

Shorecrest PREPARATORY SCHOOL



Recommendation For Guardian Safe School Program

In April 2014, 471 parents and 511 Upper School/Middle School students responded to a survey evaluating the programs offered at Shorecrest Preparatory School in St. Petersburg, Florida. One of the areas evaluated was security. The Guardian Safe School Program received the highest scores of any area of operation at Shorecrest. 98% of the community gave the security program ratings in the “Excellent,” “Very Good” or “Good” ranges.

When the Guardian Safe School Program was initiated at Shorecrest in October 2013, there were members of the community who were adamantly opposed to having armed School Protection Officers (SPO) on campus. Today, due to the way the officers interact with students, faculty, staff, parents and guests, the security program has earned the respect of the community. People feel safe, secure and protected. Our campus has remained an open and inviting school environment.

The quality of the SPOs’ work in the Guardian Program at Shorecrest has made our school the envy of any administrator that has come to observe the program. I personally attended the active shooting seminars and practice sessions with the officers. The program has standards that far exceed the expectations of our local police force. Expectations for personal character, and the ability to interact with children and adults, exceeds any school program I have witnessed in my 43-year career as an educator and accreditation leader for AdvancEd, Southern Association of Independent Schools, or Florida Council of Independent Schools.

The Guardian Program has refined how we conduct safety and lockdown drills. They have provided professional development to all faculty and staff. The Program has created easy to use and relevant emergency protocol charts for all classrooms and offices. The Program administrators have done an assessment of our facilities and have worked with us to prioritize the implementation of the security upgrades to our buildings.

Most recently, the Guardian leadership and an SPO conducted a Risk Identification Workshop for our Security Response Team. In short, the Guardian Program is educating and preparing us to not only responds to a crisis but to strive to stop them before they happen.

We are impressed with every SPO who has worked on our campus. We are impressed that the Guardian Safe School Program has requested that John Jay College in New York accredit the Program and the officer-training program. Clearly, the leaders and officers involved with Guardian wish to establish a benchmark for best practice at a school.

My Board of Trustees has given full support to the program. Shorecrest's administrative and counseling teams believe that the SPOs have integrated completely into our community. They have become a valuable resource for us whenever a member of the community is in need of support or guidance on best ways to be a positive member of the community.

In January of 2014, one of the Kindergarten classes invited an SPO to come read to the children. Following the story time the children were asked to draw a picture of the officer. We were all interested to see that not one child drew a gun on the officer. They showed his badge, his belt, his first aid pack and many other details but no one showed a gun. I believe this has happened because the SPOs have become so familiar with the children throughout the school that they are viewed like all other adults as safe, supportive members of the community.

I give my highest recommendation to the Guardian Safe School Program. The members of my school community and I feel safer knowing that we have experts moving all over our campus every day.

A handwritten signature in cursive script that reads "Michael A. Murphy". The signature is written in black ink and has a long, sweeping tail that extends to the right.

Michael A. Murphy
Headmaster
August 2014