SCHOOL SAFETY PLANS AND TEAMS

Emergencies and violent incidents in schools are critical issues that must be addressed in an expeditious and effective manner. The Board of Education recognizes its responsibility to adopt and amend a comprehensive district wide school safety plan and building-level emergency response plan(s) regarding crisis intervention, emergency response and management.

Taken together, the district and building plans shall provide a comprehensive approach to addressing school safety and violence prevention, and provide the structure where all individuals can fully understand their roles and responsibilities for promoting the safety of the entire school community. The plans shall be designed to prevent or minimize the effects of serious violent incidents and emergencies and to facilitate the district's coordination with local and county resources. The plans shall also address risk reduction/prevention, response and recovery with respect to a variety of emergencies and violent incidents in district schools.

In accordance with state law and regulation, the district shall have the following school safety teams and plans to deal with crisis intervention and emergency response and management:

Comprehensive district-wide school safety team and plan

The Board will appoint a district-wide school safety team that includes, but is not be limited to, a representative from the Board, teacher, administrator, and parent organizations, school safety personnel and other school personnel. This team shall be responsible for the development and review of a comprehensive district-wide school safety plan. The plan shall cover all district school buildings and shall address crisis intervention, emergency response and management at the district level. It shall include all those elements required by law and regulation.

The Superintendent of Schools or his/her designee shall be the district’s chief emergency officer, and shall coordinate communication between school staff and law enforcement and first responders. The chief emergency officer shall ensure that all staff understand the district-wide school safety plan and receive training on the building-level emergency response plan, violence prevention and mental health, and shall also ensure that district-wide and building-level plans are completed, reviewed annually, and updated as needed by the designated dates. The chief emergency officer shall ensure that the district-wide plan is coordinated with the building-level plans, and shall ensure that required evacuation and lock-down drills are conducted.

Building-level emergency response teams and plans

Each Building Principal shall be responsible for appointing a building-level emergency response team that includes representation from teachers, administrators, parent organizations, school safety personnel, other school personnel, law enforcement officials, fire officials and other emergency response agencies. The emergency response team shall be responsible for the development and review of a building-level emergency response plan for each district building. The plan(s) shall address communication, emergency response, and evacuation at the building level and shall include all components required by law and regulation.
Within each building, the building-level emergency response team shall designate:

- an emergency response team that includes appropriate school personnel, law enforcement officials, fire officials and representatives from local, regional and/or state emergency response agencies to assist the school community in responding to a serious violent incident or emergency; and

- a post-incident response team that includes appropriate school personnel, medical personnel, mental health counselors and other related personnel to assist the community in coping with the aftermath of a serious violent incident or emergency.

During emergencies, staff are authorized to temporarily cover classroom door vision panels when it is likely to protect staff and students. For example, covering vision panels may prevent an intruder from determining if a classroom is occupied, thereby discouraging attempts to gain access. During emergencies, staff are also authorized to temporarily block doors to slow the access of intruders. Building-level emergency response plans must address the temporary covering of door vision panels and the temporary blocking of doors during emergencies.

The Building Principal, in consultation with the Superintendent, shall annually designate a threat assessment team to provide ongoing support and information in order to identify, and assess individuals who may be potential threats to safety, with the intent of minimizing acts of violence in the school community. The threat assessment team shall be composed of, but not limited to, the following personnel from both within the school and the larger community, as appropriate: building administrators, legal counsel, the medical director and/or school nurse, school counselors, local mental health and social service providers, law enforcement, school resource officers, security personnel, and facilities and maintenance personnel. The team shall meet regularly. The team shall be mindful of the need for discretion and observance of confidentiality requirements.

Students shall be encouraged to bring their concerns to any district employee. If a district employee becomes aware of a threat to the school community, the Building Principal shall be informed and he/she will convene the threat assessment team. The Building Principal may request the participation of the following additional individuals who may have specific knowledge of the potential perpetrator: supervisors, teachers, students and parents. The Building Principal is responsible for keeping the Superintendent informed about the activities of the threat assessment team. Threat assessment team members shall receive appropriate training.

The Building Principal shall be responsible for conducting at least one test every school year of the emergency response procedures under this plan including procedures for sheltering and early dismissal.

To maintain security and in accordance with law, the building-level emergency response plan(s) shall be confidential and shall not be subject to disclosure under the Freedom of Information Law or any other law.
Team Appointments

The members of all district and building-level teams shall be appointed on an annual basis. In appointing team members, the Board and the Building Principal will make an effort to include other persons beyond those groups identified in law and policy who can contribute to ensuring continuity among the plans.

Annual Review and Report

Each plan shall be reviewed by the appropriate school safety team by July 1st every year and updated as needed. In conducting the review, the building-level teams shall consider any changes in personnel, local conditions and other factors including an evaluation of the results of the annual test of the emergency response procedures which may necessitate updating of plans. If the plan requires no changes, then it shall remain in effect. If the district-wide plan requires change, then the updated plan shall be submitted to the Board of Education in time to allow 30-days of public comment and to hold a public hearing which provides for the participation of school personnel, students and other interested parties prior to Board adoption. All plans must be adopted by the Board of Education by September 1.

The Superintendent of Schools shall be responsible for filing the district-level school safety plan and any amendments to the plan with the Commissioner within 30 days after their adoption. The district-wide plan will be posted on the district’s website. Each Building Principal shall be responsible for filing the building-level emergency response plan for his or her building and any amendments to the plan with the appropriate local law enforcement agency and the state police within 30 days after their adoption, but no later than October 15 of each year.

Cross-Ref: 0115, Bullying and Harassment Prevention and Intervention
5300, Code of Conduct
8120, Accident Prevention and Safety Procedures
8133, Bomb Threats
8134, Emergency Closings

Ref: Education Law §2801-a (school safety plans)
Executive Law §2B (state and local natural and manmade disaster preparedness)
8 NYCRR Part 155 (Educational Facilities)
School Safety Plans Guidance, New York State Education Department, June 2010

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