Merchantville Board of Education
130 South Centre Street
Merchantville, NJ 08109

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Emergencies & Disaster Preparedness

The chief school administrator shall direct the development of plans, procedures and mechanisms for responding to emergencies and crises in the schools that threaten human life and property. He/she shall consult with law enforcement agencies, health and social services agencies and emergency management planners in developing these plans and shall ensure that they provide for the protection of the health, safety and welfare of the school population as well as supportive services for staff, students and their families.

Plans and procedures shall include these elements:

A. Cooperation with local government agencies in developing and carrying out a school/community disaster plan that includes procedures for building lockdowns when necessary;

B. Mechanisms for the orderly evacuation of buildings in case of fire or other emergencies;

C. Means to provide as much protection as possible for children at school and on their way to and from school;

D. Training in individual self-protection and survival techniques for pupils and staff;

E. Communicating specific instructions to pupils and staff so that the school emergency plan may be carried out with the greatest possible speed and safety.

The chief school administrator shall develop and provide an inservice training program for school staff to enable them to recognize and appropriately respond to crises, consistent with the district's plans, procedures and mechanisms for managing crises. The inservice program shall be reviewed and updated annually.

School Safety and Security Plan

The board directs the chief school administrator and his or her designees to develop and implement comprehensive plans, procedures, and mechanisms that provide for safety and security in the schools. Written plans and procedures and mechanisms shall, at a minimum, provide for:

A. The protection of the health, safety, security and welfare of the school population;

B. The prevention of, intervention in, response to and recovery from emergency and crisis situations;

C. The establishment and maintenance of a climate of civility; and

D. Support services for staff, students and their families.

The chief school administrator shall consult with law enforcement agencies, health and social services provider agencies, emergency management planners, and school and other community resources, as appropriate, in the development of the district's plans, procedures, and mechanisms for school safety and security.

The plans, procedures, and mechanisms shall be consistent with the format and content established by the Domestic Security Preparedness Task Force and the Commissioner. The plans, procedures, and

mechanisms shall be reviewed annually and updated as appropriate.

The chief school administrator shall disseminate a copy of the school safety and security plan to its employees. In addition:

A. New employees shall receive a copy of the school safety and security plan, as appropriate, within 60 days of the effective date of their employment;

B. All employees shall be notified in writing, as appropriate, regarding updates and changes to the school safety and security plan;

C. All employees shall attend an in-service training program designed to allow all district board of education employees to recognize and appropriately respond to safety and security concerns, including emergencies and crises, in a manner consistent with the district board of education's plans, procedures and mechanisms for school safety and security.

Fire Drills and School Security Drills

Fire drills shall be held at least once each month for all students. There shall also be at least one school security drill per month. The lead person may order a modification of the fire drills so that they may take the form of indoor drills or of rapid dismissals with outdoor clothing when low temperatures prevail.

A written statement of procedures and instructions for fire drills and school security drills shall be formulated by the chief school administrator and disseminated to all staff. All staff shall also receive training on school safety and security that includes instruction on school security drills within 60 days of the commencement of that staff member's employment.

Instruction in fire prevention shall be given and emphasized in appropriate courses in the curriculum of the school. A "school security drill" shall be defined as an exercise to respond to an emergency situation such as a non-fire evacuation, lockdown, bomb threat, lockdown or active shooter situation that is similar in duration to a fire drill.

A. Required Drills

The school shall be required to conduct a minimum of two drills per year for each of the following drills:

1. Active shooter
2. Evacuation (non-fire)
3. Bomb threats
4. Lockdowns

Students are not required to participate in two of the eight mandated drills.

B. Within the first 10 days of the new school year each school shall be required to conduct one fire drill.

C. Within the first 15 days of the new school year each school shall be required to conduct one school security drill.

Reporting

By June 30th of each year the lead person shall submit to the executive county superintendent an annual "Statement of Assurance" report on the forms provided by the Department of Education.

Emergency Closings; Delayed Openings

The chief school administrator is authorized by the board to close the schools, open them late or dismiss them early in hazardous weather or in other extraordinary circumstances which might endanger the health or safety of pupils or school employees.

Each year, parents/guardians, pupils, and staff members shall be informed in advance of how they shall be notified in event of emergency closings. Parents/guardians shall be required to make alternative arrangements for their children in case no one is home to receive a child after an unscheduled early closing.

Threats

All threats are deemed credible until proper law enforcement and safety officials determine otherwise.

Key Words

Emergencies and Disaster Preparedness, Civil Defense, Disasters, Fire Drills, Bomb Threats

Legal References:

- N.J.S.A. 18A:6-2 Instruction in accident and fire prevention
- N.J.S.A. 18A:11-1 General mandatory powers and duties
- N.J.S.A. 18A:40-12 Closing schools during epidemic
- N.J.S.A. 18A:41-1 *et seq.* Fire drills and fire protection
- N.J.S.A. 18A:54-20 Powers of board (county vocational schools)
- N.J.A.C. 6A:16-5.1 *et seq.* School Safety and Security
- N.J.A.C. 6A:16-6.3 Reporting students or staff members to law enforcement agencies
- N.J.A.C. 6A:26-12.2 Policies and procedures for school facility operation
- N.J.A.C. 8:57-1.9 Reporting of diseases by health officers
- A Uniform State Memorandum of Agreement between Education and Law Enforcement Officials
- School Safety and Security Plans, Minimum Requirements

Possible Cross References:

- *1410 Local units
- *2210 Administrative leeway in absence of board policy
- *3541.33 Transportation safety
- *4131/4131.1 Staff development; inservice education/visitations/conferences
- *4231/4231.1 Staff development; inservice education/visitations/conferences
- 5141.6 Crisis intervention
- *6111 School calendar
- *6112 School day

*Indicates policy is included in the Critical Policy Reference Manual.