

*This is a recommended policy to consider and combines three previous CABE model policies: Student Safety (5142), Emergencies and Disaster Preparedness (6114) and Crisis Management Plan (5141.6)*

## Students

### School Safety: Preparation, Response, and After Action

It is the policy of the \_\_\_\_\_ Board of Education to maintain a safe, orderly, civil, and positive learning environment and to be prepared, as far as possible, to prevent and respond quickly and appropriately to unexpected crises, such as emergencies, disasters, and threats.

The Board of Education shall strive to build safe, supportive, and academically challenging school learning environments in partnership with students, staff members, families and community leaders and officials. Supporting these efforts, along with ensuring all facilities, grounds, equipment, and vehicles meet acceptable injury and violence prevention standards for design, installation, use, and maintenance, the Board recognizes that sound emergency preparedness planning and response are essential for the health, welfare, and safety of all students, staff and visitors. All school community members are responsible for doing everything in their power to promote everyone's safety at all times. District staff and students shall be prepared to respond immediately and responsibly to any combination of events that threaten the school community.

The Board directs the Superintendent to develop, maintain, and implement an *Emergency Disaster Preparedness and Response Plan (District Security and Safety Plan)* and, for each school, a **School Security and Safety Plan** and administrative procedures that detail provisions for responding to emergencies and disasters. This Plan will articulate the local emergency service providers' role in crisis preparedness and incident management, which shall be included in the District's Security and Safety Plan.

### The School Security and Safety Plan

The Superintendent shall use state-approved School Security and Safety Plan Standards and a School Security and Safety Plan Template to comply with the National Incident Management System (NIMS) and incorporate the National Incident Command System when updating District- and site-level emergency and disaster preparedness plans. Each school in the District, each school year, will develop and implement a **School Security and Safety Plan**. Such plan shall be based upon the standards issued by *the Department of Emergency Services and Public Protection/Division of Emergency Management and Homeland Security (DESPP/DEMHS)* and the *School Security and Safety Plan Template*. In addition to preparedness and response, the plan shall provide guidance on recovery from any emergency incident.

In developing the District and School Security and Safety Plans, which include plans for various crisis scenarios, such as fire, bus accidents, criminal acts, civil disturbances, presence of intruders, hazardous material spill, weather-related emergencies, and bomb threats, the Superintendent shall collaborate with local and state emergency responders and local health officials in compliance with the provisions of PA 13-3.

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### School Safety: Preparation, Response, and After Action

#### The School Security and Safety Plan (continued)

The Board through the Superintendent, shall annually, by November 1 of each year, submit the School Security and Safety Plans for each school to the Department of Emergency Services and Public Protection via submission to the District's DEMHS Regional Coordinator in the manner prescribed by said agency.

The Superintendent or designee shall use the School Security and Safety Plan standards and plan templates developed by the Department of Emergency Services, state-approved Standardized Emergency Management System guidelines, be compliant with the National Incident Management System (NIMS) and incorporate the National Incident Command System when updating district and site-level emergency and disaster preparedness plans.

The School Security and Safety Plan shall be developed within the context of the four recognized phases of crisis management: Mitigation/Prevention, Preparedness, Response, and Recovery.

#### District Security and Safety Committee

The **District Security and Safety Committee** includes the Superintendent, Police Chief, Fire Chief, representative of school leadership, teachers and staff, mental health and special education staff representatives, and others deemed necessary. This Committee shall meet each month and fulfill the following tasks:

- Oversee and facilitate the process for the development and submission of **School Security and Safety Plans**;
- Ensure that District and school site security and safety plans address an all-hazards approach to emergencies;
- Assist individual school-based crisis response teams (the School Security and Safety Committee) to include community partners and school-based personnel as specified;
- Develop training activities and conduct emergency exercises, such as tabletop exercises, to support and improve the plan;
- Initiate, build, and maintain relationships with community partners;
- Conduct regular safety, security and hazard assessments;
- Establish and update the district emergency management plan.
- Interview vendors that provide products related to school safety and security;
- Meet with the Board of Education committee that oversees district security and safety quarterly to report on the following:
  - Input related to policy changes and updates;
  - Resources supporting security and safety initiatives;
  - Security and Safety concerns facing the District;
  - Updates on communication procedures and protocols;
  - *(Discussions relating to emergency plans may require an Executive Session.)*

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### School Safety: Preparation, Response, and After Action

#### District Security and Safety Committee (continued)

Each school shall establish a **School Security and Safety Committee**, which will assist in developing and implementing the school's **Security and Safety Plan**. Such plans shall be based upon the Department of Emergency Services and Public Protection standards.

The members of the Committee shall include a *local police officer*, *local first responder*, *teacher* and *administrator* from the school, a *mental health professional*, a *parent or legal guardian* of a student at the school, a *special education teacher*, *the administrator(s) designated to interact with immigration authorities*, and any other person deemed necessary, such as a *school nurse*, *custodian*, *local health director*, *transportation coordinator*, etc. Schools shall collaborate closely with law enforcement, fire and emergency services personnel, and community partners, including public health professionals who can assist with the development of a plan that addresses a wide range of crises. A security vulnerability assessment of each school shall be conducted every two years; the results of which shall be incorporated into the school's Security and Safety Plan and reported to the DEMHS Regional Coordinator.

School Security and Safety Plans are to be updated and submitted annually and conform to standards and templates developed by the Department of Emergency Services and the Division of Emergency Management and Homeland Security (DEMHS) pursuant to Section 86 of Public Act 13-3. In addition, the Superintendent or designee shall ensure that the District's procedures include strategies and actions that comply with the National Incident Management System (NIMS) used by all first responders at all levels of prevention/mitigation, preparedness, response and recovery.

For the school year commencing July 1, 2024, and each school year thereafter, each School Security and Safety Plan shall be updated to include protocols for interacting with a federal immigration authority who appears in person at a school in the District or otherwise contacts a school to request information. For purposes of this policy, a "federal immigration authority" means "any officer, employee or other person otherwise paid by or acting as an agent of the United States Immigration and Customs Enforcement or any successor agency thereto or any division thereof or any officer, employee or other person otherwise paid by or acting as an agent of the United States Department of Homeland Security or any successor agency thereto who is charged with enforcement of the civil provisions of the Immigration and Nationality Act."

Such protocols shall be based on applicable law and the CSDE's "Guidance to K-12 Public Schools Pertaining to Immigration Activities", or any subsequent applicable CSDE guidance, and shall include, at a minimum:

- A. the designation of at least one administrator at each school to serve as the individual responsible for interacting with the federal immigration authority;

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### School Safety: Preparation, Response, and After Action

#### District Security and Safety Committee (continued)

- B. provisions that such administrator, or any other school employee, may:
  - 1. request and record a federal immigration authority's identification, including the name, badge or identification number, telephone number and business card of such federal immigration authority;
  - 2. ask such federal immigration authority if the federal immigration authority is in possession of a judicial warrant to support the federal immigration authority's request and, if so, to produce such judicial warrant;
  - 3. review any warrant or other materials that the federal immigration authority produces to determine who issued such warrant and what the warrant or other material authorizes the federal immigration authority to do; and
  - 4. consult with legal counsel for the Board, or guidance developed by such legal counsel, on how to interact with the federal immigration authority with regards to the nature of the request, whether a warrant is produced, the details of any such warrant, whether such warrant is a judicial warrant or an administrative warrant, whether the federal immigration authority is claiming exigent circumstances, and any other consideration identified by the Board's legal counsel; and
- C. permission for other school personnel to direct such federal immigration authority who requests access to any records, information, the interior of the school building or other school personnel to communicate with the administrator

(cf. 5114 – Suspension/Expulsion; Student Due Process)

Legal Reference: Connecticut General Statutes

- 10-154a Professional communications between teacher or nurse and student.
- 10-207 Duties of medical advisors.
- 10-209 Records not to be public.
- 10-210 Notice of disease to be given parent or guardian.
- 10-220f Safety committee
- 10-221 Boards of education to prescribe rules
- 10-222m School security and safety plans. School security and safety committees
- 10-231 Fire drills
- 19a-221 Quarantine of certain persons.

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### School Safety: Preparation, Response, and After Action

Legal Reference: Connecticut General Statutes (continued)

52-557b Immunity from liability for emergency medical assistance, first aid or medication by injection. School personnel not required to administer or render.

The Family Educational Rights and Privacy Act of 1974, (FERPA), 20 U.S.C. 1232g, 45 C.F.R. 99.

P.A. 13-3 An Act Concerning Gun Violence Prevention and Children’s Safety (Section 86, 87, 88)

P.A. 19-5 An Act Concerning the Safe Storage of Firearms in the Home and Firearm Safety Programs in Public Schools

Public Act No. 25-1, “An Act Concerning Interactions Between School Personnel and Immigration Authorities, the Purchase and Operation of Certain Drones, Grants to Certain Nonprofit Organizations, and Student Athlete Compensation Through Endorsement Contracts and Revenue Sharing Agreements”

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State Standards:

Connecticut State Department of Education, *Guidance to K-12 Public Schools Pertaining to Immigration Activities* (January 28, 2025)

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*A sample regulation to accompany the policy.*

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### **School Safety: Preparation, Response, and After Action**

The Superintendent or designee, on behalf of the Board of Education, shall ensure that District and School Security and Safety Plans address an all-hazards approach to emergencies and shall include, but not limited to:

1. Fire on or off school grounds which endangers students and staff;
2. Natural disasters;
3. Environmental hazards;
4. Attack or disturbance, or threat of attack or disturbance, by an individual or group;
5. Bomb threat or actual detonation;
6. Biological, radiological, chemical, and other activities, or heightened warning of such activities;
7. Medical emergencies and quarantines, such as pandemic influenza outbreaks.

### **Protocols for Interacting with Federal Immigration Authorities**

Through this policy, the Board of Education commits to ensuring the \_\_\_\_\_ Public Schools follow all guidelines and protocols established by the Connecticut State Department of Education regarding immigration authorities interacting with the District. These plans cover each school.

These plans specifically require each district to do the following:

1. Designate at least one administrator at each school to serve as the individual responsible for interacting with federal immigration authorities;
2. Specify that this administrator, or any other school employee, may request specific information from the immigration authorities to take specific other actions (see below); and
3. Permit other school personnel to direct immigration authorities to the designated administrator if they request access to records, information, the interior of the school building, or other school personnel to communicate with.

Actions that the designated administrator or any other school employee may take:

1. Request and record a federal immigration authority's identification, including the name, badge or identification number, telephone number, and business card;
2. Ask the immigration authority if he or she has a judicial warrant to support the authority's request and, if so, show the warrant;
3. Review warrants or other materials that the authority provides to determine who issued the warrant and what it or the other material authorizes the authority to do; and
4. Consult with the school district's legal counsel (or legal counsel's guidance) on how to interact with the immigration authority regarding the request's nature, whether a warrant is produced, the warrant's details (including whether it is a judicial warrant or an administrative warrant), whether the immigration authority is claiming exigent circumstances, and any other consideration the legal counsel has identified.

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### School Safety: Preparation, Response, and After Action (continued)

No staff member shall be disciplined, suspended, terminated, or otherwise punished for implementing the updated school security and safety plan relating to staff interacting with an immigration authority. This protection specifically applies to staff taking any of the permitted actions listed above and directing the immigration authority to communicate with the designated administrator. *(PA 25-1 An Act Concerning Interactions Between School Personnel and Immigration Authorities, The Purchase and Operation of Certain Drones, Grants to Certain Nonprofit Organizations, and Student Athlete Compensation Through Endorsement Contracts and Revenue Sharing Agreements)*

Each school and district building shall establish a **School Security and Safety Committee**. The Committee is responsible for developing the school's Security and Safety Plan and shall include a *local police officer, local first responder, teacher and administrator* from the school, a *mental health professional, a special education department representative, a parent or guardian of a student at the school, the administrator(s) designated to interact with immigration authorities*, and may include any other person deemed necessary, such as a *nurse, custodian or property manager, local emergency management director, local public health director, information technology manager, and transportation coordinator*. The School Security and Safety Committee shall also invite subject matter experts to participate as needed, including, for example, the local public works director, high school student council president, and/or food service director.

The Superintendent shall annually review, update as necessary, and submit a School Security and Safety Plan for each school under its jurisdiction to the DESPP/DEMHS Regional Coordinator based on the standards and required template as updated. These annual submissions shall also include results of security and vulnerability assessments for each school conducted every two years.

The Superintendent shall identify a lead administrator, such as the school principal, who shall conduct a security and vulnerability assessment for each school under the jurisdiction of such board every two years and develop a plan as described in **Personal safety and security** (Number 4 under Security and Safety Plans) and **Steps to be taken after the disaster or emergency** (Number 8 under the same section). By November 1<sup>st</sup> of each school year, the board of education, through the superintendent, shall submit to its DEMHS Regional Coordinator an electronic copy of the plan for that year.

## **Students**

### **School Safety: Preparation, Response, and After Action** (continued)

**School Security and Safety Plans** shall be based on the school security and safety plan standards and template developed by the Department of Emergency Services and Public Protection, pursuant to section 86 of PA 13-3. In addition, the Superintendent or designee shall ensure that the District's procedures include strategies and actions that are compliant with the National Incident Management System (NIMS) used by all first responders at all levels for prevention/mitigation, preparedness, response and recovery, including, but not limited to, the following:

1. **Regular inspection** of school facilities and equipment and identification of risks;
2. **Instruction and practice** for students and employees regarding emergency plans, including:
  - a. Staff training in first aid, Stop the Bleed and cardiopulmonary resuscitation;
  - b. Regular practice of emergency procedures by students and staff.
3. Specific determination **of roles and responsibilities** of staff during a disaster or other emergency, including determination of:
  - a. The appropriate chain of command at the District and, if communication between District and site is not possible, at each site. (Use of the National Incident Command System);
  - b. Individuals responsible for specific duties;
  - c. Designation of the Principal for the overall control and supervision of activities at each school during the emergency, including authorization to use his/her discretion in situations that do not permit execution of prearranged plans;
  - d. Identification of at least one person at each site who holds a valid certificate in first aid and cardiopulmonary resuscitation;
  - e. Assignment of responsibility for identifying injured persons and administering first aid.
4. **Personal safety and security**, including:
  - a. Identification of areas of responsibility for supervision of students;
  - b. Procedures for evacuation of students and staff, including a procedure to release students, including posting of evacuation routes;
  - c. Procedures for release of students, including a procedure to release students when reference to the emergency card is not feasible;
  - d. Identification of transportation needs, including a plan that allows bus seating capacity limits to be exceeded when a disaster or hazard requires students to be moved immediately to ensure their safety;
  - e. Provision of a first aid kit to each classroom;
  - f. Arrangements for students and staff with special needs;
  - g. Upon notification that a health crisis, such as a pandemic, exists, attendance policies for students and sick leave policies for staff with known or suspected infectious diseases should be adjusted.

## Students

### School Safety: Preparation, Response, and After Action (continued)

5. **Closure of schools**, including an analysis of:
  - a. The duration of the event's impact and possible scenarios;
  - b. The impact on student learning and methods to ensure continuity of instruction;
  - c. How to provide for continuity of operations for essential central office operations;
  - d. Communicating school closures and other operational decisions to the staff, students, Board of Education, local officials and community members.
6. **Communication** among staff, parents/guardians, the Board of Education, other governmental agencies, and the media during an emergency, including:
  - a. Identification of spokesperson(s);
  - b. Development and testing of communication platforms, such as hotlines, telephone/messaging trees, websites and social media;
    - i. Communicate to students, staff, parents, community, officials, and Board on how/when they can expect information to be shared;
    - ii. Share what crisis-related communications can and can't include;
    - iii. Share how they will be updated during a crisis;
    - iv. Share how they will be provided with after-action summaries of an event, including but not limited to what occurred, how the District responded, and actions the District will take to prepare for similar future occurrences.
  - c. Development of methods to ensure that communications are, to the extent practicable, in a language and format that is easy for parents/guardians to understand;
  - d. Distribution of information about District and school site emergency procedures to staff, students, and parents/guardians.
7. **Cooperation with other state and local agencies**, including:
  - a. Development of guidelines for law enforcement, fire department, and medical emergency responder involvement, intervention, and after-action analysis and feedback;
  - b. Collaboration with the local health department, including developing a tracking system to alert the local health department to a substantial increase in student or staff absenteeism as indicative of a potential outbreak of an infectious disease.
8. **Steps to be taken after the disaster or emergency**, including:
  - a. Inspection of school facilities;
  - b. Provision of mental health services for students and staff, as needed;
  - c. After-action review after each event: (This review should involve school and district administration, staff, and emergency services personnel involved in the incident. Each review should result in a written summary to prepare for future events).

## Students

### School Safety: Preparation, Response, and After Action (continued)

The Superintendent shall establish a **District Security and Safety Committee**. The Committee is responsible for overseeing the schools' development, submission and implementation of Security and Safety Plans and shall keep track of all drill logs and other documents required for submission. The District Security and Safety Committee shall include the *Chief of Police, Chief of Fire/Emergency, a teacher and administrator representative* from a primary and secondary school, *a mental health professional, a special education department representative, a parent/guardian of a student* enrolled in a district school, and may include any other person deemed necessary, such as a *nurse, custodian or property manager, local emergency management director, local public health director, information technology manager, and transportation coordinator*. The District Security and Safety Committee shall also invite emergency management experts and vendors to share information and products for consideration to improve security and safety procedures, fortification measures, and communication systems.

The District Security and Safety Committee shall organize annual District training, including tabletop exercises, drills and other activities to promote district security. Such activities include, but are not limited to, parent information sessions, Board of Education presentations and updates, and reviewing and updating published security and safety documents and communications.

**The School Security and Safety Plans** shall be reviewed annually and updated if necessary and shall use as its framework the **Four Phases of Emergency Management for Schools**:

#### 1. Prevention-Mitigation Phase

- a. Prevention is the action schools and districts can take to decrease the likelihood that an event or crisis will occur;
- b. Mitigation actions are steps that eliminate or reduce the loss of life or property damage for events that cannot be prevented.
  - i. Assess and address the safety integrity of facilities, security, culture and climate of the schools and is considered an ongoing process, directly linked to the other three phases;
  - ii. Correlate with school climate policy and subsequent plans;
  - iii. Work with community partners to conduct an assessment of school buildings, grounds, and surrounding community.
- c. Examples of items to build into the crisis management plan:
  - i. Fencing hazardous areas;
  - ii. Anchoring outdoor equipment;
  - iii. Installing building access control measures, such as buzz-in systems, photo IDs, security cameras, alarm systems, and fortification measures;
  - iv. Conducting school vulnerability assessments, such as campus entry points and buffer zones;
  - v. Establishing wellness programs;
  - vi. Establishing tools and protocols for identifying and immediately sharing concerns, such as See Something, Say Something;
  - vii. Correlate with health, wellness, and school climate policies.

## **Students**

### **School Safety: Preparation, Response, and After Action (continued)**

#### **2. Preparedness Phase**

- a. Preparedness is designed to strengthen the school community by coordinating with community partners through:
  - i. Developing an emergency plan and protocols;
  - ii. Adopting the Incident Command System;
  - iii. Addressing the needs of persons with disabilities;
  - iv. Conducting staff training and drills.
- b. Elements to be addressed:
  - i. All-hazards emergency procedures;
  - ii. Emergency supplies;
  - iii. Incident Command System to facilitate effective response;
  - iv. Student accountability procedures in the case of emergency;
  - v. Family reunification plans (contact information, notification procedures, appropriate identification);
  - vi. Training and exercises (tabletop exercises and full-scale exercises);
  - vii. Recovery planning;
  - viii. Communication with the media and parents/guardians;
  - ix. Annual review and revision.

#### **3. Response Phase**

- a. Involves what must be done during response to an emergency:
  - i. Activating the crisis management plan and the Incident Command System;
  - ii. Coordinating with first responders;
  - iii. Adapting to an evolving situation;
  - iv. Deciding on response strategies;
  - v. Accounting to students-reunifying with parents/guardians;
  - vi. Communicating with parents/guardians and the media.
- b. Consideration of which primary response to use based upon the specifics and the severity of the situation:
  - i. Evacuation;
  - ii. Lockdown;
  - iii. Shelter in place.
- c. Response Action: Evacuation:
  - i. Use when locations outside the building are safer than inside the school;
  - ii. Identify multiple evacuation routes in coordination with community partners;
  - iii. Determine how teachers will account for students;
  - iv. Ensure teachers, administrators and staff members have appropriate “Go-kits.”

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### School Safety: Preparation, Response, and After Action (continued)

- d. Response Action: Lockdown:
  - i. Use when there is an immediate threat of violence in, or immediately around, the school;
  - ii. Ensure all exterior doors are locked;
  - iii. Ensure all public safety officials can enter the building;
  - iv. Determine policy regarding blinds, turning off lights, use of status cards;
  - v. Staff and students to move to an area not visible from windows or doors.
- e. Response Action: Shelter-in-Place:
  - i. Use when students and staff must remain indoors during an extended period of time;
  - ii. Close all windows and turn off all heating and air conditioning systems;
  - iii. Provide accommodations for eating, sleeping and personal hygiene. Have staff activate family emergency plans;
  - iv. Provide communications to students and staff (plain language vs. codes).
  - v. Discourage external cellular communications by students and staff during emergencies;
  - vi. Provide for review/debriefing of the incident.

#### 4. Recovery Phase

- a. Designed to assist students, staff, and their families in the healing process and to restore educational operations in the schools.
- b. Four primary components to be addressed:
  - i. Physical/structural recovery;
  - ii. Business/fiscal recovery;
  - iii. Restoration of the learning environment;
  - iv. Psychological/emotional recovery.
- c. Issues to be addressed:
  - i. Assessment and repair of facilities;
  - ii. Possible need for alternate school sites;
  - iii. Payroll and financial systems;
  - iv. Record management;
  - v. Returning normalcy to the school environment;
  - vi. Identification of those needing psychological/emotional support and development of short and long-term interventions as needed.

#### 5. Communication

- a. Setting the table: Preparing the community on what it can expect regarding crisis communications, such as how information will be shared, what it will (and will not) include, and how often it will be sent;
- b. Real-Time Communication: Providing internal communication to staff and the board of education and external communication to parents, the community and the media;
- c. After-action communication: Reviewing and sharing the factual account of what had occurred and the outcomes that can be shared.

## Students

### School Safety: Preparation, Response, and After Action (continued)

#### All Hazards School Security and Safety Plan Standards

[https://portal.ct.gov/-/media/demhs/\\_docs/plans-and-publications/school-security-and-safety-plan-standards.pdf?rev=457023ebffa54e1e938fb17de0d74c55&hash=8B651FB5D35B6D64CE80AC7F0DA3F897](https://portal.ct.gov/-/media/demhs/_docs/plans-and-publications/school-security-and-safety-plan-standards.pdf?rev=457023ebffa54e1e938fb17de0d74c55&hash=8B651FB5D35B6D64CE80AC7F0DA3F897)

Recognizing the need for an “all-hazards” emergency preparedness and response capability for schools, the Connecticut state government has expanded its role as a partner in ensuring the safety, security, and emergency preparedness of the state’s local educational facilities. In keeping with Public Act 13-3, Section 86, the **Department of Emergency Services and Public Protection/Division of Emergency Management and Homeland Security (DESPP/DEMHS)**, in consultation with the Department of Education, re-convened a multi-jurisdictional, multidisciplinary working group to review and revise, as needed, the School Security and Safety Plan Standards and the accompanying School Security and Safety Plan Template, which were released to help schools and the surrounding communities meet all-hazards threats. The requirements for a plan and plan standards are now codified in Connecticut General Statutes Sections 10-222m and 10-222n.

Those individuals charged with the development of local all-hazards school security and safety plans should also review the Guide for Developing High-Quality School Emergency Operations Plans, released in June of 2013 by a consortium of federal agencies, including the U.S. Department of Education and FEMA. In addition, we have reviewed and revised the template for an all-hazards approach to emergencies at public schools to address these Standards, including those identified in Public Act 13-3, Section 86:

1. Involvement of local officials, including the chief executive officer (CEO) of the municipality, the superintendent of schools, law enforcement, fire, public health, emergency management, and emergency medical services in the development of school security and safety plans;
2. An organizational command structure based on the National Incident Management System (NIMS), including the Incident Command System (ICS), and a description of the responsibilities of the different parts of the command structure. NIMS includes the establishment of common nomenclature, and the municipalities shall work together through their Connecticut Division of Emergency Management and Homeland Security (DEMHS) Regional Emergency Planning Teams to implement the standard language and definitions found in the attached template plan. Basic NIMS training for school employees may include ICS 100 C, which can be taken online at <http://training.fema.gov>;
3. A requirement that a school security and safety committee be established at each school. This committee can be combined with an existing school committee provided that the following requirements are met: a. Each local and regional board of education annually establishes a school security and safety committee at each school within its jurisdiction. The Committee is responsible for assisting in developing the school security and safety plan for the school and administering the plan.

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### School Safety: Preparation, Response, and After Action

#### All Hazards School Security and Safety Plan Standards (continued)

3. (continued) The Committee members shall include a local police officer, a local first responder, a teacher and administrator from the school, a mental health professional, a special education department representative, and a parent or guardian of a student at the school. They may include any other person deemed necessary, such as a school nurse, custodian or property manager, local emergency management director, local public health director, information technology manager, and transportation coordinator. The school security and safety committee should also invite subject matter experts to participate as needed, including, for example, the local public works director, high school student council president, and/or food service director.
4. Annually, each local and regional board of education shall review, update as necessary, and submit a school security and safety plan for each school under its jurisdiction to its DESPP/DEMHS Regional Coordinator, based on the standards listed here and further provided in the attached template and any updated template, as well as the results of the assessment described in Number 8, below. By November 1st of each year, local and regional boards of education must submit to their DEMHS Regional Coordinators an electronic copy of their plan(s) for that year;
5. The school security and safety plans shall be an annex to the municipality's Local Emergency Operations Plan (LEOP), filed with the DESPP/DEMHS Regional Coordinator under Connecticut General Statutes Section 28-7. The school security and safety plans do not have to be physically attached to the LEOP; they may be referenced in the LEOP but kept in a separate binder;
6. Procedures for managing various types of emergencies, including crisis management procedures;
7. A requirement that local law enforcement and other local public safety officials (including the local emergency management director, fire marshal, building inspector, and emergency medical services representative) evaluate, score (assess), and provide feedback on fire drills and crisis response drills. This means that each named official should evaluate and provide feedback on at least one fire drill and crisis response drill each year. While it may be impossible for every official to attend every drill at every school, it is a best practice to have the town public safety team (fire, police, emergency management, etc..) attend at least one drill per year as a team. That way, team members can share observations and ideas. The feedback is critical to maintaining and enhancing your school's preparedness. The board of education shall annually submit a report to the DESPP/DEMHS Regional Coordinator by July 1 of each year regarding types, frequency, and feedback related to the fire and crisis response drills. This report provides an opportunity to develop best practices and lessons learned. The report template is located in Appendix 14 of the plan templates. If your school district has not yet filed its report for the 2023-2024 school year, please do so as soon as possible. The 2023-2024 school year report was due by July 1, 2024. If you have any questions about how to fill out this report, please contact us at [SchoolSecurityPlanStandards@ct.gov](mailto:SchoolSecurityPlanStandards@ct.gov).

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### School Safety: Preparation, Response, and After Action

#### All Hazards School Security and Safety Plan Standards (continued)

8. A requirement that each local and regional board of education conducts a security and vulnerability assessment for each school under the jurisdiction of such board every two years and develop a plan as described in Number 4 above, based on the assessment;
9. A requirement that the safe school climate committee for each school collect and evaluate information relating to instances of disturbing or threatening behavior that may not meet the definition of bullying, and report such information, as necessary, to the district's safe school climate coordinator and the school security and safety committee described in Number 3,above (See Connecticut General Statutes Section 10-222k);
10. A requirement that the school security and safety plan for each school provide an orientation on the plan to each school employee at the school, and provide violence prevention training in a manner described in the plan. Training to the plan is critical. This training should be conducted in cooperation with the school safety and security committee, including local law enforcement, fire, emergency management, public health, and emergency medical services. This will give the school community and municipal officials an understanding of the need for unified planning, preparedness, and response;
11. A requirement that each school construct a reference kit available for first responders, which includes several copies of laminated easy-to-read floor plans; master keys to interior and exterior door locks, and; other items determined as needed, after consultation with school officials, local law enforcement authority having jurisdiction, emergency management director, and first responders; and
12. A requirement that each school security and safety plan follow the format of the All-Hazards School Security and Safety Plan Templates, as released and revised by the Division of Emergency Management and Homeland Security of the Department of Emergency Services and Public Protection, in consultation with the Department of Education, including the use of standard terminology. The purpose is to have each school plan achieve the objectives outlined in the Plan Templates. In addition to preparedness and response, it is important for the plan to provide guidance on recovery from any emergency incident. See, for example, the “Accounting for All Persons and Family Re-Unification” Annex (Functional Annex G),and “Recovery and Continuity of Operations” (COOP) Annex (Functional Annex H) in the plan templates. Also, schools can take actions to mitigate potential issues through preventative planning. See, for example, guidance provided in the “Mental Health” Annex,(Functional Annex J), in the plan templates.
13. Per Public Act 19-184, each school security and safety plan shall contain a plan to provide emergency communications developed for any student identified as deaf, hard of hearing or both blind or visually impaired and deaf, including procedures for alerting such students of an emergency situation and ensuring that the specific needs of the students are met during the emergency situation (A new annex was added to the template July 1, 2021, titled Annex M, Emergency Plan for Students with Disabilities).

**Students**

**School Safety: Preparation, Response, and After Action**

**All Hazards School Security and Safety Plan Standards** continued)

14. Per Public Act 21-92, each school security and safety plan shall contain emergency action plans for Interscholastic and Intramural Athletic Events. In July 2022, a new annex, Annex N, was added to the template to address this requirement.

Regulation approved:

cps 1/25

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The following guidance is excerpted from an opinion piece, *Doing the Nearly Impossible: Teaching When the World Delivers Fear: 9 Ways Schools Can Respond to Endless Images of Violence* (Marc Brackett, Robin Stern & Dawn Brooks-DeCosta, Education Week, January 26, 2026)

“When children are exposed to violence, especially graphic, repayable violence—their brains and bodies do what they’re designed to do: scan for danger. In that state, learning becomes secondary.”

*(While this piece was offered in response to specific troubling events, the guidance that follows is easily transferable to a range of traumatic events to which young people may be exposed.)*

The leadership task: Protect students’ nervous systems without denying their reality—and protect teachers so they aren’t carrying this alone. [The American Academy of Pediatrics’](#) guidance is clear: **Limit repeated exposure, keep conversations age-appropriate, correct misinformation, and keep checking in over time.**

### 1. Start with connection, not commentary

Students don’t need a lecture. They need a comforting signal: “You matter here. You’re not alone. We will do everything we can to keep you safe at school.”

Open class with a two-minute opt-in check-in: “Let’s share one word for how we’re feeling today; it’s also OK to pass.”

Then ask: “What questions or worries are coming up for you, if any, without sharing graphic details.” (Ask students not to replay the violence, as some may have past trauma from gun violence. For tougher conversations, involve mental health experts.)

Being seen by another and invited to say what is on your mind is often the first step back to steadiness.

### 2. Set a “no replay” norm for graphic content

Many students aren’t just hearing about traumatic events; they’re rewatching them. Create classroom or schoolwide norms about viewing violent social media posts:

- We will not show violent videos at school.
- If something upsetting shows up, tell an adult you trust. They will help you handle it.

It’s best if all students hear one message: Our school does not agree with amplifying harm by repeated exposure to violent events.

### 3. Keep it simple and stick to what’s true

After tragedies, more information isn’t always helpful. In classrooms, “simple and direct” sounds like:

- “Here’s what we know. We’ll share more as we learn more.”
- “If you hear something that scares you, bring it here. We’ll sort fact from rumor.”
- “Here’s what our school is doing today to keep everyone safe.”
- Name safety steps without making promises you can’t guarantee. (Avoid phrases like: “This will never happen here.”)

**4. Invite and welcome all feelings. Hold firm boundaries on behavior**

All feelings are welcome. Not all behaviors are:

- “It makes sense to feel scared/angry/sad. Let’s identify the adults you trust.”
- “Big feelings are OK here. We all have them. Hurting others is not.”
- “We can disagree without putting others down, threatening, or targeting.”

Warmth plus limits keeps classrooms safe without shutting students down.

**5. Offer “choice points” to restore agency**

Trauma steals choice. Connection restores it. Give students options that don’t derail instruction:

- Write instead of speaking.
- Step out for two minutes and return.
- See a counselor or social worker.
- Join a brief grounding practice—or quietly opt out.

**6. Watch for distress-and respond quickly**

Trouble coping often shows up as sleepiness, headaches or stomachaches, irritability, shutdown, conflict, appetite changes, or persistent worry. If you notice a change in behavior or shift:

- Treat it as a signal, not a character flaw or weakness.
- Ask for guidance from your support team early.
- When appropriate, encourage families to consult their pediatrician or a mental health professional.

**7. Adjust the approach by grade level**

- **Preschool-grade 2:** Keep it concrete and calming: “Something scary happened. Grown-ups are working to keep people safe.” Lean on routines and warmth.
- **Grades 3-5:** Start with what they heard, correct misinformation, and teach the power of social support. Create a “trusted adult map”: two or three adults at school they can go to when they have big feelings.
- **Middle school:** Normalize intensity and reduce shame for feeling scared. Use structures—timed turns, a pass option, written reflection first. Consider a buddy system. Help them set one media boundary for the evening, such as not using social media.
- **High school:** Name emotions—grief, outrage, helplessness—and channel them toward care. Offer prosocial pathways (e.g., schoolwide care campaigns) that build connection rather than conflict. For older students, educators can also ground this moment in history.
- For students with disabilities or developmental delays, relying on what you know helps that particular student feel safe and calm.

**8. Protect students who feel targeted-without asking them to disclose**

When immigration enforcement is part of the fear, some students may be terrified and afraid to say why. Don't put them on the spot. Say publicly and repeatedly:

- “If you’re worried about someone at home, we’ll connect you with someone who can help.”
- “Tell me as much or as little as you want. I will help you find support.”

Coordinate with administrators so the burden doesn't fall on you alone. Promise your presence only when you know you can be there.

**9. Build a “connection chain” for adults**

Teachers have big feelings, too, and can experience empathic distress when supporting students. When educators feel depleted, students feel it. Leaders can make small moves to support teacher well-being:

- A five-minute staff check-in each morning and a five-minute staff debrief before leaving.
- A shared script for tough moments so teachers aren't improvising alone.

The most important message students will learn during these hard weeks (and beyond) is not only what we say about the world, but it's also how we model being human in it.

When the outside world feels frightening or cruel, classrooms can become counterforces: places where every child experiences dignity, steadiness, and belonging. That is not politics. That is the best of education.