



**Launch Expeditionary Learning Charter School  
District Safety Plan  
2020-2021**

## **Introduction:**

At Launch Expeditionary Learning Charter School (Launch), safety and health are of the utmost importance. This District Safety Plan was developed by the Launch Management Team pursuant to Commissioner's Regulation 155.17.

## **Identification of Teams:**

- *District Safety Team:* The district safety team at Launch is responsible for assessing incidents, incident response and post incident response. Launch's District Safety team is composed of the following staff members: Executive Director, Head of School, Assistant Principal of Special Populations, Director of Finance and Operations, Culture Coordinators, Parent Coordinator and Operations Managers.
- *NYC DOE School Safety Agents:* School Safety Agents provide security and ensure the safety of students, faculty and visitors in our school buildings and surrounding premises. They coordinate with our Building Council team and Building Response Teams to respond to concerns of safety. School Safety agents patrol school premises, act as first points of contacts at school entrances (verifying identity of school visitors, operating scanning and surveillance equipment, etc.). The agents also serve as direct liaisons to city officers and officials (NYPD, etc.).
- *Building Council Team:* In schools, Building Council teams at schools are comprised of the Operations lead, Principals, members of the BRT, School Safety Agents and other school leaders who share responsibility for building a safe, consistent campus culture for their community. All Building Councils must host 12 meetings between August and July of the following year to make decisions around school safety planning.

## **Risk Reduction & Intervention**

**Prevention and Intervention Strategies:** Launch has several initiatives to create a safe and positive learning environment for staff and students, which in turn minimizes conflicts.

- **Restorative Justice Practices:**
  - Launch implements a comprehensive restorative justice program. Restorative justice is a community based approach to build, repair and restore relationships. Launch's program is grounded in the school's Habits of Heart and Mind: Integrity and Stewardship; Kindness and Collaboration; Imagination and Spirit; and Dedication and Practice. We build upon this foundation by implementing three Tiers of Restorative Justice Program.
    - Tier I focuses on community building
    - Tier II focuses on harm and healing
    - Tier III focuses on reintegration

Tier I is primarily a prevention strategy while Tiers II and III are both prevention and intervention strategies.

- **Character Development:**

- Launch believes in a broader definition of student achievement. As such, Launch designs its program and measures student success through three dimensions of students achievement: Mastery of Knowledge and Skills; Character; and High Quality Work. These three dimensions are inextricably linked and each supports the success of the others. Therefore, the dimension of Character is interwoven through all program and curricular offerings, through steps like daily “Character Learning Targets” in each class, daily social-emotional learning (SEL) circles, goal-setting and significant time for reflection.

- **Social Emotional Learning:**

- Launch focuses on the development of the whole child, and social-emotional learning is a key component of the student experience at Launch. Students have an SEL advisor and participate in daily SEL circles. The circle structure at Launch is used for many purposes, like restorative justice practices or parent meetings, all of which are related to social-emotional learning, because these experiences are all part of building and maintaining relationships. Social-emotional learning, character development and restorative justice practices are all threads in the same tapestry, creating a rich network of positive and supportive relationships and a strong school culture.

- **Mandated Counseling:** Students who have this service on their Individualized Education Program (IEP) receive mandated counseling

- **Monthly Parent Events:** Our Parent Association, in conjunction with school-based counselors/deans, offer monthly events throughout the school year to increase parent participation and involvement

- **Community Meetings:** These monthly meetings reinforce the character development that is critical to the work that we do at Launch. They also serve as a space to celebrate student character, academic, and community accomplishments

**Training and Drills:** Launch ensures that at least one member of the School Leadership team has completed the NYC DOE’s Emergency Management Training annually. In addition to this, Launch conducts training for all staff on the required drill procedures for all NYC schools.

Launch, along with its co-located school, conducts the following drills:

- **Emergency evacuations (fire drills):** The purpose of an evacuation drill is to train staff/students in emergency evacuation procedures so they might leave the school building in the shortest possible time and without panic in the event of an actual emergency. Upon hearing the three gongs, students/staff will safely evacuate the building. All classrooms are equipped with a safety clipboard, containing parent and staff

contact information, emergency evacuation routes and alternative emergency evacuation routes.

- **Soft lockdown drills:** The purpose of a lockdown drill is to train staff/students in the emergency procedures so that if an intruder enters the building, they will know the proper actions to take without panicking in the event of an actual emergency. Upon hearing the announcement: “Attention, we are now in a lockdown”, students/staff will take the proper actions. During the drill, teachers will usher any students from the hall into their room, lock the door, turn off the lights and usher students into the “safety triangle”. In the event of an actual lockdown, NYPD and School Safety Agents will support the building in terms of when the lockdown can be lifted.
- **Shelter-in drills:** The purpose of shelter-in drills is to train staff/students in emergency procedures so that if they are prevented from leaving the classroom for an extended period of time (due to an incident outside of the school building), they will know what actions to take without panicking in the event of an actual emergency. In the case of real emergency, local law enforcement/public safety officials will make the determination that staff and students should remain inside during the disaster.
- **Review/Training on drills:** In the beginning of each school year, teachers are trained on the proper drill procedures and in turn, conduct training for their classes so students are prepared for each drill. After each drill, members of the District Safety Team give feedback to staff in order to improve and prepare us for real-life emergencies. In addition to this, counseling staff provide training on violence prevention and mental health for all staff.

**Staff/Student Internal Information:** Launch Charter School utilizes our student information system as well as our human resources databases to maintain accurate student and staff information. Launch maintains information on: school population, staff population, emergency contact information for both students and safety. In addition to this, all incidents are logged to have a record of the incident, the communication and the school’s response. All of this information is stored electronically with hard copies in our Main Office safety binder, which is used during any emergency incident.

## ***Responding to Emergencies***

**Response Protocol:** In the event there is an incident which requires interventions by local law enforcement, Launch will take the following steps:

- Staff members will alert the Principal or any administrator, who will then instruct a member of the District Safety Team to call 911
- The administrator will then inform the School Safety Agents as well as co-located school to use the school wide PA system to announce the proper action to be taken (soft lockdown, hard lockdown, evacuation, shelter in)
- Administrator will send members of the District Safety Team to respond to the location of the incident and to isolate any members displaying unsafe, violent behavior and/or any members who require medical assistance

- A member of the District Safety Team will print out any contact and guardian information for all students (if any) involved in the incident and for any students requiring medical assistance. All of this information will be provided to emergency personnel.
- A member of the District Safety Team will contact the parent/guardian of the involved parties with support from school counselors/deans
- A member of the District Safety Team will be outside the school entrance to support any families that may be in the area during the time of the incident as well as to escort emergency personnel to the incident

**Situational Responses:** Launch Charter School has incorporated response protocols defined by the NYS education department. We have established protocols around lockdown, shelter in and evacuation in conjunction with our co-located school as well as responses to civil disturbances, criminal actions, environmental emergencies, weather emergencies, facility related emergencies, medical and mental health emergencies.

**Responses to Acts of Violence: Implied or Direct Threats**

Launch Charter School has established policies and procedures for responding to implied or direct threats of violence by students, teachers, other school personnel as well as visitors to the school, including threats by students against themselves, which include suicide. Launch takes all threats of violence seriously. Threats of violence from children will be reported to parent/guardian, police and/or ACS based on the situation and appropriateness as determined by administrators. Threats of violence from adults will be reported to the police.

All threats of suicide are considered serious. In emergency situations, school personnel will call 911. Staff must follow up with the person that heard or learned of the threat and gather details. The counseling team will be informed for risk assessment. School staff will encourage parents to call 911 (if the school has not already called) or take the student to ER for risk assessment. School staff will provide parents with mental health resources including referrals and mental health contact numbers. A link to mental health resources for educators compiled by the New York State Education Department can be found [here](#).

**Acts of Violence:** Launch Charter School has established policies and procedures for responding to acts of violence by students or staff. When a student engages in behavior that poses a substantial risk of serious harm to the student or others, school personnel will determine the appropriate way to manage and de-escalate the behavior. In these situations, the following procedures will be followed:

- The Head of School must be notified of the incident and school staff must attempt to reach the family.
- Every effort must be made by responding staff to de-escalate the situation, utilizing strategies and interventions for addressing behavioral crises.
- If the responding staff member cannot de-escalate the situation, they should immediately contact the principal or available administrator.

- Where a student's behavior poses an imminent and substantial risk of serious injury to himself or others and the situation cannot be safely addressed by school staff or the support services set forth above, the principal/administrator must call 911.

**Bomb Threats :**Launch has established the following protocols in order to properly respond to a bomb threat:

- If staff observe a suspicious package, they are instructed to NOT touch the package and instead to alert the Head of School or any member of the District Safety Team.
- The District Safety Team will alert our co-located school and the School Safety Agents. The decision to evacuate will be made in consultation with School Safety Agents and NYPD.
- If an evacuation takes place, members of the District Safety Team will serve as floor wardens, ensuring that all members of the community are safely evacuated.
- Once evacuated, the District Safety Team will work with School Safety Agents and NYPD to determine if any when a re-entry is possible. If re-entry is not possible, the entire campus will transition to a nearby school (as indicated in the Building Safety Plan). No one can re-enter the building/affected area until explicit clearance is granted by NYPD or appropriate agency.
- The District Safety Team will assign one member to send out emergency communication to all families alerting them of the incident and the response. If the school community is relocated, we will inform families and implement a pick up plan for any families who wish to do so.

**Building Intruders:** Launch has established the following protocols for responding to a building intruder.

- If an intruder is discovered in the building, Launch in coordination with our co-located school and School Safety Agents will use the building wide PA system to alert the faculty and students of the situation. The building will immediately conduct a lockdown. The District Safety team will support Launch in implementing the lockdown. School Safety Agents will alert NYPD/School Safety supervisors.
- Any students in the hallway or restrooms will be taken into the nearest classrooms. If the event occurs during arrival, students will be ushered into classrooms. If the event occurs during lunch, lunch staff will secure the cafeteria. In the event the cafeteria cannot be secured, students will transition to the nearest classrooms.
- All classroom teachers will lock their doors, turn off the lights and usher students into the safety triangle. Any staff members occupying offices will do the same. Any staff member with students will take attendance for their rooms and alert an assigned member District Safety Team via text if there is any students missing.
- The Head of School, co-located Principal, School Safety Agents and first responders will conduct a building sweep to locate the intruder. Note - if the intruder is believed to have a weapon, all members of the District Safety Team and School Safety Agents will lockdown. The sweep will be conducted by first responders only.

- If the intruder is found and the situation is stable and safe or if there is no intruder, first responders will notify the school principals and an ALL CLEAR announcement will be made.

**Hostage Situations:** Launch has adopted the following protocols for responding to a hostage situation.

- The first staff member that witnesses the hostage situation will alert a member of the District Safety Team. The District Safety team will mobilize and 1) call School Safety and NYPD, 2) alert co-located school and together with NYPD and co-located school, the respective school principals will decide the proper response.
- Proper responses could include isolating the area or isolating the area and conducting an evacuation.
- Once NYPD arrives, the District Safety team will turn over authority to NYPD and assist them as necessary. NYPD will respond with their protocols to diffuse a hostage situation.
- Families will be informed of the situation and the school's response.

**Kidnapping Incidents:** Launch has established the following protocols for responding to a kidnapping situation.

- If a staff member thinks a kidnapping is taking place, they will immediately call the Head of School or any other member of the District Safety Team.
- A member of the District Safety Team will check the student's guardian/emergency contact information and another member of the District Safety Team will alert School Safety Agents.
- Parents/Guardians will be immediately notified and if the student is not with them or with a known family member/friend, NYPD will be alerted.
- The investigation will be turned over to the NYPD once they arrive and the parent/guardian will be alerted if/when the student is located.

**Mandated Reporting:** Launch Charter School staff are considered "Mandated Reporters", in compliance with NYS law. If a member of the staff suspects that a child is being abused or neglected, they are obligated to report their suspicion to the Administration for Children's Services (ACS). Signs of abuse or neglect may include but are not limited to; patterns of lateness to school and absence from school, consistently unkept or dirty, signs of physical abuse. If a staff member suspects abuse or neglect, they should inform their supervisor and consult with the school based counseling teams to help facilitate next steps.

### **Recovery (Post-Incident Response)**

Following an emergency situation, the following steps will be taken:

- The Board of Trustees will be notified.
- A letter will be drafted to the school community to acknowledge and address the incident. This will be sent using our robo-call/email/text systems.
- Counseling services will be made available to the victim(s) of the incident and to the school community at large.

- The District Safety Team will meet to reflect on actions taken during the incident and identify areas for improvement.
- If needed, a community meeting will be held in order to address questions or concerns of our families.