

# CHATHAM CENTRAL SCHOOL DISTRICT

## DISTRICT-WIDE SCHOOL SAFETY PLAN

### PROJECT SAVE

(Safe Schools Against Violence in Education)

Commissioner's Regulation 155.17

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### **Introduction**

Emergencies and violent incidents in districts are critical issues that must be addressed throughout the Chatham Central School District. Districts are required to develop a district-wide school safety plan designed to prevent or minimize the effects of serious violent incidents and emergencies and to facilitate the coordination of the district with local and county resources in the event of such incidents or emergencies. The district-wide plan is responsive to the needs of all schools within the district and is consistent with the more detailed emergency response plans required at the school building level. Districts stand at risk from a wide variety of acts of violence, natural, and manmade disasters. To address these threats, the State of New York has enacted the Safe Schools Against Violence in Education (SAVE) law. Project SAVE is a comprehensive planning effort that addresses prevention, response, and recovery with respect to a variety of emergencies in each school district and its schools.

**The Chatham Central School District** supports the SAVE Legislation and intends to facilitate the planning process. The Superintendent of Schools encourages and advocates on-going district-wide cooperation and support of Project SAVE.

### **Section 1: General Considerations and Planning Guidelines**

#### **A. Purpose**

**The Chatham Central School District's** District-wide School Safety Plan was developed pursuant to Commissioner's Regulation 155.17. At the direction of the Chatham Central School District's Board of Education, the Superintendent of the Chatham Central School District appointed a District-wide School Safety Team and charged it with the development and maintenance of the District-wide School Safety Plan with the assistance of the QIII BOCES Health & Safety Office.

#### **B. Identification of District Team**

**The Chatham Central School District** has created a District-wide School Safety Team consisting of, but not limited to, representatives of the School Board, students, teachers, administrators, parent organizations, school safety personnel and other school personnel.

### **C. Concept of Operations**

The District-wide School Safety Plan shall be directly linked to the individual Building Level Emergency Response Plans for each school building. Protocols reflected in the District-wide School Safety Plan will guide the development and implementation of the individual Building Level Emergency Response Plans.

In the event of an emergency or violent incident, the initial response to all emergencies at an individual school will be by the School Emergency Response Team.

Upon the activation of the School Emergency Response Team, the Superintendent of Schools or his/her designee will be notified and, where appropriate, local emergency officials will also be notified.

Efforts may be supplemented by County and State resources through existing protocols.

### **D. Plan Review and Public Comment**

This plan shall be reviewed and maintained by the Chatham Central School District's District-wide School Safety Team, reviewed on an annual basis on or before July 1 of each year. A copy of the plan will be posted on the district's website and available at the office of the Superintendent of Schools Office for review.

Pursuant to Commissioner's Regulation 155.17(e) (3), this plan will be made available for public comment 30 days prior to its adoption. The district-wide and building-level plans may be adopted by the School Board only after at least one public hearing that provides for the participation of school personnel, parents, students and any other interested parties. The plan must be formally adopted by the Board of Education.

While linked to the District-wide School Safety Plan, Building Level Emergency Response Plans shall be confidential and shall not be subject to disclosure under Article 6 of the Public Officers Law or any other provision of law, in accordance with Education Law Section 2801-a.

Full copies of the District-wide School Safety Plan and any amendments will be submitted to the New York State Education Department within 30 days of adoption. Building Level Emergency Response Plans be supplied to both local and State Police within 30 days of adoption.

## **Section II: General Emergency Response Planning**

The District-wide School Safety Plan will provide the framework for the Building-Level Emergency Response Plans. The purpose of a uniform plan is to ensure district-wide continuity for emergency responses. These general emergency responses will be used to assist school employees, students, parents and emergency responders in learning one system that can be used

in any of the Chatham Central Schools. This is particularly beneficial as students move from Mary E. Dardess Elementary to Chatham Middle School to Chatham High School, and as full-time, part-time, and substitute employees travel between the schools.

**A. Identification of Sites of Potential Emergency:**

The District-wide School Safety Team in conjunction with local officials has identified areas outside of school property that may impact a district facility during an emergency. Factors that were considered include population, presence of hazardous materials, potential for emergency based on national trends and proximity to district property.

A list of areas has been identified as having the potential to impact within the district. This list has been created for reference and awareness. This list is not all-inclusive for every emergency. However, these areas have been identified as having the most probable impact on district facilities or district boundaries should they have or create an emergency. A list of potential community-based hazards or emergency situations has been noted in the Building Level Emergency Response Plans.

The district team has recognized that there are many factors that could cause an emergency in our schools and facilities within the district. There are also factors that need to be considered when responding to an emergency. A list of potential internal and external hazards or emergency situations has been noted in the Building Level Emergency Response Plans.

**B. The District has developed multi-hazard response guides.**

These guidelines are located in the Building Level Emergency Response Plans and are in ICS (Incident Command System) format. Plans for taking the following actions in response to an emergency where appropriate are, including but not limited to:

- Initial Actions
- Command Post Location (primary and secondary)
- School Cancellation
- Early Dismissal
- Evacuation (before, during and after school hours, including security during evacuation and evacuation routes)
- Evacuation/Relocation Sites (internal and external)
- Shelter in Place
- Lockdown
- Relocation
- Lockout

Emergencies include, but are not limited to:

- Air Pollution
- Anthrax/Biological

- Aviation Crash
- Bldg. Structural Failure
- Bomb Threat
- Civil Disturbance
- Crimes Against People
- Earthquake
- Elec. System Failure
- Energy Supply Loss
- Fire Alarm Activation
- Flood
- Heating System Failure
- Hostage Situation
- Intruder Situation
- Loss of Building
- Loss of Buses
- Mass Casualty
- Medical Emergency
- Natural Gas Leak
- Severe Weather Emergency
- Threats of Violence
- Train/Railroad
- Water Emergency
- Epidemic
- Explosion
- School Bus Accident
- Radiological
- Roof Leak / Failure

The district has identified various district resources that may be available for use during an emergency, including the identification of personnel, equipment and shelters.

Using the ICS (Incident Command System) the district has identified the school officials authorized to make decisions during an emergency. Through ICS, the procedures to coordinate the use of school district resources and manpower during emergencies are clearly defined. ICS also identifies the staff members and their backups assigned to provide assistance during emergencies.

The district has developed policies and procedures for annual multi-hazard school safety training for staff and students, including the strategies for implementing training related to multi-hazards. The following procedures have been established to provide this training on an annual basis to include but not limited to: early dismissal/go home drill, fire drills, lockdown drills, tabletop exercises and Incident Command System training.

The district will conduct drills and other training exercises to test components of the emergency response plan, including the use of tabletop exercises, in coordination with

local and county emergency responders and preparedness officials. A debriefing will conclude after each test to determine if changes to the plan are necessary.

### **Section III: Responding to Threats and Acts of Violence**

Schools will refer to their Crisis Intervention Plans via the Post-Incident Response Team and the Multi-Hazard Emergency Response Guides located in their Building-Level Emergency Response Plans. These are reviewed by the District-wide School Safety Team to ensure content and consistency throughout the district. These policies and procedures are for responding to implied or direct threats of violence by students, teachers, other school personnel and visitors to the school. The following types of procedures are addressed in the plan:

- The use of staff trained in de-escalation or other strategies to diffuse the situation  
Training is and will be offered through the NYS Police Safe Schools Program, Chatham PD, and other outside agencies chosen by the school district
- Informing the building principal of implied or direct threats
- Determining the level of threat with the Superintendent or designee
- Contacting appropriate law enforcement agency, if necessary
- Monitoring the situation, adjusting the district's responses as appropriate to include possible implementation of the Emergency Response Team
- Communication with parent/guardian

The Multi-Hazard Emergency Response Guides in the Building-level Emergency Response Plans provide guidance on the district's policies and procedures for responding to direct acts of violence (i.e. Crimes Against Persons, Hostage Taking, Intruder and Kidnapping) by students, teachers, other school personnel and visitors to the school, including consideration of zero-tolerance policies for school violence. The following types of procedures are addressed in the plan:

- Inform the building principal and superintendent
- Determine the level of threat with principal and superintendent/designee
- If the situation warrants, isolate the immediate area
- Monitor the situation; adjust the level of response as appropriate; if necessary, initiate lockdown, evacuation, sheltering and/or early dismissal procedures as needed, if needed
- Contact appropriate law enforcement agency

**NOTE:** The Chatham Central School District's "Code of Conduct" describes policies and procedures for responding to acts of violence by students, teachers, other school personnel and visitors to the school.

Response protocols are identified in the Building-level Emergency Response Plan in the ICS format along with renditions of ICS Roles and Responsibilities. The Multi-Hazard Emergency Response Guides address specific procedures for responding to bomb threat, intruders, hostage takings and kidnapping.

The following protocols for appropriate responses to emergencies are provided as examples of

responses to bomb threats, hostage takings, intrusions and kidnappings:

- Identification of decision-makers
- Plans to safeguard students and staff
- Procedures to provide transportation, if necessary
- Procedures to notify parent
- Procedures to notify media
- Debriefing procedures

The district has established policies and procedures to contact parents, guardians or persons in parental relation to the students in the event of a violent incident or an early dismissal. In the Chatham Central School District, the following communication methods will be taken:

#### EXAMPLES:

For small-scale incidents, school personnel will directly call the parents/guardians of all students directly impacted by any acts of violence. All other parents/guardians will receive an informational letter. The Crisis Intervention Plans and Post-Incident Response Team will be activated and available. If needed, community meetings will be scheduled in a timely manner for further discussion.

For any major incident, the district will be working with the media (t.v., radio, etc.) to relay pertinent school related information (i.e., how and where can parents be reunited with children, etc.). It is unfortunate, but important to remember, that major emergencies can quickly tie up phone lines with in-coming and out-going calls and roads can be blocked by the traffic of emergency vehicles, and concerned parents and community members. School personnel will directly call the parents/guardians of all students directly impacted by any act of violence. All other parents/guardians will receive an informational letter. Community meetings will be scheduled in a timely manner for further discussion to include the Crisis Intervention Plans and Post-incident Response Team.

#### **Section IV: Communication with Others**

The District-wide School Safety Plan will provide the framework for the Building Level Emergency Response Plans.

The Chatham Central School District is fortunate to have substantial ties to the community of Chatham as well as to Columbia County. If there were to be an emergency within our facility, that facility would call 911 for emergency assistance. If involvement is needed from other local government agencies, then the Superintendent or designee would act as that contact person. Additional procedures for communications can be found in the Building-level Emergency Response Plans including local emergency contacts and phone numbers, and the NYS/BOCES Communication Flow Chart. These contacts provide guidance for obtaining assistance during emergencies from emergency services organizations and local government. The following examples are the types of arrangements that could be used by the district:

- Principal (Building-level IC or backup IC) or Superintendent (District-wide IC or backup IC) in an emergency would contact the county dispatch center for fire, EMS, or police by calling 911.
- Principal (Building-level IC or backup IC) or Superintendent (District-wide IC or backup IC) contacts the highest-ranking local government official for communication and/or assistance.

Arrangements for obtaining advice and assistance from local government officials including the county or city officials responsible for implementation of Article 2-B of the Executive Law will be carried out through the protocols established in the NYS/BOCES Communication Flow Chart. The following are examples of the types of arrangements that could be used by the district during countywide emergencies:

- Superintendent (District-wide IC or backup IC) in an emergency will contact the Columbia County Emergency Management Coordinator and/or the highest- ranking local government official for obtaining advice and assistance.
- The district has identified resources for an emergency from the following agencies:
  - Columbia County Civil Defense Office, American Red Cross, Columbia County Emergency Services Office, New York State Police, Columbia County Sheriff, Columbia County Mental Health office and the Questar III BOCES Health & Safety Office.
- If the emergency is within the school district boundaries and has the potential to impact the surrounding community, the Superintendent or designee will notify the appropriate city officials (i.e. Mayor, Highway Dept., Town Administrator, and/or Public Safety). The district would contact the Town of Chatham, as needed. Likewise, should there be an emergency within the community that has the potential to impact the facilities of the school district, the Superintendent should be notified immediately.
- If there is a disaster within the district that has the potential to impact other educational agencies within the district boundaries, the Chief School Emergency Officer (Salvatore DeAngelo, Superintendent of Schools) will activate a phone tree to inform all necessary parties. The phone tree will be located in the Building-level Emergency Response Plan.
- Along with the phone tree, the district will also maintain the following information about each educational agency located in the school district:
  - School population
  - Number of staff
  - Transportation needs
  - Business and home telephone numbers of key officials of each such educational agency

## **Section V: Prevention and Intervention Strategies**

The District-wide School Safety Plan will provide the framework for the Building Level Emergency Response Plans.

The district has developed policies and procedures related to school building security, including, where appropriate: visitor sign-in and badge procedures, the use of school resource deputy, security devices and procedures, DARE officers, and random locker searches by administration.

The Chatham Central School District has implemented procedures for the dissemination of informational materials regarding the early detection of potentially violent behaviors, including, but not limited to: the identification of family, community and environmental factors to teachers, administrators, parents and other persons in parental relation to students of the school district or board, students and other persons deemed appropriate to receive such information. The district has and continues to participate in programs such as: Banana Splits, professional development for all staff regarding the mental health needs of students, child abuse and prevention workshops, programs designed to provide staff on how to identify potentially violent behaviors and other risk factors. The district additionally employs many school counselors, psychologists, special education staff, and school health teachers who are instrumental in assisting the district in identifying early warning signs in students, early intervention/prevention strategies and the development of violence prevention instruction for safety.

School District has appropriate prevention and intervention strategies such as:

- Collaborative agreements with state and local law enforcement officials designed to ensure that school safety officers and other security personnel are adequately trained including being trained to de-escalate potentially violent situations
- Non-violent conflict resolution trainings such as National Coalition Building Institute
- Peer leadership
- After school programs
- Mentor programs

The district has created and supported strategies for improving communication among students and between students and staff and reporting of potentially violent incidents such as the establishment of:

- Peer Leadership
- Staff Development on conference days relating to violence prevention
- Key Communicators
- Student Government
- Others based on district need

## ATTACHMENT A

### School Resource Deputy (SRD) Sheriff's Responsibilities:

1. The SRD shall not act as a school disciplinarian, but in the event a crime occurs, may take necessary action.
2. The SRD shall act as a mentor, advisor and law enforcement officer.
3. The SRD shall develop a rapport with the staff, students, parents and any outside agencies, as necessary and/or appropriate.
4. The SRD shall offer assistance to individuals with issues dealing with probation, mental health, drug and alcohol treatment centers and any other services that can assist in a student's health and well-being, and refer them to the appropriate agency, where necessary and/or appropriate.
5. The SRD shall act as an instructor in specialized programs if requested by the building principal.
6. The SRD shall make him/herself available for parent, student and teacher conferences if requested by school officials.
7. The SRD shall assist in school activities if requested by school officials. These activities will commensurate with the duties of the SRD.
8. The SRD shall assist the school officials in building security issues and shall take any other emergency actions, as needed, to maintain a safe and secure school.

**Adopted July 9, 2019**

**Revised & readopted August 25, 2020**