

# District Wide Safety Plan

Chester Academy  
Chester Elementary School



**CHESTER UNION FREE SCHOOL DISTRICT**  
*Excellence in Education*

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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. School 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 Chester UFSD District-Wide Safety Plan is responsive to the needs of all schools within the district and is consistent with the more detailed Emergency Management Operations Plan required at the school building level. School districts are at risk of a wide variety of acts of violence, natural, and technological disasters. To address these threats, the State of New York has enacted the Safe Schools Against Violence in Education (SAVE) law. This component of Project SAVE is a comprehensive planning effort that addresses risk reduction/prevention, response, and recovery with respect to a variety of emergencies in the school district and its schools.

The Chester UFSD supports the SAVE Legislation, and intends to engage in a 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 District-wide School Safety Plan was developed pursuant to Commissioner's Regulation 155.17. At the direction of the School District Board of Education, the Superintendent of School District appointed a District-wide School Safety Team and charged it with the development and maintenance of the District-wide School Safety Plan.

#### B. Identification of School Teams

The Chester Union Free School District (UFSD) has appointed 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. The District-Wide School Safety Team consists of the following positions or affiliations:

Superintendent	Local BOCES Representative
Business Assistant	PTO Representative
School Principals	Director of Technology and Integration
Director of Instruction	Fire Chief
Supervisor of Buildings and Grounds	Local Police Chief
Board of Education Designee	Students
Teachers' Union Representative	
Support Staff Representative	

## **C. Concept of Operations**

- The District-Wide School Safety Plan is directly linked to the individual Building-Level Emergency Management Operations Plan for each of the school buildings. Protocols reflected in the District-Wide School Safety Plan will guide the development and implementation of the individual Building-Level Emergency Management Operations Plan.
- In the event of an emergency or violent incident, the initial response to all emergencies at an individual school will be by that school's Building Principal or Designee.
- With authorization from the Building Principal or Designee and or the Superintendent of Schools, local emergency response personnel (fire/police/EMS) shall be notified. If deemed necessary by the Building Principal or Designee and or the Superintendent of Schools, activation of the building Emergency Response Team shall take place.
- Additional local/county/state resources could supplement the district efforts through existing protocols or emergency response actions, including post incident response, may be supplemented by county and state resources through existing protocols.

## **Plan Review and Public Comment**

- Pursuant to Commissioner's Regulation, Section 155.17 (e) (3), this plan was adopted by the School Board on November 12, 2020. A public hearing was held October 14, 2020. One question was asked; "Is malware attack covered?" It is covered in a general way under School Security pg 6 and Response: Procedures for obtaining advice from local government officials pg 12.
- Full copies of the District-Wide School Safety Plan were submitted to the New York State Education Department within 30 days of its adoption. The Building-Level Emergency Management Operations Plan was submitted to local and state police within 30 days of its adoption. Plan was updated to SEDDAS November 1, 2020.
- This plan is reviewed periodically during the year and is maintained by the District-Wide Safety Team. The required annual review is completed on or before July 1 of each year. A copy of the plan is available in the Office of the District Superintendent.
- While linked to the District-Wide School Safety Plan, the Building-Level Emergency Management Operations Plan 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**

### **A. Prevention / Intervention Strategies and Strategies/Program Initiatives**

**Note:** Risk Reduction/Prevention and Intervention are comprised of activities that are taken prior to an emergency or disaster to eliminate the possibility of the occurrence, or reduce the impact of such emergency if it does occur.

#### **Prevention/Intervention Strategies**

Listed below are documents, programs and activities the Chester UFSD has developed and utilizes in support of the prevention of violence, as well as attempted early intervention to prevent escalation of deteriorating personal or group problems.

#### **Student Rules (Code of Conduct)**

This document clearly defines the long-standing set of expectations for conduct on school property and at school functions. These expectations are based on the principles of civility, mutual respect, citizenship, character, tolerance, honesty and integrity. This Code of Conduct identifies possible consequences of unacceptable conduct, and ensures that discipline, when necessary, is administered promptly and fairly.

#### **Anti-Bullying and Anti-Gang Programs:**

- Positive Behavioral Interventions and Supports (PBIS) program
- Non-Violent Conflict Resolution Training

#### **Student Harassment and Bullying Prevention Intervention:**

Chester has created a Dignity for all students act (DASA) Program

#### **Extended Day and/or after school activities:**

There are many after school clubs that help give our students a chance to further develop their interests and develop leadership skills.

#### **Other Program Initiatives:**

- Established anonymous reporting mechanisms for school violence
- National Incident Management System (NIMS) training for emergency response team members
- New York State School Safety Guide (2007)
- School Safety Plan Guidance (SAVE -2010)
- Collaboration with the Chester Police

- Chester UFSD Guidance Services which can assist students with issues concerning: suicide prevention, substance abuse, peer mediation and/or conflict resolution.
- Positive Behavioral Interventions and Supports (PBIS) has been established by the Office of Special Education Programs, US Department of Education to give schools capacity-building information and technical assistance for identifying, adapting, and sustaining effective school-wide disciplinary practices.
- Dialectical behavior therapy (DBT) is a type of cognitive behavioral therapy. Its main goal is to teach the patient skills to cope with stress, regulate emotions and improve relationships with others.

Chester Union Free School District encourages students to report school violence and any symptoms of potentially violent behavior to counselors, principals, student coordinators, psychologists, and teachers or any other mentor without fear of retaliation by communicating this to all students at the beginning of the school year and periodically throughout the school year as appropriate.

## **B. Training Requirements and Exercises**

All district personnel (faculty, custodial staff, office staff and administrators) will receive an orientation to the districts multi-hazards emergency plans on an annual basis. The orientation will focus on the district's policies and procedures for fire evacuations and emergency response procedures, emergency communications and the district's incident command system. (Substitute Teachers and Teacher Aides will receive a fact sheet on the district's policies and procedures upon initial assignment). Building Administrators will be responsible for compliance.

1. Emergency response procedures will be practiced on an annual basis as follows:  
(Please note we will utilize the New York State Guide to School Emergency Response Planning; February 2015 language/protocol)
  - a. **Shelter-In-Place**
  - b. **Hold-In-Place**
  - c. **Evacuate**
  - d. **Lock-Out**
  - e. **Lock-Down**
2. **Building emergency procedures** will be practiced a minimum of **12 times per school year**. (8 Fire Drills and 4 Lockdown Drills) Fire Drills will also be conducted monthly when school is not in session. These procedures will normally be tested and evaluated during the facilities normal operations. Building Level Safety Committee's will ensure that all rooms have evacuation routes posted, this not only includes classrooms but also all other rooms utilized by staff or student personnel.

3. The district will conduct **one early go-home drill** to test its alerting and warning procedures, communications procedures, resources, staff procedures, transportation procedures, public information procedures, and evacuation procedures on an annual basis. These drills have historically been attached to an evaluation of our emergency contact system through Orange-Ulster BOCES.
4. **The emergency plan for sheltering** in the event of a severe weather threat such as a tornado or thunderstorm will be practiced on an **annual basis** to test alerting and warning procedures. These include communications procedures, staff procedures and the movement of students to designated areas within the school building. The drills will be conducted by individual schools and evaluated by members of the Building Level Safety Committee. The drill will be documented within their Safety Committee Meeting Minutes.
5. The district will conduct **one drill and/or table-top** exercise with local law enforcement agencies and other emergency response agencies to practice and review its emergency procedures for a “violent incident” on an annual basis.

Following a program orientation, drill and/or exercise, participants are encouraged to forward their observations to their Volunteer Building Level Safety Committee/Team representative for further review and/or discussion. If immediate action is needed, the Building’s Principal will be notified in order to take corrective action. The Volunteer Building Level Safety Committee/Team will review after-action reports and forward their findings, recommendations and suggestions, in writing, to the Volunteer District-Wide Safety Committee, via the Supervisor of Buildings and Grounds.

## **C. School Security**

The Chester UFSD is committed to providing a safe working and learning environment at each of its schools. To help ensure the personal safety of staff and students the following has been adopted.

1. Screening of potential new employees which includes:
  - Providing a resume
  - Providing three references
  - Submit to a criminal history background check that includes fingerprinting (for all new employees hired after July 1, 2001)
2. Training of all current and new staff regarding violence prevention and intervention using the National Incident Management System (NIMS) training for Schools program or other similar programs that meet the stipulated guidelines and requirements.

## **Implementation of School Security**

1. Every door will be accessible as an exit.
2. Only one main door is used for visitors to access the school building and is locked during school hours.
3. No visitor will be allowed access to the school building without having a practical reason.
4. All staff have been assigned Picture IDs.
6. Cameras have been installed at main entrance and other strategic locations to monitor various buildings.
7. A district-wide monitoring policy routinely utilizes existing staff to maintain a presence in hallways during passing times and maintain a presence in school parking lots at the beginning and end of school days.

(Additional security information is located in the Building-Level Emergency Management Operations Plan)

## **D. School Resource Information (Vital Education Agency Information)**

Each Building-Level Emergency Management Operations Plan will include the following information:

1. School population
2. Number of staff
3. Transportation needs
4. Business and home telephone numbers of key officials of each educational agency

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

## **E. Early Detection of Potentially Violent Behaviors**

The Chester UFSD will:

- Facilitate training for staff and students on specific policies regarding reporting of threats and conflicts, weapons, appropriate clothing and the clearly defined roles and responsibilities of all persons involved in the school setting.
- Announce and post the school's safety policies against violence in visible areas of the school.



There are early warning signs in most cases of violence to self and others. Certain emotional and behavioral signs that, when viewed in context, can signal a troubled student. Teachers should be given a checklist of these signs that can be used to signal a student that may need help. The more signs a student exhibits, the more likely he/she may need intervention. Such early warning signs may include but are not limited to the following:

- Social withdrawal
- Excessive feelings of isolation
- Excessive feelings of rejection
- Being the victim of violence
- Feeling of being picked on
- Low school interest and poor academic performance
- Expression of violence in writing and drawings
- Uncontrolled anger
- Patterns of impulsive, chronic hitting and bullying
- History of discipline problems
- History of violent and aggressive behavior
- Intolerance for differences and prejudicial attitudes
- Alcohol and drug usage
- Affiliation with gangs
- Inappropriate access / use of firearms
- Serious threats of violence

The above comes from the United States Department of Education's "Early Warning, Timely Response" document. This information will be available for all staff relating to early identification of potentially violent behaviors.

1. Information will also be made available to parents / guardians on how to identify potentially violent behavior.
2. If a teacher or administrator feels help for a student is warranted, it will be discussed with the appropriate school personnel to determine the next step.
3. Interpersonal violence prevention education package will be taught as appropriate.
4. The District Superintendent will set specific time for the building principal(s) in conjunction with the Chester UFSD Professional Development Plan to organize activities of particular concern.

## **F. Hazard Identification of Sites of Potential Emergencies**

Potential hazards in the neighborhood and community are considered, such as facilities containing toxic, chemically reactive, and/or radioactive materials; high voltage power lines; transportation routes of vehicles including trucks and trains carrying hazardous materials; underground gas and oil pipelines; underground utility vaults and above-ground transformers; multi-story buildings vulnerable to damage or collapse; water towers and tanks; and other potentially hazardous sites in the community. The Chester UFSD has consulted with local emergency managers on the hazard analysis for the area in which the school district is located. The Chester UFSD has identified sites of

potential internal and external emergencies and has included procedures within our Building Level plans for appropriate response actions.

## **Section III: RESPONSE**

### **A. Notification and Activation (Internal and External Communications)**

- Upon being notified of an emergency, the Building Principal or Designee will contact law or emergency personnel in accordance with stated response protocol and request the closest response agency to ensure that the response to the incident is as rapid as possible.
- In the event of an emergency, the Building Principal or Designee will notify all building occupants to take the appropriate protective action. Follow established procedures as listed in Building-Level Emergency Management Operations Plan.
- The following systems may be utilized as forms of communications:

Telephone	District Radio Systems
Intercom	Emergency Alert System
Fax / E-mail	NOAA Weather Radio
Local Media	School Messenger
School Web site	

- Should parental and / or media notification be required. The school district will contact appropriate parents, guardians or persons in parental relation to the students/staff via media release, telephone contact, or others appropriate means in the event of a violent incident or early dismissal following the protocol listed in the Building-Level Emergency Management Operations Plan.

### **B. Situational Responses**

#### **Multi - Hazard Responses**

The district's multi-hazard response plans for taking actions in the following emergencies are included in the Building-Level Emergency Management Operations Plan. They are as follows:

#### **Criminal Offenses**

##### **Bomb Threat**

- Written Threats
- Telephone / Verbal Threats
- Suspicious Packages
- Outside Facility
- Evacuation for Bomb Threat
- Shelter in Place for Bomb Threat
- Bomb Threat Response Form

##### **Civil Disturbance / Prison Break**

##### **Hostage Taking / Kidnapping**

Intrusion  
Suspected Student with a Weapon on Campus  
School Shooting  
Suicide Threat

### **Natural Hazards**

Severe Thunderstorm / Tornado  
Winter Storm / Ice Storm  
Hurricane / Tropical Storm  
Flood  
Reservoir / Canal / Dam Failure  
Earthquake

### **Technological Hazards**

Mail Handling Protocol  
Anthrax / Biological Threat On-Site  
Biological Threat Off-Site  
Air Pollution  
Aircraft Crash  
Gas Leak  
Hazardous Material Incident – On Site  
Hazardous Material Incident – Off Site  
Radiological Incident  
Water Emergency

### **Explosion and Fire**

Explosion / Fire Emergency

### **Systems Failure**

Building Structure Failure  
Cyber Failure / Computer Loss  
Electrical System Failure  
Energy Supply Loss / Utility Restrictions  
Heating System Failure  
Sewage System Failure  
Transportation Fleet Loss

### **Medical Emergencies**

School Bus Accident (Off-Site)  
Epidemic / Human Disease

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

The school district has adopted policies and procedures dealing with acts of violence and responses to acts of violence. These policies and procedures deal with the safety of the school community as well as the range of discipline of those making the threat or committing the acts of violence. The normal procedures to respond to implied or direct threats of violence will be:

- Use of staff trained in de-escalation or other strategies to diffuse the situation

- Inform building principal of implied or direct threat
- Determine level of threat with District Superintendent / Designee
- Contact appropriate law enforcement agency if necessary
- Monitor situation, adjust response as appropriate, include the possible use of the Emergency Response Team

## **D. Responses to Acts of Violence**

The Chester UFSD recognizes that appropriate response to acts of violence by students, teachers, other school personnel and visitors varies greatly depending upon the actual threat or act as well as the magnitude of such emergency. The Building-Level Emergency Management Operations Plan and Code of Conduct details the appropriate response to such emergencies utilizing the following procedure:

- The threat level will be determined
- If the situation warrants, the immediate area will be isolated and evacuated.
- Administration will be notified
- If necessary, lockdown procedures will be initiated and appropriate law enforcement officials will be notified
- The situation will be monitored and the appropriate response will be adjusted accordingly. If necessary, early dismissal, sheltering or evacuation procedures may be initiated.

## **E. Response Protocols**

The district recognizes that appropriate response to emergencies, such as bomb threats, intrusions, hostage takings and kidnappings, varies greatly depending on the situation. The Building-Level Emergency Management Operations Plan details the appropriate response to such emergencies utilizing the following protocols:

- Identification of the decision makers
- Determination of threat level
- Plans to safeguard students and staff
- Procedures to provide transportation, if necessary
- Procedures to notify parents
- Procedures to notify media
- Debriefing procedures

## **F. Arrangements for Obtaining Emergency Assistance from Local Government**

During emergencies, local government agencies, including emergency services, can be obtained by contacting the county Emergency Management Coordinator. The Incident Commander will authorize the request for assistance from these agencies.

**Chester Village Police Department:** (845) 469-4111  
**Chester Town Police Department:** (845) 469-9311  
**State Police:** (845) 782-8311

## **G. Procedures for Obtaining Advice and Assistance from Local Government Officials**

If the nature of the emergency necessitates advice and/or assistance from local governmental officials, the Incident Commander will notify the county Emergency Management Coordinator at:

**Orange County: 911 or (845) 615-0400**

and/or the highest ranking local governmental official for obtaining the advice and assistance. The district resources, which may be available during an emergency, include the following but no limited to:

Red Cross	NYS Dept. of Environ. Conservation
Fire Department	NYS Dept. of Transportation
Police	NYS Dept. of Health
Private Industry	Village / Town Officials
Private Individuals	State Emergency Mgmt Office (SEMO)
Religious Organizations	Other

Specific resources are identified in the Building-Level Emergency Management Operations Plan.

## **H. District Resources Available for Use in an Emergency**

The district has committed the full inventory of its resources to be available for use during an emergency. These resources will be utilized in line with the Building-Level Emergency Management Operations Plan as deemed appropriate by the Incident Commander. Specific resources are identified in the Building-Level Emergency Management Operations Plan.

## **I. Procedures to Coordinate the Use of School District Resources and Manpower during Emergencies**

The district uses the Incident Command system model for emergency actions. For district-wide emergencies the incident commander will be the Superintendent or designee. In building-level emergencies, the administrator in charge or designee will act as the Incident Commander. The Incident Commander is authorized to activate such resources and personnel as are appropriate to the incident. The Incident Commander is empowered to render such decisions as may be necessary in keeping with the response actions as identified in the Building-Level Emergency Management Operations Plan.

## **J. Protective Action Options**

Depending on the emergency, response actions may include:

- School cancellation
- Early dismissal
- Evacuation
- Sheltering sites

Refer to detailed response action guidelines in the Building-Level Emergency Management Operations Plan.

## **Section IV: RECOVERY**

### **A. District Support for Buildings**

After a critical incident has occurred, the District is committed to a thorough and comprehensive recovery for students, staff, and families. To achieve this goal, the Post Incident Response Team should consider the following steps:

Step 1: Consult with administrators and others to:

- Determine advisability of team involvement
- Determine nature of team involvement
- If team is needed, acquire release from currently assigned responsibility
- Inform Superintendent of nature of incident

Step 2: Acquire facts and circumstances as to the nature of the trauma/loss

Step 3: Determine those groups and/or individuals most affected by the trauma/loss (target population)

Step 4: Assist building administrator in the following:

- Arrange for staff meeting
- Formulate staff meeting agenda
- Dissemination of information to staff, parents, students, media, etc. (e.g., letters, etc.)
- Determine logistical needs (e.g., work space, crisis center, counseling rooms, class schedules, etc.)

Step 5: Assignment of team members and other staff to individual tasks

Step 6: Provide Crisis Team Services

- Conduct faculty meeting with all building staff
- Provide educational information to teachers to be used in class
- Conduct classroom meetings with Team member and teacher in seriously affected classes
- Assess needs and arrange for follow-up meetings with individuals and small groups

- End of day staff meeting to update staff and administrator and plan for next day
- Crisis Team “debriefing” at the end of day
- Provide substitutes and aides as back-up staff for teachers
- Offer a separate room for parent contact, if necessary
- Crisis workers in offices to aid office staff to deal with parents’ telephone calls and questions

Remind staff about “Teachable Moments”

- Death and grief education
- Personal safety
- Sorting rumor from fact
- Anatomy of the injury (e.g., what type, extent, what it means)

Step 7: Assist in creating a committee that can coordinate and plan for memorial contributions, expressions of sympathy, scholarship funds, etc., should be composed of staff students, and parents

Step 8: Follow-up plans for ending Crisis Team involvement

- Staff meeting
- Alert staff to individual staff questions and needs
- Respond to individual staff questions and needs
- Provide feedback to teachers regarding individual student support and resources, post-incident as deemed appropriate.
- Refer students and others to appropriate building personnel or other helping resources in the community
- Arrange for meeting with Crisis Response Team to determine effectiveness of the Crisis Response Plan in addressing the needs in this particular incident.

## **B. Disaster Mental Health Services**

The District will work closely with local mental health services to:

- Provide services to children and families that are appropriate for the type emergency/disaster
- Assess condition and immediate needs of children and family including food, shelter, clothing, medical treatment
- Follow-up on referrals
- Decrease the internal and external stressors which affect the children and family
- Provide opportunities for children and families to verbalize their feelings and provide emotional support to aid recovery
- Guide the family through the emergency/disaster and provide tools and techniques for the family to help themselves to recover

## CHAIN OF COMMAND

The Chester Union Free School District Superintendent will be responsible for designation of response actions necessary to cope with an emergency.

**Chief Operating Officer**  
Superintendent of School

### **Superintendent of Schools**

Catherine O'Hara

**Office:** (845) 469-5052, Ext. 3404

In the event the District Superintendent is not available, the response action designation responsibility shall be delegated as follows:

### **Business Administrator**

Erin Brennan

**Office:** (845) 469-9184, Ext. 3408

### **Director of Facilities**

Matthew A. DeRosa

**Office:** (845) 469-2231, Ext. 3705

### **Director of Instructional Support Services**

Edward Spence

**Office:** (845) 469-2231, Ext. 3305

### **Assistant Superintendent**

Rachel Loftus

**Office:** (845) 469-2231, Ext. 3751

## BUILDING ADMINISTRATION

### **Chester Academy Principal**

John Flanagan

**Office:** (845) 469-2231, Ext. 3303

### **Chester Academy Assistant School Principal**

Rolando Aguilar

**Office:** (845) 469-2231, Ext. 3306

### **Chester Elementary School Principal**

Mary Kate Boesch

**Office:** (845) 469-2178, Ext. 2203

## Emergencies Dial 911