable information of the student(s) involved, we cannot share the recording of the meeting. However, as part of our commitment to provide information to our families and community, we are sharing the topics below that were frequently asked by participants. If you have any questions or concerns, please contact me, Principal Laura Ahn at 808-307-6800.

Thank you,

A handwritten signature in blue ink, appearing to read "Laura Ahn".

Laura Ahn  
Principal

# NVMS Town Hall Questions

## **QUESTIONS RELATED TO SAFETY PROTOCOLS**

All Hawaii Department of Education (HIDOE) schools are required to have [school emergency and safety procedures](#) which include evacuation plans (fire and off-campus), shelter-in-place plans, lockdown plans, and earthquake plans. [All NVMS teachers are provided and required to have](#) in their classrooms a binder with these plans, a copy of the [HIDOE Emergency Procedures Guide](#), and a safety vest. All classrooms also have Cisco phones programmed with an emergency button which alerts a number of school phones that there is an emergency including all front office phones. Every year, teachers are informed and reminded of the emergency and safety procedures during the opening teacher-only administration day, a week prior to the first day for students.

All HIDOE schools are also required [to annually conduct a series of emergency and safety drills as well as a number of other safety requirements](#). If your child attended a HIDOE school, they have likely participated in many of these drills annually.

These procedures and expectations have been in place for many years at NVMS and at all HIDOE schools. For further information, please review the details in this link: [HI DOE Emergencies](#). In addition, Niu Valley Middle School also participated in a Vulnerability Assessment on August 10-11, 2023 conducted by a team led by the Director of HIDOE's Safety, Security, and Emergency Preparedness Branch under the Office of Facilities and Operations. Moreover, NVMS has scheduled and planned in the summer an Active Shooter Training for staff during our Planning and Collaboration No-Student work day in January 2024.

School administrators assess and determine the level of safety/security concern and whether the school enters a lockdown procedure. [For the incident on Friday, September 15, 2023, Principal Ahn consulted with officers of the Honolulu Police Department who determined the school was safe and lockdown procedures were not necessary](#). In incidents where administrators are absent, the school follows its chain of command.

## **QUESTIONS RELATED TO DETAILS ON THE THREAT**

There is an ongoing investigation that prevents NVMS from disclosing details about the incident. Additionally, because the situation involves minors, the school must be sensitive about details provided to the community. There are privacy laws that prohibit us from sharing information that does not particularly pertain to your child. That being said, we wanted to reassure you that actions have been taken to ensure our campus remains safe. The school was notified of the threat on Friday, September 15, 2023 in the morning and the school worked with HPD to assess the safety of the school campus.

## **QUESTIONS RELATED TO WHY SCHOOL WASN'T CANCELED**

The Honolulu Police Department worked with NVMS in assessing the threat and law enforcement determined there was no imminent threat or danger. The school trusts and relies on HPD as safety and security specialists and their recommendation that school was safe and could remain open. The school

can only cooperate with HPD in their criminal investigation and does not have the authority to search private residences or arrest individuals. The school again trusts HPD in their assessment, investigation, and recommendation that school was safe and therefore school was not canceled.

Parents/guardians have the right to pick up their child early on any school day. On September 15, 2023, there was no early release initiated by the school and school was not closed; some parents/guardians did choose to pick up their child early. Students were released to their parents/guardians upon arrival and upon showing an ID.

### **QUESTIONS RELATED TO COMMUNICATION**

Niu Valley Middle School acknowledges that adjustments need to be made regarding communication with the school community. Because of the evolving nature of the situation, we appreciate your understanding as we balanced the need to put out accurate information in a timely manner. Although NVMS was deemed safe, the school did not anticipate the heightened safety concerns among students and the spreading of rumors/misinformation. The school is working with complex and state specialists on communication protocols, including sending text messages and emails to parents promptly and updating faculty/staff on situations as necessary. An administrator is assigned to lead all communication efforts in similar situations, and all administrators have the ability to push out messages and alerts. NVMS is committed to making necessary improvements and to respond more effectively when they do occur.

### **QUESTIONS RELATED TO POTENTIAL CONSEQUENCES**

Niu Valley Middle School and the Honolulu Police Department are continuing to investigate the recent incident. Both organizations are working with the affected student(s) and family(ies). HPD will enforce all applicable laws and ordinances. The school must follow [Chapter 19 Rules and Policies](#), the Department's student misconduct and discipline code. Please understand that NVMS and HODOE cannot share any consequences, personal information, school/family agreements, and specifics of plans for the student(s). Again, there are privacy laws that prohibit us from sharing information that does not particularly pertain to your child.

### **QUESTIONS RELATED TO REPORTS OF OTHER INCIDENTS**

NVMS continues to work with HPD in the ongoing investigation. Please contact the school immediately if you or your child have any information.

### **QUESTIONS RELATED TO SUPPORTS FOR STUDENTS**

The school understands that you may have concerns about your child and the school community. NVMS wants to assure you that HODOE and NVMS have personnel to support students who may have been victimized, and the school is committed to addressing the behaviors and actions that led to this incident. Should your child need additional support, please reach out to NVMS administration and/or your child's counselor.

**FURTHER CONTACT**

Laura Ahn - Principal

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Dr. Rochelle Mahoe - Complex Area Superintendent

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