

District Wide Safety Plan



Equality Charter School
PROJECT SAVE (Safe Schools Against Violence in Education)
Commissioner's Regulation 155.17
Updated August 2023

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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 Executive Director 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 Coordinator and charged it with the development and maintenance of the District-wide School Safety Plan. The district wide plan was updated as of August 2021.

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 Executive Director 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 2023 and was available for public comment during the period of August 2, 2023 - September 2, 2023.
- The district-wide plan will be adopted by the School Board on September 18, 2023, after a public hearing that provides for the participation of school personnel, parents, students, and any other interested parties. 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 July of 2023. 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

- 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

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 evacuations, 4 lockdown drills)
- General staff awareness training
 - Safe Work Practices
 - Student Behavior & Intervention Support
 - Staff Accident Management
 - Hazard Assessments
 - First Aid Equipment & Supplies
 - CPR Training
- General student awareness training of emergency response procedures conducted by building staff (i.e. fire drills, lockdown drills)
 - Safe School Practices
 - Hazard Assessments
 - Accident Avoidance
 - Safety Drill behaviors
- 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

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 remain locked, but will be accessible as an emergency exit.
- Main entrance is the only exit for staff to enter or exit the building during school hours.
- Buzzer system is 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 ensure 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.

Potential Hazard Sites Listed in ECS' MS Safety Plan

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

Potential Hazard Sites Listed in ECS' HS Safety Plan

Location of Potential Sites: Seward Ave Internal or External Hazard: External

Location of Potential Sites: Castle Hill Ave 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 Wind:** 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 and scholars. Instead of traditional snow days, Equality will move to asynchronous remote instruction. This will be communicated to families clearly with plans for the instruction.
 - **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 the school website automatically by the school district. The notification also is provided on our Facebook pages for our facility. In some cases, the public/parents may also be notified via media outlets.

Alyssa’s Law

The School Safety team has met consistently to consider the thought of installing a silent panic alarm system at our current high school location. These conversations are ongoing as we continue to keep the safety of our staff and scholars at the forefront. These conversations will continue as we look to open an elementary school in the 2024-2025 school year and relocate our high school in the 2025-2026 school year.

B. Situational Responses

Response Protocols

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 the identification of specific procedures for each action depending upon the emergency. We have incorporated response protocols defined by the 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

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 actions to be used when responding to threats or acts of violence.

Bomb Threats

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

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

Intrusions

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

Kidnapping

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

Pandemic

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

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

Procedures for obtaining advice and assistance from local government officials including the county or city officials responsible for the 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

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:

County Emergency Management Office

NYS Police

American Red Cross

Local Fire Departments

Town Government

Public Safety

Protective Action Options

School Cancellation

The 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: All unplanned or emergency dismissals are covered under “Protective Action Options” on pages 8 and 9 of the 2023-2024 [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. The ECS Internal Crisis Response Team will coordinate with internal and external sources where appropriate to provide support in time of disaster.

SECTION V: Amendments to Education Law §2801-a Regarding Pandemic Planning

On September 7, 2020, Governor Cuomo signed into law Chapter 168 of the Laws of 2020 that requires public employers, including public school districts, to adopt a continuation of operation remote plan in the event that the governor declares a public health emergency involving communicable disease. The legislation (S.8617-B/ A.10832) amends subdivision 2 of section 2801-a of New York Education Law to require that District Safety Plans include protocols for responding to a declared public health emergency involving a communicable disease that are “substantially consistent” with the provisions of section 27-c of the Labor Law.

- A. A list and description of positions and titles considered essential in the event of a state-ordered reduction of in-person workforce, as well as a justification for such consideration for each position and title. You should anticipate how certain positions/titles may be necessary to assist in response to a pandemic or communicable disease outbreak. For example, if schools are directed to provide meals to students and families that are eligible to receive free and/or reduced lunch or to provide child care for children of first responders or health care workers, you may need to designate certain positions/titles as essential for this purpose.
 - a. Facilities/Maintenance Staff - These staff members would be required to maintain a safe and clean school environment. They would be responsible for cleaning and disinfecting the facility in case of a pandemic or communicable disease outbreak. They would also ensure that the school building and assets are safe and secure, free from theft or other damage to the building while school is not in operation. In addition, the Facilities Staff is responsible for managing the mail (picking up the mail from the middle school once a week, retrieving the high school mail daily, sorting all mail, and pickup/delivery of any important mail).
 - b. School Foods Staff - These staff members would be required to continue to provide meals to students and families that are eligible for free and/or reduced lunch if our school sites are needed to be used as distribution centers.
 - c. Technology Staff - These staff members would be required to intermittently be in the building to maintain our crucial technology such as our school servers.

- B. A specific description of protocols the employer will follow in order to enable all non-essential employees and contractors to telecommute including, but not limited to, facilitating or requesting the procurement, distribution, downloading and installation of any needed devices or technology, including software, data, office laptops or cell phones, and the transferring of office phone lines to work or personal cell phones as practicable or applicable.
 - a. All requests for technology (hardware & software) are submitted through our technology vendor, Performance Connectivity via email or phone call.
 - b. Requested technology is shipped out via UPS
 - c. Cell phone requests are for supervisors only, and are processed by the Director of Operations
 - d. Office phone line transfers are processed online by Director of Operations

- C. A description of how the employer will, to the extent possible, stagger work shifts of essential employees and contractors to reduce overcrowding on public transportation and at worksites.
 - a. Our Middle School location has approximately 40 regular staff members with a daily even split of those traveling by car or public transportation. Non-essential staff has been designated for full/primary remote work to support only essential staff being on-site. Our Middle School is housed on a NYCDOE campus and we have coordinated arrival and dismissal schedules with the other two schools on our campus to ensure that there is little overlap in the

number of staff entering and leaving the building at any given time to support a more efficient screening process.

- b. During in-person instruction, Equality Charter High School has its full staff supporting its students using the regular schedule. In order to reduce the number of people in the school building at any given time and to promote health and safety, visitors are not allowed until further notice and contractors are scheduled (outside of work hours where possible).
- D. Protocols the employer will implement to procure personal protective equipment (PPE) for essential employees and contractors, based upon tasks and needs in a quantity sufficient to provide at least two pieces of each type of PPE to each essential employee and contractor during any given work shift over at least six months. A plan for storage of equipment and access to equipment must be included.
- a. We will provide every staff and scholar three acceptable reusable masks when we return to the building for hybrid instruction
 - b. Additional requests can be made through our Supply/Maintenance form
 - c. All equipment is stored at the High School and Middle School in designated storage rooms
 - d. Access is given to Administration and Operations staff only
- E. Protocols in the event an employee or contractor is exposed to a known case of the disease, exhibits symptoms of the disease, or tests positive for the disease to prevent the spread or contraction in the workplace. The protocols shall not violate any existing federal, state, or local law, regarding sick leave or health information privacy, and must include:
- a. Detailed actions to immediately and thoroughly disinfect the work area, common area surface and shared equipment; and
 - b. The employer policy on available leave in the event of the need of an employee to receive testing, treatment, isolation, or quarantine.
 - c. Health Considerations Document
 - Section III- VII (Pg 3-8)
- F. Protocol for documenting precise hours and work locations, including off-site visits, for essential employees and contractors. The protocol shall be designed only to aid in tracking of the disease and to identify exposed employees and contractors to facilitate the provision of any benefits which may be available.
- a. Health Considerations Document
 - Tracking- Section VII (Pg 9)
- G. Protocol for working with the employer's locality to identify sites for emergency housing for essential employees to further contain the spread of the communicable disease to the extent applicable to the needs of the workplace.
- a. This is not applicable to us.

Emergency Remote Instruction Plan

- [Equality Remote Learning Contingency Plan](#)

APPENDICES

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

- 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: Responding to Violence

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