

**BETHLEHEM CENTRAL SCHOOL DISTRICT**

**DISTRICT-WIDE SCHOOL SAFETY PLAN  
PROJECT SAVE (SAFE SCHOOLS AGAINST VIOLENCE IN EDUCATION)  
Commissioner’s Regulation 155.17**

**Introduction**

Emergencies and violent incidents in school districts are critical issues that require comprehensive planning and training. The New York State Safe Schools Against Violence in Education (SAVE) law requires school districts to develop a school safety plan to prevent or minimize the effects of serious violent incidents and natural/manmade disasters and to facilitate the coordination of state, 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 Building-Level Emergency Response Plans required at the school building level. 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.

**District Chief Emergency Officer**

Bethlehem Central Schools has designated the Superintendent as the district’s chief emergency officer (CEO). The CEO is responsible for coordinating communication between staff and law enforcement and first responders, and for ensuring staff understanding of the District-Wide School Safety Plan. Additionally, the CEO ensures that Building-Level Emergency Response Plans are annually updated.

**Section I: General Considerations and Planning Guidelines****A. Purpose**

The Bethlehem Central School’s District-Wide School Safety Plan was developed pursuant to Commissioner’s Regulation 155.17. At the direction of the Board of Education, the Superintendent appoints the District-Wide Safety Team and charges it with making recommendations regarding the development, maintenance, and implementation of the District-Wide School Safety Plan. The finalization of the plan ultimately rests with the Superintendent, with adoption by the Board of Education by September 1<sup>st</sup> of each school year.

**B. Identification of School Teams**

The Bethlehem Central School District has created a District-Wide Safety Team and Building-Level Emergency Response Teams for every school building. Both consist of, but are not limited to, representatives of staff, administrators, school safety personnel, law enforcement and other first responders.

**C. Coordination of District and School Plans and Teams**

The District-Wide School Safety Plan is directly linked to the individual Building-Level Emergency Response Plans for each school. The protocols reflected in the District-Wide School Safety Plan guide the development and implementation of each Building-Level Emergency Response Plan.

In the event of an emergency or violent incident, the initial response to all emergencies at an individual school will be by that building’s emergency response team. Upon the activation of this team, the Superintendent, or his/her designee, will be notified and, where appropriate, local emergency officials will also be notified. Efforts may be supplemented by county and state resources through existing protocols when needed.

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

Pursuant to Commissioner’s Regulation 155.17 (e)(3), this plan was originally adopted by the school board on July 7, 2015. Full copies of the District-Wide School Safety Plan and any amendments were submitted to the New York State Education Department (NYSED) within 30 days of this adoption.

The commissioner’s regulation also requires that this plan shall be reviewed by the District-Wide Safety Team on an annual basis on or before July 1<sup>st</sup> of each year, and recommendations for updates provided to the Superintendent. Herein after, all updates made by the District-Wide Safety Team shall be presented to the Board of Education for adoption pursuant to the aforementioned regulations. In most cases, recommendations are specific and included in Building-Level Emergency Response Plans. A copy of the district-wide plan is available at the Bethlehem District Office located at 700 Delaware Avenue, Delmar, New York and online at the district’s website ([www.bethlehemschools.org](http://www.bethlehemschools.org)). While linked to the District-Wide School Safety Plan, Building-Level Emergency Response Plans shall be confidential and shall not be subject to disclosure under Article 6 of the Public Officers Law or any other provision of law, in accordance with New York State Education Law Section 2801-a, Building-Level Emergency Response Plans and all updates are given to the New York State Police, Bethlehem Police Department and Albany County Sheriff’s Department within 30 days of adoption.

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

The District-Wide School Safety Plan provides the framework for the Building-Level Emergency Response Plans. The purpose of a uniform plan is to ensure district-wide continuity for emergency responses. These general emergency responses will provide one consistent response system that will be used by all school employees, students, parents and emergency responders. This is particularly beneficial as students move from elementary to middle school and then to high school, and as full-time, part-time and substitute employees travel among the schools.

The District-Wide Safety Team has identified many factors that could cause an emergency in our schools and facilities within the district as well as factors that need to be considered when responding to an emergency. The detailed list of potential internal and external hazards or emergency situations is included in the confidential Building-Level Emergency Response Plans.

### **A. Identification of Potential Emergency Situations (on and off school property):**

Lists of areas on school property that have the potential to create an emergency situation have been identified. These lists and floor/site plans have been created for reference and awareness. These lists are not all-inclusive for every emergency. However, these areas have been identified as having the most probable impact on district facilities or district boundaries should they have or create an emergency, such as natural gas lines, fuel tanks and chemical storage. The detailed lists and floor plans are included in the confidential Building-Level Emergency Response Plans and are updated on an annual basis.

The District-Wide Safety Team in conjunction with the New York State Police, Albany County Sheriff’s Department, Bethlehem Police Department, local fire departments and town officials have identified potential emergency situations off school property that could have an impact on the district. Factors that were considered include population, presence of hazardous materials, potential for emergency based on geographical potential and/or national trends and proximity to district property, such as airports, bridges, dams, major intersections, primary routes of hazardous cartage and SARA Title III locations of hazardous materials. The detailed lists are included in the confidential Building-Level Emergency Response Plans and are updated on an annual basis.

**B. Multi-Hazard Response Guidelines**

**1. Actions** – Included in the Building-Level Emergency Response Plans are actions for handling multi-hazard emergencies that are in compliance with the Incident Command System (ICS). These guidelines include but are not limited to:

- Initial actions
- Command post location (primary and secondary)
- Before, during and after school evacuation including evacuation routes and relocations sites (internal and external)
- Shelter-in-place
- Lockdown/lockout
- Emergency school cancellations, closing, early dismissal and delays including after-school, evening activities and weekends.

**2. Emergencies** – These include, but are not limited to the following Multi-hazard Response Guidelines:

Air Pollution	Epidemic	Mass Casualty
Anthrax/Biological	Explosion	Medical Emergency
Aviation Crash	Fire Alarm Activation	Natural Gas Leak
Bldg. Structural Failure	Flood	Radiological
Bomb Threat	HAZMAT on & off-site	School Bus Accident
Civil Disturbance	Heating System Failure	Severe Weather Emergency
Crimes Against People	Hostage Situation	Threats of Violence
Earthquake	Intruder Situation	Toxic Exposure
Elec. System Failure	Loss of Building	Water Emergency
Energy Supply Loss	Loss of Buses	

**3. Resources** – The district has identified various resources that may be available for use during an emergency, including: the identification of personnel via school building teams; use of Incident Command System (ICS); a list of volunteer faculty/staff trained in first aid, CPR and AED use; master list of all vehicles in the Transportation Department; building floor plans/maps with shut-offs and potential hazards noted; American Red Cross sheltering agreements; and designated shelter sites with backup shelter sites. The district has agreements with any shelters that are used within the community. The specific, detailed information is included in the confidential Building-Level Emergency Response Plans.

**4. Incident Command System (ICS)** – The district has identified school personnel authorized to make decisions during an emergency. Through ICS, the procedures to coordinate the use of school district resources and manpower during emergencies are clearly defined. ICS identifies the staff members and their backups assigned to provide assistance during emergencies. Each school building has a safety team that works under the Incident Command System. Each team is documented in detail. This document is given only to the Building-Level Emergency Response Team, district administration, the New York State Police, Bethlehem Police Department and the Albany County Sheriff’s Department. The safety team details are located in the confidential Building-Level Emergency Response Plans. Each safety team has been given an overview of the ICS, an ICS flow chart, ICS training and specific ICS roles and responsibilities.

**5. Policies and Procedures for Training** – The district has developed policies and procedures for National Incident Management System (NIMS) Compliant annual refresher school safety training for staff and school safety training and drills for students including scenarios based upon the Multi-

Hazard Response Guides. Procedures have been established to provide this training on an annual basis to include but not be limited to: early dismissal/go home drill, fire drills, lockdown drills and table top exercises. Individual schools obtain feedback from faculty/staff on the drill practiced. School administrators then address any concerns or questions noted. District administrators and principals will meet to discuss any reports of multi-hazard training, hazards and/or violence (implied threats, direct threats and/or actual acts of violence). The discussions are the key to debriefing as a district. Actions and procedures that are carried out successfully are verified and areas in need of improvement are noted as needed. This level of district awareness assists each principal and administrator in responding to future training, actual emergency responses and implied threat, direct threats and/or actual acts of violence.

The district conducts drills and other training exercises to test components of the safety plan, including the use of tabletop exercises, in coordination with local and county emergency responders and preparedness officials. The district administrators and building-level teams participate in tabletop exercises with local responders. Schools that have multiple floor levels also prepare and practice a non-ambulatory emergency evacuation plan.

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

**A. Policies and Procedures** – Schools will activate their Building-Level Emergency Response Team and will refer to their Building-Level Emergency Response Plan and the Multi-Hazard Response Guide. The multi-hazard response guides are reviewed by the District-Wide Safety Team to ensure content and consistency throughout the district. These policies and procedures are for responding to implied or direct threats of violence by students, teachers, other school personnel and visitors to the school, including consideration of zero-tolerance policies for school violence. These policies and procedures also include threats by students against themselves, which include suicide. The following types of procedures are addressed in the confidential Building-Level Emergency Response Plans:

- Contacting appropriate law enforcement agency, if necessary.
- Informing the building principal and Superintendent.
- Using staff trained in de-escalation or other strategies to diffuse the situation. Informing the building principal of implied or direct threats.
- Determining the level of threat with principal and Superintendent/designee.
- Monitoring the situation, adjusting the district’s response as appropriate to include possible implementation of the safety team.
- If the situation warrants, isolating the immediate area and evacuating if appropriate.
- If necessary, initiating lockdown procedure and contacting appropriate law enforcement agency.
- Monitoring the situation; adjusting the level of response as appropriate; if necessary, initiating early dismissal, sheltering or evacuation procedures.
- Communicating with parent/legal guardian, and general public, as needed.

*NOTE: The Bethlehem Central Code of Conduct also describes policies and procedures for responding to acts of violence by students, teachers, other school personnel and visitors to the school. The district’s code of conduct also supports school safety and security. The code of conduct is pursuant to the district’s safe and drug-free schools policy and the no weapons policy.*

**B. Response Protocols** – These are identified in the district-wide school safety plan, along with definitions of ICS roles and responsibilities. The Multi-Hazard Emergency Response Guides address specific

procedures and protocols for responding to bomb threat, intruders, hostage takings and kidnapping, including:

- Identification of decision-makers.
- Notification of administrators/agencies - All district administrators, principals, their secretaries and building custodians have a confidential emergency reference card. This card specifically outlines which agency and which administrator(s) need to be contacted under which emergency circumstances. This document is updated as needed and designed to be kept near the phones at work and at home if needed during “off” hours.
- Plans to safeguard students and staff.
- System for student release (reunification).
- Procedures to provide transportation, if necessary.
- Debriefing procedures.

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

- For small-scale incidents, schools may activate their Crisis Team and will refer to their crisis intervention plan. Depending on the incident, school personnel may directly call the parents/legal guardians of all students directly impacted. All other parents/legal guardians will receive an informational notification via the district website and School Messenger. Meetings may be scheduled in a timely manner for further discussion if necessary.
- For any major incident, the Building-Level Emergency Response Team will be activated. The district will be working with the media (TV, radio, newspaper), website, social media and the School Messenger to relay pertinent school related information (i.e., how and where parents can be reunited with children, etc.). Community meetings and/or press conferences may be scheduled in a timely manner to discuss the particulars of the incidents and the district’s response.

#### **Section IV: Communication with Other Agencies**

The District-Wide School Safety Plan provides the framework for the Building-Level Emergency Response Plan with regard to communication with other agencies.

**A.** The Bethlehem Central School District is fortunate to have substantial ties to the Town of Bethlehem. In case of an emergency within any one of our facilities, that facility would dial 911 for emergency assistance. If involvement were needed from other local government agencies, the Superintendent or their designee would act as that contact person. Additional procedures for communications can be found in the Building-Level Emergency Response Plans and the Capital Region BOCES Emergency Communications Network Flowchart. The following examples are the types of arrangements that could be used by the district:

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

**B.** Arrangements for obtaining advice and assistance from local government officials, including town officials responsible for implementation of Article 2-B of the Executive Law, will be carried out through

the protocols established in the Capital Region BOCES Communication Flowchart. The following are examples of the types of arrangements that could be used by the district during countywide emergencies:

- Superintendent (district-wide IC or backup IC) in an emergency will contact the Albany County Emergency Management Coordinator and/or the highest-ranking local government official for obtaining advice and assistance.
  - The district has identified resources for an emergency from the following agencies: Town of Bethlehem Emergency Management Office, Town of Bethlehem Police Department, Albany County Department of Health, American Red Cross, New York State Police, Albany County Sheriff's Office, Albany County Department of Mental Health and Capital Region BOCES Health/Safety/Risk Management Office.
  - If the emergency is within the school district boundaries and has the potential to impact the surrounding community, the Superintendent or designee will notify the appropriate town officials (ex: highway dept., town supervisor, and/or public safety).
- C. If there is an emergency within the district that has the potential to impact bus transportation capabilities either to or from other educational agencies within the district boundaries, the Director of Transportation in close coordination with the school emergency coordinator will activate a phone tree to inform all necessary parties. The phone tree will be located in the Transportation Emergency Relocation Plan. In the event that phones are not operational, media (radio, television, district website and other social media) may be utilized to convey the pertinent emergency information.
- D. Along with the phone tree, the district has access to the following information about each educational agency located in the school district, including information on:
- School population.
  - Number of staff.
  - Transportation needs.
  - Business and home telephone numbers of key officials of each such educational agency.

The details are considered confidential, due to the school-specific information and administrator home phone numbers, and are located in the confidential Building-Level Emergency Response Plan.

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

- **Security Measures and Procedures** – The district procedures require the following: visitor sign-in and visitor badges (during regular school hours), single point of entry, buzz-in door surveillance systems, fingerprinting of employees, volunteer screening, and employee badges. The district also employs school monitors and School Resource Officers (SROs) that are routinely present on campus. Video surveillance and security intrusion systems are also used to improve security.
- **Security Policies** – To further enhance school security and student, faculty and staff safety, the district has the following policies in place:
  - Suspected Child Abuse in a Domestic Setting – 5460 and 5460-R
  - Code of Conduct – 5300
    - Covers Anti-Harassment in the School District, Dignity for All Students, Unlawful Possession of a Weapon on School Grounds, Weapons in School and the Gun-Free Schools Act,
  - School District Officer & Employee Code of Ethics – 2160
  - Drug-Free Workplace – 9320 and 9320-R
  - Drug-Free Workplace Act – 9125

- Emergency Closings – 8134
  - Recruiting and Hiring (covers fingerprinting of prospective school employees ) - 9240
  - School Building Safety – 8110
  - School Safety Plans and Teams – 8130
  - Child Abuse in an Educational Setting – 5465
  - Violent or Disruptive Incident Reporting – 5710
  - Anti-Harassment in the School District – 5062 and 5062-R
- **Identification of Warning Signs** – The Bethlehem Central School District has implemented procedures for the dissemination of materials regarding the early detection of potentially violent behaviors (threat assessment) when deemed appropriate. The district employs school social workers, counselors and psychologists/behavioral specialists who assist the district in identifying early warning signs in students and early intervention/prevention strategies. Designated personnel also play a key role in suicide prevention programs.
  - **Appropriate Prevention and Intervention Strategies**
    - Collaborative efforts with state and local law enforcement officials.
    - Training of hall monitors and other security personnel.
    - Compliance with DASA regulations.
    - Non-violent conflict resolution training programs.
    - OCIP – Off-Campus Intervention Program
    - Extended day school programs.
  - **Prevention and Intervention Programs** – Strategies for improving communication among students, between students and staff and the reporting of potentially violent incidents. Highlights of the major programs are noted below (not all inclusive):

#### **Bethlehem High School (Grades 9-12):**

- Counseling Center – All students are assigned a school counselor who works with the students and parents.
- Pupil Studies Team (PST) – Members (principal, assistant principal, psychologist, school counselors and school nurse) meet monthly to discuss students who are referred by members of the committee or teachers. Specific interventions are developed and staff are assigned to monitor progress.
- Progressive Discipline Process – Teachers discuss behavior with students, communication with parents/legal guardians and use classroom behavior consequences. Teachers write referrals to document behavior that continues after teacher intervention. The student meets with the Assistant Principal or Principal or Class Assistant Principals (CAPs) to discuss the behavior and its consequences.
- Extracurricular Activities – There are extensive opportunities for students to become involved in productive, fun activities before and after school.
- Gender Equity Club, Students for Peace and Survival, Peer Helpers – To foster mutual respect in the high school.
- Mentoring Program – To improve school performance and/or social interactions.
- Key Club – Organized to promote pride and service to school and community.

#### **Middle School (Grades 6-8):**

- Middle School Rights and Expectations – Provided in written form in the Student Code of Conduct.

- Home Base Assemblies – Character and code of conduct.
- Counseling Center – All students are assigned a school counselor who works with the students and parents. Counselors discuss study/organizational skills, goal setting, interim/report card grades, strategies for improving grades/attitudes, learning styles, getting along with others and related topics that concern a student and/or parents.
- Child Study Team – Members (principal, assistant principal, psychologist, intervention counselor, school counselors and school nurse) meet weekly to discuss students who are referred by members of the committee or teachers. Specific interventions are developed and staff are assigned to monitor progress.
- Extracurricular Activities – There are extensive opportunities for students to become involved in productive, fun activities before and after school.
- Student Agenda – The ‘What is Character’ section of the student’s agenda is provided for student reading and teacher use in school to help students learn the skills of making responsible choices and being proactive in facing challenges.
- Progressive Discipline Process – Teachers discuss behavior with students, communication with parents/legal guardians and use classroom behavior consequences. Teachers write referrals to document behavior that continues after teacher intervention. The student meets with the assistant principal or principal to discuss the behavior and its consequences.

### **Elementary Schools (K-5):**

- Character/Bullying Assemblies.
  - Response to complaints protocol.
  - Comprehensive approach to work toward an atmosphere of tolerance school-wide.
  - Conflict resolution.
  - Social skill training.
  - DARE drug education program.
  - K-5 classroom lessons with counselor and psychologist.
  - Reporting system to report serious offense school violence.
  - Feelings; counselor works with all students on the four basic feelings – happy, sad, mad, scared.
  - Problem solving strategies.
  - School-wide approach to appropriate behavior – three rules.
- **Prevention and Intervention Training** – The district’s Human Resources Department has developed descriptions of job duties, the hiring process and the screening process. As required by the SAVE legislation, all employees are fingerprinted and have a criminal background check via the NYS Education Department. All Aides to Students with Disabilities receive the SAVE required de-escalation training (TCIS - Therapeutic Crisis Intervention for Schools).

## **Section VI: Recovery**

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

The district realizes that some emergencies may require external support for an individual school since it may require additional expertise or personnel requirements. If/when a Building-Level Emergency Response Team or Crisis Team is faced with threats of violence or actual violent incidents, the District-Wide Safety Team will assist as follows:

- Acting as a sounding board for the building principal/supervisor of implied or direct threats and/or violent acts.
- Assisting in determining the level of threat and appropriate responses.



- Sending a district-wide team member to support the Building-Level Emergency Response Team.
- Monitoring the situation and adjusting the district’s response as appropriate.
- Assisting with parent/legal guardian, faculty/staff, and media communication.
- Assisting with coordinating building and grounds security.
- Assisting with offering a “backup” crisis team (another school team and/or an outside group) if the affected team needs assistance.
- At the monthly Administration Council meetings, threats and/or violent acts are shared and discussed with administrators.

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

The district realizes that some emergencies may require external support for an individual school since it may require additional expertise or personnel requirements. If/when the Building-Level Emergency Response Team is faced with threats of violence or actual violent incidents, the District-Wide Safety Team will assist as follows:

- Sending a district-wide team member to each affected school building as a liaison between the school building and the district office.
- The team may involve the school physicians, school nurse coordinator, school psychologists or district office administrative staff as needed. If necessary, additional Albany County or Town resources can be called upon.
- Continued feedback from those directly impacted is sought. Building and district support is offered during the incident with projected plans to assist if needed during heightened stressful times such as a re-occurrence of a similar event and anniversaries of the original incident.
- Assisting with parent/legal guardian, student, and faculty/staff debriefing and/or post-incident crisis intervention. If needed, assisting in contacting additional outside mental health resources.
- Assisting the schools with the creation of written statements being distributed to faculty/staff, parents/legal guardians; press releases and media requests through the district’s public information officer and communications office. The district has a large resource of letters, press releases and media procedures that take the burden off the individual school building team.

### **Section VII: Roles & Responsibilities – School/Law Enforcement (SRO)**

- As per Education Law, it is important for schools to define the roles and responsibilities of school personnel, security personnel and law enforcement working in the schools. District officials are committed to cooperating with police officials and other law enforcement authorities to maintain a safe school environment. The District’s Code of Conduct (Policy 5300), Article VII, Section C.2.d defines the relationship between the school administration, students and law enforcement. It also clearly delegates the role of school discipline to the school administration.
- A written contract or memorandum of understanding between the district and local law enforcement shall be developed with input from stakeholders. School Resource Officer’s (SRO’s) primary duty is to protect the school’s environment and to maintain an atmosphere where students, teachers and staff feel safe. A copy of this agreement with the Town of Bethlehem Police Department is attached.