



POCANTICO HILLS CENTRAL SCHOOL

District-Wide School Safety Plan School Year 2021-22

This plan was created in accordance with the Safe Schools Against Violence in Education Act, and represents our commitment to providing a safe and secure environment for our students, faculty, staff and visitors.

INTRODUCTION

In accordance with Chapter 181 of the Laws of New York 2000 (commonly referred to as Project SAVE, Safe Schools Against Violence in Education Act), the following procedures comprise the Pocantico Hills District-Wide School Safety Plan (DSSP). This plan is general in nature and forms the framework for the school district's safety program when implemented in conjunction with the Building Level Safety Plan (BLSP).

The Superintendent of Schools serves as the chief emergency officer for the district, and appoints the following District-Wide School Safety Team:

- Assistant Superintendent for Business and Operations
- Principal
- Director of Facilities
- Supervisor of Special Education
- Guidance Counselor
- School Nurse
- Security Guard
- Southern Westchester BOCES – Safety Coordinator

The Safety Team shall be responsible for annually reviewing this Safety Plan and recommending any changes to the Board of Education. The Board of Education shall make the Safety Plan available for public comment at least thirty days prior to its annual adoption, and provide for at least one public hearing during that period that allows participation of school personnel, parents, students and other interested parties. The Plan shall be filed with the New York State Education Department within thirty days of adoption.

The Safety Team will provide support to faculty and staff during an incident or emergency situation and afterwards. They will coordinate the various district resources (food, shelter, and transportation, and information, psychological and social emotional support, mental health resources). The team will also meet to ensure local law enforcement agencies are familiar with the DSSP and have established procedures for working with the district in the event of an emergency situation.

In the event of an emergency situation, the Chain of Command, determined by the Superintendent, is as follows:

	Name	Title	Address	Telephone
1	Richard Calkins	Superintendent of Schools/Chief Emergency Officer	599 Bedford Rd, Sleepy Hollow NY 10591	914-631-2440 X 702
2	Michael Vanyo	Assistant Superintendent for Business and Operations	599 Bedford Rd, Sleepy Hollow NY 10591	914-631-2440 X 709
3	Adam Brown	Principal	599 Bedford Rd, Sleepy Hollow NY 10591	914-631-2440 X 712
4	Donald Booth	Director of Facilities	599 Bedford Rd, Sleepy Hollow NY 10591	914-631-2440 X 158

I. RISK REDUCTION/PREVENTION AND INTERVENTION STRATEGIES

A. Building-Level School Safety Plan

The District shall develop a Building-Level School Safety Plan and shall provide instruction to students, staff, and visitors to prepare them to respond to disaster and emergency situations in a practical way. It shall be standard operating procedure for staff and students to be familiar with the Building-Level School Safety Plan to ensure each individual knows what to do in an emergency and how to do it should the need arise. The Building-Level School Safety Plan shall identify potential sites of emergency including, but not limited to, buildings, grounds, buses, field trips, and work sites and shall contain the following elements:

- Procedures for the safe evacuation of students, staff, and visitors in the event of a serious violent incident or other emergency.
- Designation of an emergency response team comprised of school personnel, local law enforcement officials, and representatives from local, regional and/or state emergency response agencies; other appropriate incident response teams; and a post-incident response team that includes appropriate school personnel, medical personnel, mental health counselors and others who can assist the school community in coping with the aftermath of a violent incident.
- Procedures for assuring that crisis response and law enforcement officials have access to floor plans, blueprints, schematics or other maps of the school interior, school grounds and road maps of the immediate surrounding area.
- Establishment of District-Wide standard for internal and external communication systems in emergencies.
- Definition of the chain of command in a manner consistent with the National Interagency Incident Management System/Incident Command System.
- Coordination of the school safety plan with the statewide plan for disaster mental health services to assure that the school has access to federal, state, and local mental health resources in the event of a violent incident.
- Procedures for review and the conduct of drills and other exercises to test components of the emergency response plan.
- Standardizing procedures for securing and restricting access to the crime scene in order to preserve evidence in cases of violent crimes on school property.

B. General Daily Prevention Measures

The implementation of the DSSP begins with the adoption of basic preventative measures prior to a crisis. All personnel shall practice these measures on a daily basis:

- All staff members are expected to carry their classroom/office keys at all times.
- All staff members are expected to wear District-issued photo identification badges.
- Each teacher/staff member who occupies a room or area must scan the room or area upon first entering.
- The building administrator or his/her designee should be notified immediately if anything looks suspicious.

- After opening the room, staff should key the door in the locked position, if possible.
- When leaving the room vacant, staff should lock and close the door, where applicable.
- After school begins, all entrances should be locked, except those monitored or where access is controlled.
- All visitors must obtain a visitor's pass. All students, visitors and staff must adhere to district and building level identification (I.D.) and visitor pass policies and procedures.
- All students/staff are encouraged to report suspicious behavior, threats, and potentially harmful activity to the Principal or school staff.
- Field trip supervisors, co-curricular and club supervisors shall account for security and emergency planning as part of their activity planning.
- The district shall coordinate with outside groups as needed to address security during use of district facilities.

C. Coordination with Parents/Guardians

- It is the responsibility of all parents and guardians to ensure that emergency contact information for students is always up-to-date and complete.

D. Drills and Exercises

The best way to train students, faculty and staff on emergency response procedures is through annual drills and exercises in each school building. Based on the determination of the Safety Team, the following methods may be used:

- Early dismissal drill
- Live drill including sheltering, evacuation, or lockdown
- 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 may invite local agencies to participate in and to help evaluate 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.

E. Early Detection of Potential Violent Behavior

The 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
- 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
- Information on how to recognize and respond to school security hazards
- A review of measures implemented to prevent school violence such as use of security equipment and safety procedures and how to diffuse hostile situations
- Information on how to summon assistance in the event of an emergency
- Information on special procedures to follow based on the nature of the emergency
- Information on post-incident procedures to be followed, including medical follow-up and the availability of counseling and referral
- Information on how to recognize and respond to implied or direct threats of violence by students against themselves

F. Hazard Identification

The Building-Level Safety 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, properties adjacent to schools, off-site athletic fields, buses and off-site field trips.

II. EMERGENCY RESPONSE PROTOCOLS

If a threat is received, the principal should consult the Building Level Safety Plan and proceed as directed, in consultation with the Superintendent or his/her designee. Note: law enforcement will be contacted, as appropriate, and other disciplinary action is implemented according to the following guidelines:

For student(s): implementation of disciplinary action consistent with Code of Conduct

For staff member(s): as per existing protocol, then per Staff Code of Conduct

For Visitors: via coordination with Security Staff

A. Notification and Activation (Internal and External Communication)

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 the school Safety Team. These individuals and appropriate means of contact are documented in the Building Level Safety Plan.

Internal communication is also of prime importance and is specifically defined in the Building Level Safety Plan. Depending on the nature of the emergency, some of the communication methods will include telephone, 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 incident commander.

In general, parent/guardian notification will be conducted by means of telephone call-out system (Blackboard Connect), and postings to the district website. In some cases it may be necessary to use other means, such as local media.

B. Plans of Action

To account for the variable character of emergencies and the extent of advance warning, there are differing plans of action to ensure the health and safety of students, faculty, staff and visitors.

1. Cancellation Prior to the Start of School

The Superintendent or his/her designee(s) shall make the decision to close schools/offices for the health, welfare, and safety of students, staff, and visitors. Notice will be given to parents and students through the use of radio and television stations, email alert, telephone call-out system, website, and other appropriate procedures.

2. Early Dismissal

The Superintendent or a designee, in consultation with building principal as appropriate, may make the decision to close schools/offices early and dismiss students. He/she will notify the director of facilities who will supervise the readiness of district buses and staff for student transportation to their homes. The Superintendent or his/her designee shall activate the emergency notification system that will provide relevant information to all affected students and staff. Staff designated by the principal will remain in the building after dismissal until all children have been picked up or transported safely to their bus stop.

3. Evacuation

The Superintendent or a designee, in consultation with building principal as appropriate, may make the decision to evacuate the school building. This action plan shall be used as a guideline when conditions within a building present an immediate health or safety risk to the occupants and vacating the building would reduce or eliminate those risks.

Upon notification to evacuate, students, staff, and visitors are to immediately leave their building according to the fire exit plan posted near each door or as directed, and in accordance with specific building procedures for evacuation of handicapped or those with disabilities. Students, staff, and visitors are to proceed through the corridor, with minimum talking, as per building procedure. Students and staff are to remain together in designated areas outside the building.

Staff members are responsible for supervision of students and taking attendance, in order to be certain that all students have left the building. Any student unaccounted for shall be reported to the Principal or his/her designee.

4. Shelter Plan

This plan shall be used in emergency situations when it has been determined that being inside the building is safer than being outside. Depending on circumstances, the decision may be to Shelter-In-Place or Shelter-Off-Site.

a. Shelter-In-Place

In the event of imminent danger due to natural or man-made disasters, students, staff, and visitors should be notified to shelter-in-place. Students, staff, and visitors will be directed to either move to the main corridor outside the classroom or to remain inside the classroom, depending on the nature of the incident. Classroom doors are to be closed, where applicable.

b. Shelter-Off-Site

This plan shall be used when it becomes necessary to move students, faculty, staff and visitors off campus completely and immediately. Upon notification to evacuate, students, faculty, staff, and visitors shall immediately leave their building according to the fire exit plan posted near each door and/or as directed. Staff shall lead their students to the previously determined location identified in the Building Level Safety Plan.

5. Evacuation of Disabled Students, Staff, and Visitors

Each Building Level School Safety Plan shall include evacuation procedures for all disabled persons and shall identify assigned responsibilities and procedures to assist the disabled. Each building administrator shall work with local emergency responders to ensure their understanding of the protocols regarding the evacuation of disabled individuals is included in their Building Level School Safety Plan.

6. Evacuation Areas

Evacuation areas must be identified in the Building Level Safety Plan, and staff should know the location of the evacuation areas where students will be taken during emergencies. Students and parents should only be notified of evacuation areas as needed, due to security considerations and confidentiality. Students shall remain in designated evacuation areas until dismissal or parental/guardian pickup.

7. Weather Conditions and Evacuation

The possibility exists that students, faculty and staff may have to evacuate a building during inclement weather conditions. The Building Level Safety Plan addresses procedures for prolonged outdoor exposure.

8. Re-Occupancy of a School Building

After law enforcement or fire department personnel have cleared the building, the principal or his/her designee shall be responsible for making the decision to reenter the school building. Based upon information received, one of three decisions shall be considered after consultation with the Superintendent or his/her designee: (1) reoccupy the building and resume classes; (2) relocate the building occupants to another facility (sheltering); or (3) activate the plan for early dismissal.

9. Lock Out and Lock Down

Lock Out begins by bringing all students, faculty and staff indoors as appropriate. Lock all exterior windows and doors. Deny unauthorized access to the building. All students, faculty and staff should remain in the building until the situation is determined to be safe.

Lock Down is to completely lock down the entire school. Staff should remain calm and lock your door immediately. Permit no one to leave the classroom. Shut off all computers. Move all students out of their seats and onto the floor in the safest part of the room, away from doors and windows. Students, faculty, staff and visitors outside of the classroom should go to the safest area in the closest room available. Wait for further instructions.

10. Bomb Threats, Hostage-taking, Intruders, and Kidnapping

The Building Level Safety Plan includes specific procedures on how to respond to various emergencies. The handbook is a confidential document made available only to building faculty and staff.

III. PREVENTION AND INTERVENTION STRATEGIES

A. Compliance with Project SAVE Legislation

Staff shall be trained in compliance with Project SAVE Legislation, with the student Code of Conduct as the basis for training.

B. Annual School Safety Training for Students and Staff

In order to provide and maintain a safe and secure environment for all personnel, it is imperative to establish policies and procedures for annual school safety training. The school district shall implement a staff development program in order to assure that all staff incorporates the necessary knowledge and skills to assure their own safety, as well as the safety of students and visitors. Training shall be implemented as follows:

1. Staff

- right-to-know training (as required by law)
- blood borne pathogen training (as required by law)
- violence prevention training (annually)

- school violence prevention and intervention training
- Dignity for All Students Act/Code of Conduct
- additional building-based training based on site discretion and needs
- knowledge of school district Board Policies related to safety and security
- knowledge of School Safety Plan and specific roles related to plan
- training in the use of security devices as needed

2. Students/Staff

- annual review of student handbook and Code of Conduct as early in the school year as practical
- emergency drills as required by law
- classroom and/or assembly orientations on security and safety issues
- nonviolent conflict and peer mediation where appropriate
- school safety programs

C. Student Transportation Safety

In most instances, the District's responsibility for a child begins when a student enters school property. If a child is driven to school by a private party, the responsibility for the child's safety remains with that party until the child exits the car.

If a child rides on a school bus provided by the District, the District's responsibility begins when the child boards the bus and ends when he/she steps off of the bus at the end of the day. Therefore:

- Trained personnel will staff all buses.
- A bus driver/school aide orientation program in the first week of school will include anti-violence procedures and warning signs.
- During orientation, bus drivers will be told whom to contact to report bus issues and/or incidents. All drivers will be provided with appropriate communications devices (two-way radios or cell phones) before leaving the bus compound.
- The transportation supervisor and bus dispatchers shall be trained to recognize, identify, and handle a potential crisis, using anti-violence procedures and shall review this information with all new transportation staff hired during the school year.

D. Intervention Strategies

Appropriate prevention and intervention strategies as practiced in each school shall include, but are not limited to, the following:

- Non-violent conflict resolution training programs
- Peer mediation programs
- Anti-bullying programs

The Student Code of Conduct provides for procedures regarding bullying, violence, and harassment and other prohibited student conduct. The Code shall be disseminated to all staff and students by the first week of school. This section of the Code contains procedures to be

followed by all school personnel regarding student conduct, reporting of violations, and penalties, procedures and referrals for all inappropriate behaviors as set forth in the Code. All staff members will be trained annually in recognizing and effectively dealing with these behaviors.

IV. DISSEMINATION OF INFORMATION REGARDING EARLY DETECTION OF POTENTIALLY VIOLENT BEHAVIORS

Because we believe that early detection and recognition of anxiety in a student may eliminate a potential crisis, personnel, including administrators and staff who are involved with students shall receive training on warning signs and symptoms of suicide and violent behavior.

A. Response to Reports of Potentially Violent Incidents

When a student or staff member becomes aware of implied or direct threats of violence by other students, teachers, school personnel and visitors to the school, he or she must report the threat immediately to a teacher, principal, the principal's designee, or the Superintendent of Schools or any other responsible adult. The principal shall investigate the report and if it is found to be credible, shall impose discipline in accordance with the Student Code of Conduct. Reports of potentially violent incidents shall be given to the Superintendent of Schools as soon as practicable.

B. Response to Reports of Threats of Violence by a Student Against Themselves

In the event of a threat of violence by a student against themselves, the first person aware of suspected or confirmed instances of student self-injury will immediately notify the Principal. The Principal will activate the appropriate personnel for response and notify the Superintendent when necessary. The response team will ensure that the student receives appropriate care, including the care of wounds and an assessment for suspicion of self-injury or suicidality. The Principal will act as and/or identify liaison between student, parents, affected faculty/staff and peers. When appropriate, parents will be encouraged to follow up with an appropriate outside evaluation for the student. The principal will identify the need for and provide for continued support for the student.

C. Response to Acts of Violence

Acts of violence requiring immediate response from building personnel shall be responded to in accordance with protocols found in the Building Level Safety Plan. Once the situation is stabilized, acts of violence involving students shall be subject to processing under the disciplinary procedures found in the Student Code of Conduct and, if appropriate, criminal prosecution.

V. CONTACTING POLICE

Local law enforcement officials are an integral part of the District's ability to manage crisis situations. The Safety Team shall meet at least annually with the Mt. Pleasant Police Department to review current policies and procedures, make recommendations for changes, if any, and plan for building-level training for both law enforcement and school staff. In addition, each principal shall establish a working relationship with local police officials and work with them to develop appropriate safety and security policies and procedures for reporting incidents to local law enforcement officials.

In the event of an ongoing violent incident that threatens the safety and security of staff and students, the principal will contact the police for assistance and notify the Superintendent as soon as practicable. Other than an immediate crisis, actions with regard to contacting law enforcement agencies will depend on the nature of the crisis, and are included in the Building Level Safety Plan.

VI. CONTACTING PARENTS, GUARDIANS

In the event of violent incidents or crises, or an early dismissal of students, every effort will be made to notify parents. As soon as practical, the Superintendent or his/her designee shall activate the emergency notification system that will provide relevant information. Parental notification procedures for a student involved in disciplinary situations shall be consistent with the Code of Conduct and New York State law, and shall be presented clearly and concisely to staff and students each year. When a student is involved in any violent situation, a parent or guardian shall be contacted as soon as practicable.

VII. BUILDING SAFETY/SECURITY

The District shall provide physical environment, security equipment, and procedures/policies that school officials, in consultation with the police, judge appropriate to safeguard the safety of all students, staff, and visitors who lawfully enter school property.

The District shall:

- install and maintain appropriate building alarms, fire alarms, lighting, emergency communications systems, and locking systems
- conduct ongoing visual inspection and systematic maintenance of security alarms, fire alarms, telephone and emergency communications systems, inside and outside doors, and locking devices

The Principal shall:

- establish procedures for controlled building access pursuant to the Building Level Safety Plan
- identify staff members who will be responsible for the administration of safety/security regulations and provide them with time and resources that are appropriate, in the District's judgment
- periodically review with faculty and staff the security needs of their individual facilities and make recommendations for change

The District shall provide all sites with staff, security devices, and training that, in its judgment, are appropriate to safeguard students, staff, and visitors. The District shall establish a process for the ongoing review of safety and security concerns of students, staff, and visitors.

VIII. INFORMATION FOR VISITORS AND PARENTS

There is a single point of entry for the building and visitors to the school must sign in, receive an identification badge, and be buzzed into the building. Staff in the building all wear district-produced names tags which must be worn at all times. Staff is trained to report to the main office any person they observe who is not wearing a badge.

Resources for Staff/Parents/Students

- Telephone Callout System which can notify parents in a particular school or all parents District-Wide about a situation which might require an adjustment of a school schedule, including student sheltering and pick-up procedures/areas, etc.
- District Calendar which is made available to all parents in August. It contains general information about the district and specific information on how to contact individuals for various situations.
- The Summary of the Code of Conduct is sent to all parents in August. It is also given to all students at a special assembly held in September. During this assembly, a presentation on the Code is made and any questions answered.
- The school district's website is an ongoing resource for parents with general information about the district, including school district policies, specific information on how to contact individuals for various situations, and with timely emergency information.