



Equality Charter School  
PROJECT SAVE (Safe Schools Against Violence in  
Education)

Commissioner's Regulation 155.17

Updated October 2020

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## **INTRODUCTION**

Emergencies and violent incidents in school districts are critical issues that must be addressed in an expeditious and effective manner. 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 Equality Charter 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 I: GENERAL CONSIDERATIONS AND PLANNING GUIDELINES**

### **A. Purpose**

The ECS District-wide School Safety Plan was developed pursuant to Commissioner's Regulation 155.17. At the direction of the ECS Board, the Executive Director of ECS appointed a District-wide School Safety Team and charged it with the development and maintenance of the District-wide School Safety Plan. The district wide plan was updated as of August 2020.

### **B. Identification of School Teams**

As per Commissioner's Regulation, Section 155.17 (c)(13), the ECS Safety Team is comprised of administrators, school safety personnel, and other school personnel.

The Chief Emergency Officer for ECS is the Executive Director, Caitlin Franco.

## **C. Concept of Operations**

1. The District-Wide School Safety Plan shall be directly linked to the individual Building-Level Emergency Response Plans for the school building. This District-Wide School Safety Plan will guide the development and implementation of Building Level Safety Plans.
2. This Plan has been developed using the New York State Education Guidance Document.
3. In the event of an emergency or violent incident, the initial response to all emergencies will be by the School Emergency Response Team.
4. Upon activation of the School Emergency Response Team, the Superintendent of Schools or his/her designee will be notified and, when appropriate, local emergency officials will also be notified.
5. County and State resources through existing protocols may supplement emergency response actions, including post-incident responses.

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

- This plan has been updated as of July 2020.
- The district-wide and building-level plan was adopted by the School Board in 2020 after a public hearing that provided for the participation of school personnel, parents, students and any other interested parties. The plan must be formally adopted by the Board of Education.
  - 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.
- This plan will be reviewed periodically during the year and will be maintained by the District-wide School Safety Team. The required annual review occurred in August of 2020. Building-level Emergency Response Plans will be supplied to local police, the Sheriff's department and the State Police within 30 days of the update.
- While linked to the District-Wide School Safety Plan, Building-Level Safety 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.

## **SECTION II: RISK REDUCTION/PREVENTION AND INTERVENTION STRATEGIES**

### **A. Prevention/Intervention Strategies**

#### **Program Initiatives**

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- Character Education through Advisory and Dean Time
- MTSS/ PBIS
- Dignity for All Students Act policy
- Code of Conduct policy

1. Information will be available to parents/guardians on how to identify potentially violent behaviors from our Code of Conduct which is posted to our website.

2. If a teacher or administrator feels help for a student is warranted, it will be discussed with appropriate school personnel to determine the next step.

3. An interpersonal violence prevention education package will be taught as appropriate.

4. ECS recognizes that communication is a vital key in the prevention and intervention of violence in schools; ECS will continue to explore programs based on need.

5. ECS referral process is utilized for the reporting of potentially violent incidents and following our Code of Conduct.

6. Additionally, counselors are available in every school for students to share information where the source can be confidential.

#### **Training, Drills, and Exercises**

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Three levels of annual multi-hazard school training will be considered in this plan for the upcoming school year:

- Required drills to be held throughout the school year (8 evacuation, 4 lockdown drills)
- General staff awareness training
- General student awareness training of emergency response procedures conducted by building staff (i.e. fire drills, lockdown drills)
- Meeting notes are shared with staff for each drill and Safety Meeting

Each year the District-Wide School Safety Team and/or Building-Level Teams will consider appropriate training for each of the groups listed above.

- Lockout and Lockdown drills are conducted throughout the school year, also, an early release drill is done at least once a year.
- After each lockdown drill we have a building-wide meeting to discuss the drill and make changes if necessary.

## Implementation of School Security

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### Safety Response

School staff is trained to be vigilant pertaining to threats against students and staff (i.e. bullying, violent behavior, etc.). ECS continues to promote a culture of respect for the students and staff through the Dignity for All Students Act.

### Security Devices

- Surveillance cameras placed in various locations on campus.
- Photo ID cards are issued to staff and tags to visitors, plus a sign in and sign out log. Visitors are required to wear a “Visitor” tag.
- All outside doors to remained locked, but will be accessible as an emergency exit.
- Main entrance is only exit for staff to enter or exit building during school hours
- Buzzer system are on all doors (Exits)

### Vital Educational Agency Information

Each Building-Level Safety Plan will include the following information:

- School population

- Number of staff
- Transportation needs
- Business and home telephone numbers of key officials.

The Building-Level School Safety Teams will insure that this information is accurate and will be updated routinely.

## **B. Early Detection of Potentially Violent Behavior**

1. Paying attention to early warning signs can help prevent or minimize violence to self and others. Certain emotional and behavioral signs, when viewed in context, can signal a troubled student. Teachers are trained to recognize the signs that can be used to signal a student who may need help. The more signs a student exhibits the more likely it is that he or she may need intervention. Early warning signs include, but not limited to:

- Depressed mood or chronic crying
- Decline in school performance
- Verbal expressions about one's own death
- Giving away important personal possessions
- Use of alcohol or drugs
- Sudden lifting of severe depression
- Recent withdrawal from therapy or psychological counseling
- Purchase of knives, guns, or ropes
- Verbal or written communications which appear to be saying "good-bye"
- Feelings of guilt
- Violent, aggressive behavior
- Exaggerated mood swings
- Running away
- Talking about revenge or getting even with parents
- Confusion and despair resulting from sudden death or suicide of a peer
- Any sudden obvious changes in behavior
- Eating disorders – changes in eating habits
- Sleeping disorders – insomnia or excessive sleeping
- Low energy level, constant fatigue

- Decreased productivity or effectiveness
- Pessimism about the future or brooding about the past
- Loss of interest in formerly pleasurable activity
- Inability to show pleasure
- Reactions that seem inappropriate to the situation
- Statements of inadequacy or low self-esteem
- Social withdrawal – pulls away from friends
- Irritability or excessive anger (which may be directed towards parents, caretakers, or siblings), rebelliousness, and belligerence
- Neglect of personal appearance
- Physical complaints
- Preoccupation with illness, death, or catastrophic events
- Decreased attention, concentration, or ability to think clearly

2. If a teacher or administrator feels help for a student is warranted, it will be discussed with appropriate school personnel to determine the next step.

3. The Executive Director will set specific times for the building principal(s), to organize activities of particular concern as needed.

### **C. Hazard Identification**

ECS has established procedures in the Building-Level Safety Plans for the identification of potential sites and the internal and/or external hazards that may be present in them. These procedures are developed in coordination with the local Emergency Management Office, Fire Department, and law enforcement agencies, and the use of a Risk Probability Checklist.

**Location of Potential Sites:** Hutchinson River Pkwy E **Internal or External Hazard:** External

**Location of Potential Sites:** Erskine Pl **Internal or External Hazard:** External

**Location of Potential Sites:** School Heating System **Internal or External Hazard:** Internal

## **Hazard Assessment (some external hazards are county wide)**

### **Intruder**

Specifics and responsibilities pertaining to this situation can be found in our confidential School Building plans.

### **Bomb Threat**

Specifics and responsibilities pertaining to this situation can be found in our confidential School Building plans.

### **Hazmat**

Specifics and responsibilities pertaining to this situation can be found in our confidential School Building plans.

### **High Winds**

Specifics and responsibilities pertaining to this situation can be found in our confidential School Building plans.

### **Bus Accident**

Specifics and responsibilities pertaining to this situation can be found in our confidential School Building plans.

### **Winter Storm**

#### **Communication:**

For any school closing, we will do automatic phone blasts to staff. Staff are responsible for ensuring the main office has their most updated phone number. If you need to make an update, please email tracee.black@ with an updated phone number and they will confirm that it has been updated. real

**The night/day before:**

-When DOE schools are closed, Equality automatically closes. A phone blast and an email will be sent out.

**The day of:**

-If the DOE closes school the day of, Equality automatically closes. A phone blast and an email will be sent out.

-If the DOE is open and Equality chooses to close for weather or another reason (which happens rarely, if ever), a phone blast and an email will be sent out.

**Additional Communication Points Ops will Handle:**

-updating parent calendars

-sending email to staff

-phone/email/text blast to parents

## **SECTION III: RESPONSE**

### **A. Notification and Activation**

Policies and procedures for contacting appropriate law enforcement officials in the event of a violent incident.

- The person in charge (Incident Commander) will decide if the level of the incident classifies it as a “violent incident” (consistent with the definition of such an incident as defined in the district’s Code of Conduct). If appropriate, the Incident Commander will call 911.
- In a crisis situation involving a violent incident, school staff should call 911 and notify the Incident Commander.

Procedures to contact parents, guardians or persons in parental relation to the students in the event of a violent incident or an early dismissal

- Parents/Guardians will be contacted via telephone and school website automatically by the school district. Notification also is provided on our Facebook pages for our facility. In some cases, the public/parents may also be notified via media outlets.

## **B. Situational Responses**

### **Response Protocols**

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The district uses emergency information folders in each room for important directional information when a response action is needed. The Building-Level Safety Plans include identification of specific procedures for each action depending upon the emergency. We have incorporated response protocols defined by state education department. It establishes definitions of lockout, lockdown, sheltering, hold-in-place and evacuation. Our responses are based upon these guidelines and are included in the Building Level School Safety Plan.

### **Responses to Acts of Violence: Implied or Direct Threats/Acts of Violence**

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ECS has enacted policies and procedures dealing with violence. These policies and procedures deal with the safety of the school community, as well as the range of disciplinary action to be used when responding to threats or acts of violence.

### **Bomb Threats**

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Procedures and Guidelines are included in the Building-Level School Safety Plans for ECS. We use the NYS Police guidelines to bomb threats as protocol.

### **Hostage Taking**

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Procedures and Guidelines are included in the Building-Level School Safety Plans for ECS

### **Intrusions**

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Procedures and Guidelines are included in the Building-Level School Safety Plans for the ECS

## Kidnapping

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Procedures and Guidelines are included in the Building-Level School Safety Plans for the ECS.

## Pandemic

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Procedures and Guidelines are included in the Building-Level School Safety Plans for the ECS and we have an additional Crisis Response Team plan with members who meet specifically for district wide and school building emergencies. .

## Arrangements for Obtaining Emergency Assistance from Local Government

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Policies and procedures for contacting appropriate law enforcement officials in the event of a violent incident are included in the Building Level Response Plan for ECS.

- The person in charge (Incident Commander) will decide if the level of the incident classifies it as a “violent incident” (consistent with the definition of such an incident as defined in the ECS Building Safety Plan). If appropriate, the Incident Commander will call 911.
- In a crisis situation involving a violent incident, school staff should call 911 and notify the Incident Commander.

## Arrangements for Obtaining Advice and Assistance from Local Government Officials

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Procedures 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.

- The person in charge (Incident Commander) will decide if the level of the incident warrants obtaining emergency assistance. If appropriate, the Incident Commander will call 911
- In a crisis situation, school staff should call 911 and notify the Incident Commander.

## District Resources Available for Use in an Emergency

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**Building Resources:** Gym, Cafe, Auditorium

**Transportation Resources:** N/A

**Personnel Resource:** Staff with CPR/FA training, Building Response Team

**Other Resources:** AEDs, Portable Fire Extinguishers

## Agencies authorized to Request Use of Resources:

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County Emergency Management Office

NYS Police

American Red Cross

Local Fire Departments

Town Government

Public Safety

## Protective Action Options

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### School Cancellation

Executive Director or designee will announce the closing of school. Communication will be sent to all officials needed to proceed with the cancellation.

### Early Dismissal

MS Procedure:

[Rapid Release - Reunification Plan](#)

[Rapid Release - Reunification Activation Plan](#)

\*Based on DOE mandates as the MS is located on the PS160X Campus

HS Procedure-

### Emergency/Unplanned dismissals

- All unplanned or emergency dismissals are covered under “Protective Action Options” on page 8 and 9 of the 2020-2021 [safety plan](#)

### **Evacuation (before, during and after school hours)**

Procedures and guidelines are included in the building-level school safety plans for ECS for an evacuation.

### **Sheltering Sites (internal and external)**

Procedures and guidelines are included in the building-level school safety plans for ECS for sheltering sites.

## **SECTION IV: RECOVERY**

### **Support for ECS**

All ECS manpower and resources will be available if it should endure an emergency. Mental health counseling, building security and restoration will be items of primary focus. Response and recovery will be a district goal.

Besides building security and restoration, the strategies will also include damage assessment, relocation and continuation of the educational process. A post-incident response critique, the notes from the incident command team and lessons learned will be assessed. Plans to mitigate the likelihood of occurrence or impact, if the incident does occur again, will be reviewed. If possible, efforts will be made to improve ECS facilities resulting in them being more resistant to suffering similar or worse damage.

### **Disaster Mental Health Services**

ECS understands how an emergency can have a major effect on the well being of students, staff and community at large. ECS will coordinate resources with County Mental Health Services and the Post-Incident Crisis Response Team.

## **APPENDICES**

### **Appendix 1: Listing of all school buildings covered by the district-wide school safety plan**

Building:

ECMS 4140 Hutchinson River Pkwy E Bronx, NY 10475

ECHS 2140 Seward Ave Bronx, NY 10473

## **Appendix 2: Policies and procedures for working with the Media**

### **Information**

- Media interaction may be handled by: **Executive Director or Designee**
- A law enforcement / emergency response agency PIO; or
- Jointly, by both PIO's listed above

### **Public Information Officer Information: Executive Director or Designee**

- Incident Commander and PIO functions may be handled by two different persons.
- ECS PIO may work under, over or in cooperation with law enforcement and emergency response agency PIO's.
- The PIO should set forth clear media guidelines and communicate these guidelines to the media in writing.
- The PIO should use a press release template for both a news conference script and/or a written press release.
- The PIO should receive information and forms from the Incident Commander and other key function personnel on a regular basis throughout the emergency event.

### **Student/Parent/Guardian Information**

- Students, parents and guardians should be mindful of the situation during an emergency event when approached by the media for an interview. Safety and security issues may be comprised

Students should not communicate with the media via cell phone or other type of communication when on campus during any type of emergency situation.

### **Appendix 3: Student Release in an Emergency**

Students will be released only to parents and persons identified on the ECS Emergency Card, you may be asked to provide proof of identification upon arrival in order for the school to release the student(s). During an extreme emergency, students will be released at designated reunion location(s). Parents should be patient and understanding with the student release process.

### **Appendix 4: Emergency Contact information form**

Located within each Main Office

### **Appendix 5:**

Policies and procedures for responding to implied, or direct threats of violence or acts of violence by students, teachers, other school personnel, and visitors to the school:

- Corporal Punishment
- Alcohol and Other Substances
- Child Abuse and Maltreatment
- Drug Free Workplace
- Firearms in School
- Policy for Maintenance of Public Order on School Property
- Code of Conduct
- Sexual Harassment
- Student Management Policy
- Title IX/504/Civil Rights