The Big Five

Trauma-Informed and Inclusive Practices Guidelines

Safety Drills, Lesson Plans, and Student Emergency Response Plans



Coalition for Safe Schools & Communities

SAN MATEO COUNTY OFFICE OF EDUCATION

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OVERVIEW

Emergencies can trigger past traumatic experiences or create new ones. Without a trauma-informed approach that is inclusive of all students, preparedness efforts may unintentionally heighten fear, anxiety, and distress. By recognizing the physical, emotional, and psychological needs of students and staff, schools can foster a sense of safety, trust, and empowerment, ultimately leading to more effective emergency responses and a more resilient school community. By integrating trauma-informed practices with The Big Five, schools can increase safety and promote a supportive, inclusive environment that nurtures resilience in both students and staff.

This guide builds upon The Big Five Administrator and Staff Packets, with an emphasis on how to **effectively communicate and engage with students** through the following strategies:

- Trauma-Informed Practices
- Trauma-Informed Safety Drills
- Developmentally Appropriate Lesson Plans
- Inclusive Practices
- Student Emergency Response Plans
- Student Comfort Bags

Students' reactions to emergencies will vary widely depending on their **developmental, cognitive, emotional, and physical profiles**. It is essential to:

- Reassure students that it is normal to feel afraid, sad, angry, or worried during emergencies.
- Create space for them to express these emotions in age-appropriate ways.
- Provide materials, tools, and support for all students to safely respond to all emergencies.

Collaboration with families is a vital step in preparing for drills and incidents. By engaging parents and caregivers, schools can better understand each student's past experiences, coping strategies, and support needs.

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TRAUMA-INFORMED APPROACHES

To minimize detrimental mental health impacts on students and staff, school leaders are asked to use trauma-informed approaches when practicing and implementing The Big Five protocols. The following table provides grade-appropriate guidance for supporting students during the preparation, response, and recovery phases of emergency planning and/or incidents.

	Preparedness	Response	Recovery
All Grades	**Staff:** Train all staff on procedures Use the phrase "safety drills" when conducting training **Students:** Practice grounding and calming skills with students **Parents/Guardians:** Educate parents on protocols Inform parents of safety drills in advance	**Staff:** Remain calm Model calm confidence. Students take their cues from adults **Students:** Students practice their calming skills during training **Parents/Guardians:** Provide communication to families in their home language	Engage students in a movement or reflective activity Notice students who may be experiencing anxiety/fear. Check in personally with any students of concern and inform counselors or parents as needed.
Pre-K to Kinder *Developmental Considerations:* Students require adult guidance to determine what action to take Engage in social stories with students instead of simulated safety drills No prior knowledge of The Big Five or emergency response actions	**Students:** Use The Big Five posters as a visual tool Use *Think-on-Your-Feet Peet* books to help students learn and prepare for emergency safety drills and responses	**Staff:** Act with confidence Use age-appropriate language **Students:** Allow/encourage students to hold a calming item (stuffed animal, book, small toy)	Praise students for what they did well during the safety drill Reinforce the concept that preparedness is key to overall school safety

TRAUMA-INFORMED APPROACHES

	Preparedness	Response	Recovery
1st Grade to 5th Grade *Developmental Considerations:* Students can understand safety directions and instructions Students are capable of understanding the purpose of safety safety drills Teachers/leaders engage in social stories with students instead of simulated safety drills	**Students:** Use The Big Five posters as a visual tool Use *Think-on-Your-Feet Peet* and related curriculum to help students prepare and learn **Parents/Guardians:** Encourage families to discuss The Big Five Protocols and emergency preparedness at home using *Think-on-Your-Feet Peet*	**Staff:** Give clear instructions and follow protocol **Students:** If needed, allow students to hold a calming item (stuffed animal, book, small toy)	Identify how the class worked well together Give students time to ask questions Reiterate that safety drills help us stay safe Move back into learning when class is ready
6th Grade to 8th Grade *Developmental Considerations:* Students are capable of understanding purpose of safety safety drills Students benefit from adult direction but are able to perform The Big Five actions independently Review prior knowledge of The Big Five protocols	**Staff:** Clearly post The Big Five Protocols in each classroom **Parents/Guardians:** Encourage families to discuss The Big Five Protocols and emergency preparedness at home	**Staff:** Give clear instructions and follow protocol Emphasize cooperation as a class **Students:** Assign students to perform action steps during the incident	Acknowledge students who performed specific tasks and identify how the class worked well together Give students time to ask questions Reiterate that safety drills help us stay safe Move back into learning when class is ready
9th Grade to 12th Grade *Developmental Considerations:* Students are able to identify potential dangers confronting a school Students benefit from adult direction, but are able to perform The Big Five actions independently in an emergency	**Staff:** Clearly post The Big Five Protocol in classroom **Students:** Have students discuss what to expect during a safety drill or incident Assign students specific roles and have them walk through those actions	**Staff:** Give clear instructions and follow protocol **Students:** Assign students to perform specific action steps during the safety drill or incident	Spend time debriefing the safety drill or incident with the class Allow students to ask questions Identify how the class worked well together Move back into learning when class is ready

TRAUMA-INFORMED APPROACHES

TRAUMA-INFORMED SAFETY DRILLS

It is essential for school and district staff to conduct safety drills and engage in various preparedness exercises. Exercises should occur on a regular basis and meet California Education Code Requirements. The Big Five utilizes a graduated approach to safety drills and encourages developmentally appropriate practice and lesson plans with students, based on grade level and ability.

Types of Safety Drills and Exercises

- Orientation Seminar: Introduces The Big Five Emergency Response Protocols to students and allows for discussion and clarifying questions
- Tabletop Exercises: Simulates an emergency situation in an informal, trauma-informed way to elicit discussion and questions
  - Tabletop Exercises are included in the Middle School and High School Lockdown/ Barricade Lesson Plans
- Safety Drill: Simulates an incident in a limited scope, tests the function of the emergency plan, initiates an informal discussion of simulated emergencies
  - Safety Drills are required by California Education Code 32001
  - Drop, Cover, and Hold On drills (Earthquake) are required once quarterly in elementary schools; once each semester in secondary schools
  - Evacuation drills (Fire Drills) are required monthly in elementary schools and middle schools and twice yearly in secondary schools
  - An Evacuation drill (Fire Drill) must be completed within 10 days of the start of the school year
- Functional Exercise: Simulates a real emergency under time-sensitive conditions, tests and measures seldom-used resources
  - Includes a Student Release Exercise, including staff, students, parents, law enforcement, and fire department participation
  - Lockdown/Barricade Functional Exercise with students is not trauma-informed and is not recommended
- Full-Scale Exercise: Tests an entire community's response capability, uses real equipment, and takes place in "real time"
  - Lockdown/Barricade Full Scale Exercise with students is not trauma-informed and is not recommended
  - If conducting a Lockdown/Barricade drill with students, compliance with Ed. Code 32282(K) is required

TRAUMA-INFORMED APPROACHES

Consideration for Trauma-Informed Safety Drills

- Conduct Lockdown/Barricade safety drills only with adult staff when students are not present
- Consider conducting a tabletop exercise with adult staff
- Always announce safety drills in advance to prepare all participants. "Surprise" safety drills can cause unnecessary panic
- Prioritize the most serious gaps and focus on the specific objectives
- Because children are sensitive to adult behavior, staff should be trained to exhibit confidence and remain calm during safety drills
- Make sure the school team is ready for the type of safety drill planned
- Allow enough time for the exercise
- Gradually increase the sophistication of exercises over time, but do not add unnecessary complications
- Adults should monitor students during the safety drill for signs of emotional distress and provide support as needed
- Evaluate every exercise and conduct a debrief with staff and students

DEVELOPMENTALLY APPROPRIATE UNDERSTANDING OF THE BIG FIVE

To ensure emergency procedures are accessible, supportive, and effective for all students, it is essential to align expectations for understanding The Big Five Immediate Action Response Protocol with each student's grade level and developmental capabilities. The suggested learning objectives below are designed to be flexible and can be adapted to meet the unique needs of all learners.

Early Awareness (Preschool to Kindergarten)

- Demonstrates a general understanding of danger.
- Heavily reliant upon direction from school staff during an emergency.
- Capable of knowing what The Big Five Immediate Action Responses are.
- Capable of understanding the concept of "Lockdown/Barricade" as demonstrated in Think-on-Your-Feet Peet and the Slimeville Monsters.

Developing Awareness (Early Elementary 1st to 3rd Grade)

- Demonstrates the characteristics of Early Awareness.
- Understand the basic steps to take for all The Big Five Immediate Action Emergency Responses (recognizes The Big Five Poster, and knows what each response is for).
- Capable of providing basic assistance in an emergency (turning off classroom lights, retrieving the first aid kit, or closing blinds at the command of school staff).

Practiced Awareness (Upper Elementary 4th to 5th Grade)

- Demonstrates the characteristics of Developing Awareness.
- Capable of assisting staff in a Lockdown/Barricade, such as closing a door, moving furniture, helping to barricade an entry, or calling 911 at the command of staff.
- Ability to assist in Evacuation as a line leader, or when assigned specific roles.
- Understands the concept of Think-on-Your-Feet and has a general grasp on where to "Escape" and when/where to "Hide" during a Lockdown/Barricade.

Proficient Awareness (Intermediate to Middle School 6th-8th)

- Demonstrates the characteristics of Practiced Awareness.
- Ability to determine which of The Big Five Immediate Action Responses is needed in an emergency situation.
- Capable of performing The Big Five Immediate Action steps independently in an emergency without staff command or direction.
- May or may not understand completely Think-on-Your-Feet, including "Protect/Defend" if necessary.

DEVELOPMENTALLY APPROPRIATE UNDERSTANDING OF THE BIG FIVE

Independent Awareness (High School)

- Demonstrates the characteristics of Proficient Awareness.
- Fully understands the concept of Think-on-Your-Feet and the action of "Protect/Defend" if necessary.
- Demonstrates the ability to independently apply and adapt The Big Five Immediate Action Responses on and off the school campus during an emergency.

TRAUMA-INFORMED LESSON PLANS: LOCKDOWN/BARRICADE

The Big Five Lesson Plan for Lockdown/Barricade helps students understand the Think-on-Your-Feet concept and the immediate actions taken during a Lockdown/Barricade in a trauma-informed and developmentally appropriate way. Lesson plans take between 15-30 minutes for each grade level and have corresponding activities, vocabulary words, and visual aids, including the Think-on-Your-Feet Peet and the Slimeville Monsters book for TK-5th grade students. Visual aids, activity books, and digital Think-on-Your-Feet Peet and the Slimeville Monsters books can be found on the San Mateo County Office of Education website.

TK-3rd Grade Lesson Plan

- Introduces The Big Five and what to do in a Lockdown/Barricade
- Helps students learn about The Big Five Immediate Action Emergency Response Protocol in a developmentally appropriate and trauma-informed way.
- Takes the place of a traditional Lockdown drill.

Materials:

- *Think-on-Your-Feet Peet and the Slimeville Monsters* Book (English and Spanish)
- TOYFP Activity Pages
- TOYFP Lesson Plan/Slide Deck

4th Grade-5th Grade Lesson Plan

- Provides an overview of The Big Five and Immediate Action Response of Lockdown/Barricade
- Helps students learn about The Big Five Emergency Response Protocol in a developmentally appropriate and trauma-informed way
- Builds on lessons students may have received from TK-3rd grade
- Takes the place of a traditional Lockdown drill

Materials:

- *Think-on-Your-Feet Peet and the Slimeville Monsters* Physical and Digital Book (Spanish & English)
- TOYFP: Lockdown/Barricade Lesson Plan Slide Deck
- The Big Five Classroom Posters

Middle School Lesson Plan

- Provides an overview of The Big Five and the Immediate Action Response of Lockdown/Barricade.
- Emphasizes the concepts of Think-on-Your-Feet and Situational Awareness
- Reviews action-based options for an intruder on campus
- Requires students to move around the classroom to practice the actions in a Lockdown/Barricade Incident
- Takes the place of a traditional Lockdown drill

TRAUMA-INFORMED LESSON PLANS: LOCKDOWN/BARRICADE

Materials:

- ☐ TOYFP: Lockdown Barricade Lesson Plan Slide Deck Middle
- ☐ The Big Five Classroom Posters

High School Lesson Plan

- Provides an overview of The Big Five and the Immediate Action Response of Lockdown/Barricade. Emphasizes the concepts of Think-on-Your-Feet and situational awareness
- Reviews action-based options for an intruder on campus
- Requires students to move around the classroom to practice the actions in a Lockdown/Barricade incident
- Takes the place of a traditional lockdown drill

Materials:

- ☐ Lockdown/Barricade Lesson Plan Slide Deck
- ☐ The Big Five Classroom Posters

INCLUSIVE PRACTICES

This section outlines inclusive strategies to support students with ambulatory, cognitive, developmental, sensory, and mental health needs during emergency incidents or safety drills. It is essential for staff to demonstrate both confidence and competence in these situations. The following guidance helps staff prepare to accommodate all students' needs, educate students with disabilities on The Big Five Immediate Action Response Protocols, and consider specific supports required during both drills and actual emergencies.

Inclusive Preparedness Considerations with Students and Families

- Procurement of relevant adaptive equipment and/or vehicles to facilitate safe transport (wheelchairs, sleds, stair chairs, etc.)
- Provide The Big Five materials (community packets, The Big Five wall posters) translated into preferred languages for students and families
- Explain expectations and outcomes in a developmentally appropriate way (using storyboards, social narratives, The Big Five books, or Picture Exchange Systems, etc.)
- Ensure students are provided information regarding emergency response protocols through verbal/ auditory learning or visual aids when needed.
- Provide The Big Five materials (Community Packets, The Big Five Posters, Parent Night Slide Decks) at parent information nights and community events
- Identify the stressors/triggers for students (e.g. noise, chaotic environment, change in schedule, items out of place, hiding in locations, etc.) and address this in the Student Emergency Response Plan
- Dedicated meeting or dedicated time during an existing meeting with teacher/staff supporting students with special needs to discuss considerations, challenges, and successes
    - Individual meetings with students and families to complete the Student Emergency Response Plan
    - Review the checklist for the Student Comfort Bag with the students and families
    - Encourage families to provide Student Comfort Bags for students that need them

Inclusive Preparedness Considerations with Staff

- Additional staff trainings
    - Staff training with adaptive equipment
    - Staff training with the required medical equipment
    - Staff training in alternative/augmentative communication tools
    - Training for designated staff/personnel assigned to individuals at risk of elopement/wandering or with difficulty enacting lockdown
- Scheduling time in staff meetings to discuss inclusive practices and considerations
- Opportunities for emergency responders to meet with staff and students with SERPs

  - Additional opportunities for assigned support staff and emergency responders to practice safety drills
- Discuss varying safety drill times for therapeutic day school/special day classes/specialized classes at first, building up to participation in the whole school safety drill

Inclusive Response Considerations with Students

- If students use American Sign Language, PECS (Picture Exchange Communication System), tablets, or GoTalk for communication, use these for instructional commands during the incident
- Use visual signals in conjunction with verbal commands (classroom signage, The Big Five Posters, desk-sized visual aids, lighted or vibrating alert systems, or American Sign Language)
- Flash lights on and off to secure the student's attention after an announcement or when a fire alarm is activated
- Students on crutches, canes, or walkers should be evacuated as injured persons
  - Use a sturdy chair or one with wheels to move the student or help carry the person to the evacuation location
  - Give priority assistance to wheelchair users
  - Accompany students to the evacuation site and reunite with their ambulatory equipment as soon as it is safe to do so
- Use the student's reward/reinforcement systems to promote participation and following directions
- Allow use of self-soothing behaviors, such as fidgeting or placing hands in their pockets or hair
- Speak slowly, whisper commands, and avoid physical contact between others during safety drills and incidents if able to do so
- Provide earplugs/noise-canceling headphones to decrease sensory input
- Provide calming activities and soothing objects for students to hold (stuffed animal, stress ball, fidget spinner, etc.)

Inclusive Recovery Considerations with Students and Families

- After a safety drill or an emergency incident, spend time debriefing what happened and what went well with students
- Allow students to ask questions and talk about how they are feeling and what they think went well and didn't
- Only move back to instruction when the class is ready
- Debrief all safety drills and emergency incidents during a staff meeting; Identify areas of improvement, and materials/upgrades needed to be more inclusive
- Be aware of students who may be vulnerable to stress or trauma
- Identify and refer students exhibiting anxiety, fear, or stress after the safety drill or event to the school counselor
- Contact students' parents if there is a concern regarding the impact of the safety drill or emergency incident on the student; offer resources to the family
- Consider creating a Student Emergency Response Plan (SERP) for students exhibiting anxiety, fear, or stress.

INCLUSIVE PRACTICES

- Take inventory of/and replace any supplies from the Emergency Response Box or Classroom Go Bags that were used during the safety drill or emergency incident
- Communicate with families the outcome of safety drill or emergency incident and any important next steps they may need to know.
- For an emergency incident, provide families access to resources and information through the recovery process. Use the Emergency Communication Guide and Templates.

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STUDENT EMERGENCY RESPONSE PLANS

The Student Emergency Response Plan (SERP) should be created in collaboration with the student (when appropriate), the student's family, and members of the student's school team. Each plan should address the individual needs in each support category and highlight any needs related to a specific The Big Five Action.

Student Emergency Response Plan Considerations

- Use the SERP Planning Worksheet to determine the following for each of The Big Five Immediate Action Responses:
  - Potential barriers (Physical, Procedural, Behavioral, Communication)
  - Equipment, technology, and/or material supports required
  - Person responsible for assisting students
  - Training needs for staff
- Include supports needed for specific Hazard Response Protocols
- Include the following categories of support
  - Transportation and mobility
  - Emotional, mental, and behavioral health
  - Auxiliary communication
  - Medical health
  - Security and supervision
- Discuss the need for a Student Comfort Bag and what should go in it
- Communicate with the student's school team and other important school site staff about the contents of the finalized plan
- Provide a copy of the SERP to the student, family, and members of the student's school team
- Review plans annually, as students' needs change, and/or after an emergency incident occurs
- Adjust the plan and supports as needed

STUDENT EMERGENCY RESPONSE PLANS

STUDENT EMERGENCY RESPONSE PLAN EXAMPLE

BIG FIVE RESPONSE	SUPPORT CATEGORY	POTENTIAL BARRIERS	EQUIPMENT, TECHNOLOGY, AND/OR MATERIAL SUPPORTS	PERSON RESPONSIBLE FOR ASSISTING STUDENT	TRAINING NEEDS FOR STAFF
EVACUATION	Transportation and mobility	Difficulty using stairs or long walking distances	Evacuation chair; buddy system; wheelchair-accessible routes	Assigned evacuation buddy; safety team leader	Evacuation procedures for mobility-impaired students
	Emotional, mental, and behavioral health	Student may freeze, hide, or panic	Visual schedule of steps; calming fidget tools; pre-evacuation practice	Classroom teacher or mental health professional	Role-playing evacuations; recognizing signs of panic
	Auxiliary communication	Difficulty hearing alarms or processing verbal directions	Vibrating alarm; visual strobe alarm; pre-recorded directions via tablet	Classroom aide	Alternative communication strategies during emergencies
	Medical needs	Needs regular monitoring or emergency medical support (e.g. diabetes)	Emergency medical go-bag; list of medical protocols with evacuation folder	School nurse or trained aide	Health procedures during movement or outdoor holding areas
	Security and supervision	May separate from group, not respond to name	Bright vest or wristband; designated adult to maintain visual contact	Behavior support aide or teacher	Student-specific supervision plans, group accountability strategies

STUDENT EMERGENCY RESPONSE PLAN PLANNING DOCUMENT

Use the table below to determine which Big Five Immediate Action Responses require additional support for the student. Determine potential barriers that currently exist or could exist during a safety drill or emergency incident. Then strategize what type of equipment, technology or materials could mitigate the barrier. Finally, determine who should be responsible for assisting the student and what type of specific training is required to prepare that staff person to assist the student.

BIG FIVE RESPONSE	SUPPORT CATEGORY	POTENTIAL BARRIERS *Physical, Procedural, Behavioral, Communication*	EQUIPMENT, TECHNOLOGY, AND/OR MATERIAL SUPPORTS	PERSON RESPONSIBLE FOR ASSISTING STUDENT	TRAINING NEEDS FOR STAFF
SHELTER IN PLACE	Transportation and Mobility				
	Emotional, mental, and behavioral health				
	Auxiliary				
	Medical Needs				
	Security and Supervision				
DROP, COVER, AND HOLD ON	Transportation and Mobility				
	Emotional, mental, and behavioral health				
	Auxiliary				
	Medical Needs				
	Security and Supervision				

BIG FIVE RESPONSE	SUPPORT CATEGORY	POTENTIAL BARRIERS *Physical, Procedural, Behavioral, Communication*	EQUIPMENT, TECHNOLOGY, AND/OR MATERIAL SUPPORTS	PERSON RESPONSIBLE FOR ASSISTING STUDENT	TRAINING NEEDS FOR STAFF
SECURE CAMPUS	Transportation and Mobility				
	Emotional, mental, and behavioral health				
	Auxiliary				
	Medical Needs				
	Security and Supervision				
LOCKDOWN BARRICADE	Transportation and Mobility				
	Emotional, mental, and behavioral health				
	Auxiliary				
	Medical Needs				
	Security and Supervision				

BIG FIVE RESPONSE	SUPPORT CATEGORY	POTENTIAL BARRIERS *Physical, Procedural, Behavioral, Communication*	EQUIPMENT, TECHNOLOGY, AND/OR MATERIAL SUPPORTS	PERSON RESPONSIBLE FOR ASSISTING STUDENT	TRAINING NEEDS FOR STAFF
EVACUATION	Transportation and Mobility				
	Emotional, mental, and behavioral health				
	Auxiliary				
	Medical Needs				
	Security and Supervision				
HAZARD	Transportation and Mobility				
	Emotional, mental, and behavioral health				
	Auxiliary				
	Medical Needs				
	Security and Supervision				

STUDENT EMERGENCY RESPONSE PLAN

The Student Emergency Response Plan (SERP) should be created in collaboration with the student (when appropriate), the student's family, and members of the student's school team. Each plan should address the individual needs in each support category and highlight any needs related to a specific The Big Five Action.

School Year Plan is Effective For: _____ School: _____

Name of Student: _____ Grade: _____

Gender: _____ Language: _____

Parent/Caregiver Name: _____

Primary Language: _____

Parent/Caregiver Contact: (email_)_____ (phone) _____

Parent/Caregiver Name: _____

Primary Language: _____

Parent/Caregiver Contact: (email_)_____ (phone) _____

Emergency Contact #1: _____ Phone: _____

Emergency Contact #2: _____ Phone: _____

Does the Student have an IEP: Yes ___ No ___ Does the Student have a 504 Plan: Yes ___ No ___

Identified educational disabilities/special needs:

Identified medical disabilities, conditions, impairments or injuries:

Is the student able to independently navigate the physical facilities? Yes ___ No ___

Is the student able to follow procedures? (Are they able to comprehend emergency alerts? Are they able to self-evacuate at this school site?) Yes ___ No ___

Explain: _____

Is this student able to communicate effectively in an emergency (Do they use an alternative or augmentative communication method?) Yes ___ No ___

Explain: _____

Does the student's preferred language pose a barrier for communication at the school site? Yes ___ No ___

Explain: _____

School Personnel responsible for the coordination and implementation of this plan:

_____

Back Up School Personnel: _____

Number of Adults needed for assistance during emergency evacuation: _____

Would the student benefit from a Student Comfort Bag? Yes ___ Not Needed ___

Student Comfort Bag Contents:

BIG FIVE IMMEDIATE ACTION	SUPPORT CATEGORY	ACTION ITEMS	PERSON(S) RESPONSIBLE
SHELTER IN PLACE	Transportation and Mobility		
	Emotional, mental, and behavioral health		
	Auxiliary Communication		
	Medical Needs		
	Security and Supervision		
DROP, COVER, AND HOLD ON	Transportation and Mobility		
	Emotional, mental, and behavioral health		
	Auxiliary Communication		
	Medical Needs		
	Security and Supervision		

BIG FIVE IMMEDIATE ACTION	SUPPORT CATEGORY	ACTION ITEMS	PERSON(S) RESPONSIBLE
EVACUATION	Transportation and Mobility		
	Emotional, mental, and behavioral health		
	Auxiliary Communication		
	Medical Needs		
	Security and Supervision		
HAZARD	Transportation and Mobility		
	Emotional, mental, and behavioral health		
	Auxiliary Communication		
	Medical Needs		
	Security and Supervision		

Plan review and approval:

Name	Relation to Student

Date reviewed with Student & Parent/Caregiver: _____

Date Reviewed with School Team: _____

STUDENT COMFORT BAG

Students will have varying needs during a safety drill and especially during an emergency incident. Oftentimes, what is needed most is for the student to have access to comforting objects or personal objects that can help mitigate some of the emotional, psychological, or sensory impact that a safety drill or emergency incident can produce. A Student Comfort Bag can be a helpful tool to have in the classroom. Schools can choose to provide Student Comfort Bags to all students or individual students based on their needs.

Student Comfort Bag Considerations

- As a school or district, decide whether all students or individual students, based on their needs, have access to Student Comfort Bags
- Decide on distributing Student Comfort Bags and the contents to students, or having students bring in a bag and the contents from home
- Consider using drawstring backpacks, gallon-size plastic bags, or small tote bags
- Write the student's name using tape on the bag so it can be reused next year by a different student
- Decide the best location in the classroom to stage the bags, so that students can quickly grab them during an emergency incident or safety drill
- Each student should be responsible for their own Student Comfort Bag, as the classroom teacher will be transporting the Classroom Go-Bag

Discuss what would be helpful to have in the Student Comfort Bags when creating the Student Emergency Response Plan. Work with the family and school teams to establish a list of what is needed for students with special needs. If providing bags for all students, have students and/or their families pick a few items that would be helpful during a safety drill or emergency incident.

Possible Comfort Items to Include

- Allergy-safe snack/preferred snack/sugar free lollipops
- Additional batteries for devices/equipment needed by the student
- Device/board for communication and its charger
- Special medical equipment (if able to fit in the bag)
- Fidget toys, sensory balls, pipe cleaners, or putty
- Earplugs or noise-cancelling headphones
- Sunglasses/sun protection
- Weighted vest or blanket
- Stuffed animal, a book to read, or a small coloring book with crayons
- A picture or drawing of someone they admire or think is brave

STUDENT COMFORT BAG

- Photo of their family, pet, or someone they love
- A copy of the student's emergency contacts
- Teacher will be transporting the Classroom Go-Bag

RESOURCES

Safe and Sound Schools: A Sandy Hook Initiative; Especially Safe: An Inclusive Approach to Safety Preparedness in Educational Settings, Planning and Preparation Guide and Teaching and Training Guide; https://www.safeandsoundschools.org/especially-safe