

New safety protocols take effect

District makes changes to ensure student protection

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The 2023 school year brought a number of updates to safety protocols for both faculty and students. Administration has increased their awareness of student locations within the school through electronic hall passes, minor changes to drill practices have given students an increased sense of security and former social studies teacher Kevin Shubnell is now the Dean of Student Culture and Community.

Student activity monitored through e-hall passes

While North takes on the topics of safety and protection inside and outside of school, their main focus during class time is attendance. As the new e-hallpass takes effect, some students are indecisive about whether or not it's necessary to implement. Senior Makyla Williams doesn't see a point in the new technology. She says it makes her feel like a child when having to let the staff know exactly where she is going and why, and feels that the previous paper method was appropriate.

"I don't like it," Williams said. "I personally don't think it's doing anything because all we're saying is where we're going, like we did on the sign-in sheet."

Although Williams doesn't see a point in e-hallpass, or like it, sophomore Sam Michael thinks otherwise. Michael believes that students will soon get used to the new technology.

"I think overall and throughout time it will get better and students will adjust to it," Michael said.

The time that is taken out of classroom learning to

accept and stop e-hallpass requests is something that puts Williams against the technology.

"I feel like the electronic device is extra," Williams said. "The paper was way easier and faster for us to get out of class, and we didn't have to stop a whole lesson."

The time that both teachers and students spend navigating e-hallpass is a very minor issue in comparison to the positive change that Michael predicts, keeping students present in class.

"I think we use e-hallpass now to get better attendance for students and with better attendance comes better grades," Michael said.

Safety drills updated to ensure preparation

Minor changes to drill protocols have been one of the many safety focuses since the beginning of the school year. Students and staff are instructed through emergency drills in preparation for a true threat. One of the main improvements, according to social studies teacher Bridget Cooley, is the emphasis on preparation in times of crisis.

"It feels like we have more of a plan in place," Cooley said. "I just think we're running a tighter ship in terms of who's out of the classroom, how we are keeping track of that and then just preparation for drills for teachers."

One of the biggest changes that occurred is the transition from one fire emergency plan to two. Unlike last year, the new protocol is for students and staff to remain in their classrooms instead of evacuating

in attempts to contain the emergency, until directed otherwise by administration via PA system. The drill was assessed and improved to increase efficiency and safety, which is something the teachers have been trained extensively on.

"We're taking into consideration if someone pulls the fire alarm, what to do," Cooley said. "We [also now] have some protocols on how to blockade the door or things like that, if necessary."

In addition to the changes made to the fire drill protocols, the reunification location of the evacuation drills has changed. The last time that North students and staff practiced an evacuation drill was during the 2019-2020 school year. Students left the building and traveled to Lochmoor's indoor tennis courts, which a portion of have since been repurposed as a golf simulation. Because of the reduction in usable space, students now go to the First English Evangelical Lutheran Church across from the North entrance. Senior Grace Lemanski is grateful to be at a school that is prepared for emergencies, however, she has concerns about the new evacuation location.

"I am glad we have a plan," Lemanski said. "But the walk [to the church] was a lot longer and it was inconvenient to walk across Vernier."

Administration is confident in the changes they have made. Because of this, Young believes that there will be very few changes on the student end in the future.

"I think teachers and staff will continue to refine their safety protocols," Young said. "But what the students would be asked to do during a drill is not likely to change very much, if at all."

How safe do students feel at school?

According to @gpnnorthpointenow Instagram followers



A full-page photograph of Kevin Shubnell, a man with short brown hair, smiling and standing in front of a green brick wall. He is wearing a dark grey sweater over a collared shirt and a striped tie, with a lanyard and ID badge around his neck. He is also wearing dark blue trousers and brown leather shoes. The text 'Introducing the Dean of Student Culture and Community, Kevin Shubnell' is overlaid in large white font at the bottom left.

Introducing the Dean of Student Culture and Community, Kevin Shubnell

This year, former social studies teacher Kevin Shubnell transitioned into a new role, Dean of Student Culture and Community. Since many new rules have been implemented at North, Shubnell helps students follow them. North staff has increased their efforts to hold students accountable for their actions. Many students have griped about the new procedures and tardy consequences, but Shubnell believes they will have a positive impact on the student body.

The many aspects of his job include applying the rules to students and making sure the rules are obeyed. Shubnell has to deal with the consequences of substandard actions, rather than creating the rules.

“I had a say in a lot of the new rules and protocols, but for the most part my job is enforcement of the policies and procedures and making sure they are followed,” Shubnell said.

Shubnell spends his day enforcing policies, but also helps to keep students on track with their attendance. He says that the interactions he has had this year differ from last year, and he appreciates being able to connect with the whole school, and not just his classroom.

“I taught in a classroom for 16 years, so getting out of the classroom and doing something else was what was most attractive to me about the position,” Shubnell said. “It really allows me to see the whole school, as opposed to just my classes and the small world.”

The downside of this position is dealing with adversity everyday, and having to grant punishments for misconduct. Optimistically, Shubnell hopes to be involved with the positive culture that North has to offer.

“I would like to get on the other side of it, because I keep dealing with negative things,” Shubnell said. “Eventually I would like to be sitting in on Student Association, student council and club meetings. I’d like to be in touch with the positive culture of the school.”

As a lot of the procedures were altered this year at North, Shubnell says there are reasons behind it. He feels that the past few school years have been challenging, due to the pandemic so there was a different approach to students.

“We are enforcing or holding our students to a standard, and holding them to expectations and making sure that those expectations are met,” Shubnell said. “I think that it’s very different this year because we are enforcing more of our policies and following through on some of the things we said we were going to do.”

