

Peekskill
City School District

*District
Comprehensive
Safety Plan*

2014-2015



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POLICY STATEMENT

The District Emergency Response Plan (as required by the SAVE Law – Safe Schools Against Violence in Education – Commissioner of Education Regulation 155.17) has been established to provide for the safety, health and security of both students and staff and allows for input from the entire school community. This particular component of Project SAVE is a comprehensive planning effort that addresses risk reduction/prevention, response and recovery with respect to a variety of emergencies which may occur in the school district and its component school buildings.

The Board of Education has appointed, under the direction of the Superintendent of Schools, a District-Wide Safety Team to develop, implement and maintain all provisions of the Plan. After at least one public meeting, this plan was adopted by the School Board on October 6, 2009. This Plan incorporates all School Building Emergency Response Plans that have been developed by the Building Level School Safety Teams appointed by the Building Principals. In the event of an emergency or violent incident, the initial response at an individual school building will be the responsibility of the School Building Emergency Response Team. Upon activation of the School Building Emergency Response Team the Superintendent of Schools or designee and appropriate local emergency response officials will be notified. The nature of any given emergency will dictate the degree of interaction with both State and Local Emergency Response Agencies. The local BOCES Health & Safety Office will assist in development of protocols for accessing these services.

The Plan was made available for public comment 30 days prior to its adoption and provided for participation of the entire school community. The District-Wide and Building-Level Plans were formally adopted by the School Board after at least one public hearing. It is reviewed annually by July 1 of each school year. Building-Level Emergency Response Plans are provided to both Local and State agencies.

The school district refuses to tolerate violence or threats of violence on school grounds or buses and, by implementation of this Plan, will make every effort to prevent violent incidents from occurring. We will provide the appropriate authority and budgetary resources in support of this effort. Violence prevention is the responsibility of the entire school community and we encourage participation of all individuals. Our Plan requires the prompt reporting of all violent incidents or threats and assures that victims or reporters of incidents of violence will not be discriminated against.

A copy of the District-Wide Plan is available on the school district web site. The Building-Level Emergency Response Plans are linked to the District-Wide Safety Plan, in accordance with Education Law Section 2801-a, the Building-Level Plan will remain confidential and not be subject to disclosure.

OVERVIEW OF DISTRICT SAFETY TEAMS

Following is a brief overview of the Safety and Emergency Response Teams that service the Peekskill City School District. Please read the entire plan text for complete descriptions and responsibilities.

District-Wide Safety Team: This team consists of a cross-section of the school district community including a School Board Member, Parent, Teacher, Student and Administrator. They are responsible to assess the vulnerability of the school district to violence and recommend preventative actions, and to audit and maintain the **District Comprehensive Safety Plan**.

District-Wide Emergency Response Team: This team Consists of the Supt. of School, Asst. Supt. for Business, Asst. Supt. for Administrative Services, Asst. Supts. For Elementary and Secondary Education, Dir. of Special Services, Dir. of Facilities, Director of Security, Transportation Supervisor and others as deemed necessary. They are responsible to respond to District Emergencies and to assist the **Building-Level Teams** as necessary, in accordance with this plan.

District Crisis Team: Acting under the direction of the Office of Pupil & Personnel Services, this team includes office staff and other medical & mental health professionals, as deemed necessary. They are charged with offering mental health and other support services in times of crisis. They are responsible to assist the **Building-Level Post-Incident Response Team**. If necessary the District Crisis Team may seek additional support service through Putnam/Northern Westchester BOCES Regional Crisis Team Response Process. See Appendix E.

Building-Level School Safety Team: This team includes the Principal, Ass't. Principal, Administrator, Teachers, PTO, Safety Officer, and others as deemed necessary. This team is charged with the development, implementation and maintenance of the **Building-Level Emergency Response Plan**. They work closely with the District-Wide Safety Team to ensure that all practices and procedures remain current and are effective.

Building-Level Emergency Response Team: This Team will generally be a small group of less than five individuals who have critical functions in the building. The Team is usually a subset of the **Building Level Safety Team** and will include the Building Principal, Assistant Principal, School Nurse, and Senior Custodian at a minimum, and others as deemed necessary.

Building-Level Crisis Team: This team consists of the School Nurse, Psychologist, Mental Health Counselors and other appropriate school personnel. They will be available for post-incident response to medical and psychological needs. Buildings without such sufficient resources will utilize the District Crisis Team.

District Wide Teams

Participants in District-Wide Safety Team

The District-Wide Safety Team will always include the following representation at a minimum:

- School Board Member
- Teacher Representative
- Administrator
- Parent/Teacher Organization
- School Safety Personnel
- Director of Facilities
- Transportation Supervisor
- Police
- O.E.M.

Responsibilities of the District-Wide Safety Team

The District-Wide Safety Team will act as a Threat Assessment Team with the responsibility to assess the vulnerability of the school district to violence and recommend to the Superintendent and School Board preventive actions that they feel are necessary. The Team will meet on a regular basis and minutes of each meeting will be kept. An agenda will be established prior to each meeting. The Team will maintain responsibility for auditing the Comprehensive Safety Plan to determine its success in violence prevention. Some of the team's primary responsibilities will include:

1. Recommending training programs for students and staff in violence prevention.
2. Dissemination of information regarding early detection of potentially violent behavior.
3. Developing response plans to acts of violence.
4. Communicating the Plan to students and staff.
5. Reviewing previous incidents of violence and examining existing records to identify patterns and trends that may indicate causes of violence (OSHA 200 Logs; Incident Logs; Worker Compensation Reports; Police Reports; Accident Investigations; Grievances, etc.).
6. Making recommendations necessary for change.
7. Arranging for annual security analysis including the inspection of all buildings to evaluate the potential for violence. Possible evaluators include County and Local Police Departments, consultants or District-Wide Safety Team Sub-Committee or Building-Level Team.
8. Recommending improved security measures based on school building inspection results.
9. Conducting annual school building survey of students and staff to identify the potential for violent incidents.
10. Reviewing survey results and recommending actions that are necessary.

District-Wide Emergency Response Team

The District-Wide Emergency Response Team will always include the following representation at a minimum:

- Superintendent Incident Commander
- Assistant Superintendent for Business Back-up Incident Commander
- Assistant Superintendent for Administrative Services Back-up Incident Commander
- Assistant Superintendent for Elementary Education Back-up Incident Commander
- Assistant Superintendent for Secondary Education Back-up Incident Commander
- Director of Security Safety Officer
- Assistant to the Superintendent Recorder
- Dir. of Facilities /Athletic Director Operations
- Superintendent & Public Relations Consultant Public Information Officer
- Director of Technology Communications
- CSE/CPSE Chairperson Student Services
- Director of Special Services Staff Services
- Director of Special Services Parent Services
- Dir. of Facilities /Maint. Foreman Facilities
- Transportation Super./Secretary to Asst. Supt. Business Transportation

Responsibilities of the District-Wide Emergency Response Team

The District Wide Emergency Response Team is responsible to respond to District Emergencies and to assist the Building Level School Safety Teams as necessary, in accordance with this plan.

District Crisis Team

The District Crisis Team will act at the Direction of the Office of Pupil Personnel Services to offer Mental Health and other support services.

RISK REDUCTION/PREVENTION AND INTERVENTION STRATEGIES

Program initiatives include:

1. Non-violent conflict resolution training programs.
2. Peer mediation programs.
3. Extended day and other school safety programs.
4. Mentors for students concerned with bullying/violence.
5. We have established an anonymous reporting process for school violence.
6. As part of the process of exercising emergency plans (lockdown, sheltering, evacuation, etc.) all students are educated on the reasons for testing emergency plans and are given an opportunity to ask questions. Specific training is provided on how to respond to emergency situations.
7. We have implemented *PBIS* (Positive Behavior Intervention System).
8. SAVE room for alternate education

TRAINING, DRILLS AND EXERCISES

The best way to train students and staff on emergency response procedures is through annual drills and exercises in each school building. Based on the determination of the District-wide School Safety Team and the Building-Level School Safety Team, at a minimum, the following methods may be used:

- Early Go-home drill
- Live drill including sheltering, evacuation, or lock-down
- Live drill for specific responses (hostage taking, bomb-threat, etc.)
- Table top exercises
- Emergency Response Team exercises
- Building pre-clearance searches

The school district recognizes that critical evaluation of drills and exercises is the best learning experience and results in improved response procedures. As a result, the district will invite local agencies to participate in and to help evaluate all exercises. These agencies may include but not be limited to the Police and Fire Departments, Rescue and Ambulance Services, Local Office of Emergency Management and the local BOCES Health & Safety Office. At least one exercise will occur in each school building every school year.

IMPLEMENTATION OF SCHOOL SECURITY

School safety personnel will help carry out the School District Comprehensive Safety Plan and may include anyone in the school community. These individuals have received appropriate annual training as required under the Regulation. Such training has been conducted in cooperation with the Police Department.

Appropriate school building security measures and procedures have been determined by the District-Wide School Safety Team and Building-Level School Safety Team after review of school building procedures and practices, security surveys, and building-level occupant surveys. Based on these findings we have or plan to implement the following security measures:

- The School District has had a security assessment of all school buildings conducted by experts.
- Each building, as a part of developing the Building-Level Emergency Response Plan, examines specific security needs for their building.
- **There is a single point of entry at all buildings for visitors.**
- Visitors are vetted before being allowed into the building and must provide valid identification. Identification is then scanned through the Raptor System Sexual Offender Database and once cleared a badge is printed and placed on a red visitor lanyard which must be worn while in the building. Upon leaving the badge must be returned.
- All Facilities have walkie-talkies for two-way communication, which allows for immediate communication in a emergency situation.
- School personnel are encouraged to greet strangers and direct them to sign in if they have not and report any visitors who have not signed in to the security personnel on duty.
- Video surveillance/closed-circuit TV is use in some areas within the district.
- Random searches may be considered if deemed necessary.
- We will employ any other methods deemed necessary and constantly review our current practices.
- The hiring and screening of all staff is in accordance with District policies and in conformance with SAVE legislation.

VITAL EDUCATIONAL AGENCY INFORMATION

Each Building Response Plan will contain vital information such as school population, number of staff, transportation needs and telephone numbers of key educational officials.

EARLY DETECTION OF POTENTIALLY VIOLENT BEHAVIOR

The District-Wide Safety Team will make recommendations for appropriate annual training for students and staff in violence prevention. Training will include early warning signs of potentially violent behavior and early intervention/prevention strategies. Training will be conducted by in-house staff, local agencies or others as deemed appropriate. Training for students and staff will be conducted annually and include:

- An explanation of what constitutes school violence and a description of the school Code of Conduct. Written information on early detection of potentially violent behavior and a summary of the Code of Conduct.
- A description of the school district's Violence Prevention Program and Safety Plan.
- Information on how to report incidents of violence including threats and verbal abuse.
- How to recognize and respond to school security hazards.
- Review of measures implemented to prevent school violence such as use of security equipment and safety procedures and how to diffuse hostile situations.
- How to summon assistance in the event of an emergency.
- Special procedures for bomb threats, hostage-taking, intrusions and kidnapping.

- Post-incident procedures including medical follow-up and the availability of counseling and referral.

Other methods for informing parents and students may include:

- Parent Resource Center
- Gang awareness programs
- School social worker outreach.
- School counselor involvement.
- Mailings to parents on violence prevention and early recognition.
- Conflict resolution programs.

Records will be maintained of all participants along with their evaluation of the training program. Trainers will be knowledgeable and familiar with our District Comprehensive Safety Plan.

HAZARD IDENTIFICATION

As part of each Building-Level Emergency Response Plan, each Building-Level School Safety Team will determine sites of potential emergencies that may impact the individual school building. Such sites may include but not be limited to all school buildings, playground areas, and properties adjacent to schools, off-site athletic fields, buses and off-site field trips.

Faculty and staff will conduct a daily inspection of their classrooms, specialty rooms, playground, athletic fields, and/or office areas to identify, evaluate, and if needed control any potential hazards associated with their work area. All concerns should be forwarded to a member of the faculty's safety committee for further reviews. If necessary, the building principal shall be contacted directly.

The District will continue to work with outside agencies such as NYSIR to evaluate potential hazards associated in transporting and educating our students. The building level response plans have lists of specific hazards for each building.

RESPONSES TO VIOLENCE

All incidents of violence, whether or not physical injury has occurred (verbal abuse, threats of violence, etc.), should be reported immediately to the Principal and the Office of PPS, and documented by the principal on the Violent and Disruptive Incident Report (VADIR) Form. With the realization that employees and students may otherwise be reluctant to come forward, we will maintain confidentiality. Individuals will be assured that there will be no reprisal for reporting their concerns. Incidents will be reported as follows:

The School Building Principal/Administrator or Designee will be responsible for receiving and responding to all incident reports including anonymous reports. Information on the reporting process for students and staff will be provided as part of the violence prevention training program. Each incident will be reported to and evaluated by the District-Wide Safety Team (Threat Assessment Team) for the purpose of compiling data and evaluating the Violence Prevention Program.

Relationships have been established with the Police Department (Police Chief) and other emergency response agencies at the building level. Representatives from these agencies participate on Building-Level School Safety Teams.

Reporting

Once an incident has been reported, and depending on its severity, the School Building Principal/Administrator or Designee will assume responsibility as the Incident Commander.

- Report it to the Police Department.
- Report to Superintendent
- Secure the area where the disturbance has occurred.
- Ensure the physical safety/medical management of students/staff remaining in the area as soon as possible.
- Ensure that while responding to the incident, the remainder of the building remains appropriately supervised.
- Quickly assess the area of the incident to determine damage as a result of the incident and if it is safe to remain. If necessary, evacuate or shelter as per School Building Emergency Response Plans.
- Provide incident debriefing to students/staff as needed. Notify parents.

Investigation

After the incident has occurred the District-Wide Safety Team will conduct a detailed investigation. It is the purpose of the Team to focus on facts that may prevent recurrence, not find fault. The Team conducting the investigation will:

- Collect facts on how the incident occurred.
- Record information.
- Identify contributing causes.
- Recommend corrective action.
- Encourage appropriate follow-up.
- Consider changes in controls, policy and procedures.

Follow-up

The school district recognizes the importance of responding quickly and appropriately to the medical and psychological needs of students/staff following exposure to a violent incident. All individuals affected by a violent act in the school district will be provided with appropriate first aid and psychological treatment. Provisions for medical confidentiality and protection from discrimination will be included to prevent the victims of violent incidents from suffering further loss.

Evaluation

The District-Wide Safety Team is responsible for ensuring that an initial school building security analysis is conducted and periodically re-evaluated. These physical evaluations will focus on the identification and assessment of school building security hazards and address necessary changes in building practices.

These evaluations will review the potential for different types of violent incidents including bomb threats, hostage-taking, intrusions, and kidnapping. Professionals will be utilized from local law enforcement and private consultants as necessary.

Disciplinary Measures

The school district Code of Conduct will be the basis for determining the appropriate disciplinary measures that may be necessary.

SUMMARY OF DISTRICTS COMMUNICATION & NOTIFICATION PROTOCOLS

Notification and Activation

Quick and accurate contact with appropriate law enforcement officials is essential in the event of a violent incident. These relationships have been established by participation of local response officials on School-Building Safety Teams. These individuals and appropriate means of contact are documented in the Building-Level Response Plan.

Internal communication is also of prime importance and will be specifically defined in the Building-Level Response Plan. Depending on the nature of the emergency, some of the communication methods will include telephone, fax/e-mail, district radio system, NOAA weather radio, intercom, local media, emergency alert system, cellular phones, and others as deemed necessary. Appropriate notifications and methods will be determined by the District-Wide Safety Team.

In general, parent/guardian notification will be conducted by means of the phone tree of emergency contacts established in each school building. However, in some cases it may be necessary to use other means such as local media. Prior arrangements have been established with the appropriate media. (ConnectEd, News Channel 12, Radio Station #100.7 WHUD)

The Superintendent of Schools recognizes his/her responsibility to notify all educational agencies and team members within the school district of a disaster and has established the following notification list.

RECOVERY

School District Support for Buildings

The School Building Emergency Response Teams will be supported in their efforts by all available in-district resources and personnel as required by the nature of the emergency. County and State resources and personnel will be obtained as dictated by the nature of the emergency.

A District Wide Emergency Response Team will be available when necessary to assist all school buildings in their response effort.

Disaster Mental Health Services

The Office of Pupil and Personnel Services will respond in crisis situations to help provide disaster mental health services as outlined in this plan.

DISTRICT RESOURCES USE AND COORDINATION

School Building-level Emergency Response Plans will address the identification, availability, and use of resources. This will include procedures for coordination of these resources including manpower and Chain-Of-Command.

In an emergency that requires the activation of the District Safety/Emergency Response Team, the coordination of District resources will be through the District Safety Team with the District Superintendent as Incident Commander. If the Team is not activated, the coordination of resources will be managed through the office of the District Superintendent. The Director of Facilities will oversee the allocation of custodial and maintenance staff as well as vehicular needs. Other District staff may be called as needed.

PROTECTIVE ACTION OPTIONS

School Building-Level Emergency Response Plans will address the following response actions as determined by the nature of the emergency:

- School Cancellation
- Early Dismissal
- Evacuation
- Sheltering (internal and external)
- Short-Term Shelter-In-Place
- Lockdown
- Lockout