

Hoosick Falls Central School



District-Wide School Safety Plan

September 2018

Route 22, Hoosick Falls, New York

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HOOSICK FALLS CENTRAL SCHOOL DISTRICT

District-wide School Safety Plan

Commissioner's Regulation 155.17 Project 14

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 School Safety Plan is responsive to the needs of the Hoosick Falls K-6 Elementary School and the 7-12 Secondary School, and is consistent with the more detailed emergency response plans required at the school building level. Districts are at risk of a wide variety of acts of violence, and natural and technological disasters. To address these threats, the State of New York has enacted the Safe Schools Against Violence in Education (SAVE) law along with implementing regulations.

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 Hoosick Falls Central School District supports the SAVE Legislation and intends to facilitate the planning process. The Superintendent of Schools encourages and advocates on-going district-wide cooperation and support of Project SAVE.

GENERAL CONSIDERATIONS

A. Purpose

The Hoosick Falls Central School District-wide School Safety Plan was developed pursuant to Commissioner's Regulation 155.17. At the direction of the Hoosick Falls Central School District Board of Education, the Superintendent of Hoosick Falls Central School District identified 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 Hoosick Falls Central School District 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 members of the team and their positions or affiliations are as follows:

- Superintendent
- Business Administrator
- 7-12 Secondary Principal
- UPK-6 Elementary Principal
- UPK-6 Assistant Principal
- 7-12 Assistant Principal
- Director of Special Education
- Superintendent of Buildings and Grounds
- Transportation Supervisor

- Board of Education member
- Parent
- Town Supervisor
- Attendance Teacher/Dean of Discipline
- K-6 Elementary Nurse
- 7-12 Secondary Nurse
- Teacher, K-6 Elementary
- Teacher, 7-12 Secondary

The District-wide Safety Team developed the District-wide School Safety Plan with input from appropriate school employees.

C. Concept of Operations

- The District-wide School Safety Plan is directly linked to the individual Building-level Emergency Response Plans as a matter of protocol. The activation of the Building-level Emergency Response Plan triggers the notification of the chain of command and the assessment of the activation of the District-wide Emergency School Safety Plan and District-wide Response Team.
- The District-wide School Safety Plan was developed through extensive analysis of the local environment, emergency potential, and available resources. Through training and workshops that included school employees, administration, and local emergency services, the plan has been developed to address the specific needs of the Hoosick Falls Central School District and the community.
- In the event of an emergency or violent incident, the initial response to all emergencies at an individual school will be by the School Emergency Response Team, the membership of which is specified in the Building-Level Plan. The Building Principal is responsible for notifying the Superintendent or the highest-ranking person in the chain of command of any necessary Building-level plan activation. This notification shall be accomplished through the use of telephone or the district's radio network.
- Upon the activation of the School Emergency Response Team, the Superintendent of Schools or his/her designee shall be notified and, where appropriate, local emergency officials shall also be notified.
- County and state resources shall supplement the school district's emergency action planning in a number of ways:
 - State and local law enforcement provide building reviews and employee training.
 - Local law enforcement and emergency services participate in planning and training exercises and develop strategies for managing building-level emergencies.
 - A protocol exists for the school district to use certain facilities for sheltering during times of emergencies.
 - A protocol exists for the use of county mental health resources during post-incident response.

D. Plan Review and Public Comment

- Pursuant to Commissioner’s Regulation, Section 155.17 (e)(3), this plan will be made available for public comment at least 30 days prior to its adoption. The School Board shall adopt the District-wide Plan only after one public hearing that provides for the participation of school personnel, parents, students and any other interested parties. The plan shall be formally adopted by the Board of Education.
- Full copies of the District-wide School Safety Plan and any amendments shall be submitted to the New York State Education Department within 30 days of adoption.
- This plan shall be reviewed periodically during the year and maintained by the District-wide School Safety Team. The required annual review shall be completed on or before September 1 of each year after its adoption by the Board of Education. A copy of the plan will be available in the District Office.

RISK REDUCTION/PREVENTION AND INTERVENTION

A. Prevention/Intervention Strategies

Program Initiatives

The district and community has developed a number of programs and activities to aid in risk reduction. These initiatives are run at different age groups within the district.

- K-12 Character Education programming
- Student’s Bill of Rights and Responsibilities
- The district’s Code of Conduct
- The Explorer program.
- Dare Program and Youth Summit – 5th Grade
- Bullying awareness conference for staff members
- The district has anti-bullying awareness programming in place for students
- The district has a substance abuse program
- The Mean Girls program (relational aggression)
- Increased mental health
- Group counseling, individual counseling, and student counseling
- The school district’s mentoring program
- Cyber bullying awareness programming
- District’s smoking cessation programming
- The “Why Try” stay in school program
- The “Upward Bound” program
- Big Brothers/Big Sisters
- Good Touch/Bad Touch
- The district has run internet safety programs for students and parents
- Tuesday’s Child/Thursday’s Child programming used to identify specific students who need assistance
- Project Adventure
- Sex Offender awareness
- The Hoosick Falls Church Association summer youth program
- Identification and fingerprinting for elementary school students

- Fire department role modeling program
- Rescue Squad awareness and recognition program
- SADD (Students Against Drunk Driving)
- College Safety for Girls

Facilities Initiatives

The district has attempted to enhance the security of its facilities through a number of initiatives, including the following:

- The school has developed a parent/visitor sign-in procedure and requires the use of visitor ID badges with visual contact.
- The school has developed limited access for visitors at each building.
- The school district has enhanced entrance door hardware.
- The district has installed surveillance equipment on school buses.
- The district has installed electronic surveillance systems in key areas of the building.
- The school has implemented handheld communication systems for key school officials.
- The district has implemented individual safety plans for students requiring assistance during emergencies.
- The school has implemented classroom emergency procedures.
- The district has implemented an enhanced school bus driver communication system.
- The district has provided identification badges for staff.
- The district’s planned construction project will enhance facility security by changing exterior features of the grounds and adding electronic security.
- The building will be gaining a larger electrical generator to assist with emergency coverage.

Training, Drills, and Exercises

- The district has established policies and procedures for annual multi-hazard school safety training for employees and students. Training includes:
 - An annual review of the Building-level emergency guides and general employee awareness training for building employees.
 - The annual early dismissal drill to test evacuation and sheltering procedures.
 - Each school building conducts fire drills throughout the course of the year in compliance with the SED schedule for the purpose of familiarizing employees and students with emergency procedures.
 - The Building-level tabletop exercise run in cooperation with members of local emergency services.
- The district shall conduct drills and other exercises to test and evaluate the effectiveness of the district emergency response plan. Each building principal will forward a schedule of planned emergency drills and fire drills to the Superintendent by September 1 of each school year. Each principal will be required to complete a minimum number of student drills as follows:

Fire Drills: 8 Fire Drills
 Emergency Drills: 4 Lockdown Drills

Of these 12 Drills, a combination of 8 Fire and Lockdown Drills must occur by December 31st. With the remainder to be completed before the end of the school year.

- The district shall conduct tabletop exercises with the building-level safety teams to test the components of the emergency response plan. The narratives, sequence of events and messaging for each exercise shall be developed by select members of the District-wide Safety Team, Emergency Management consultants and local emergency services. A controller, evaluator and simulator shall conduct each tabletop exercise. The suggestions and necessary enhancements of the Building-level plan noted during the evaluation shall be documented by the evaluator and provided to the Building-level Safety Team and District-wide Safety Team for further evaluation.
- Topics for training will include general security and safety measures, intervention strategies with difficult or challenging students, building security awareness, and reporting requirements and procedures.

In the execution of their duties, faculty, aides and administrators shall have responsibility for:

- Monitoring halls, lavatories, locker rooms, locker bays and similar areas, assuring orderly passage of students and pre-emptive intervention in potentially disruptive situations.
- Observation of the general property, including the immediate outside area/perimeter of the building(s), with an obligation to report suspicious activity to district or building administration.
- Overseeing study halls, cafeterias, or other areas of student assemblage with the goal of assisting to maintain an orderly, safe environment is the responsibility of administrators.

School Safety Personnel

School safety personnel have a critical role in violence prevention. The following represents a description of the responsibilities of school safety personnel in the district:

The building principal or his/her designee shall serve as the School Safety Representative for the school building. The responsibilities of the School Safety Representative are as follows:

- Monitor hallways, entranceways, exits and outside grounds during school hours for unusual occurrences or unauthorized visitors.
- Act as building liaison in communicating building level safety issues or concerns.
 - Represent the building on the District-wide Health and Safety Committee.
 - Serve on building level School Building Response Team.
 - Attend school safety meetings and be a resource on school safety and security issues for building employees.
 - Develop plans and strategies for building security, crime and violence prevention, safety planning and employee training.
 - Participate in school incident investigations.
 - Respond to all school emergencies as part of the building's Emergency Response Plan.
 - Coordinate annual school safety multi-hazard training for students and employees. Multi-hazard training shall include crisis intervention, emergency response and management.
 - Employees and students shall receive annual training and drill practice on protocols for bomb threats, evacuation, sheltering, lock-down, relocate to hallway, fire emergency, bus drills and appropriate violence prevention strategies.
 - Designate procedure for informing substitute teaching and non-teaching employees of school safety protocols.
- Comply and encourage compliance with all school safety and security policies and procedures established by the Board of Education.
- Attend professional development activities on school safety and violence prevention.

All school safety personnel shall be provided with training on violence prevention and school safety. All training courses shall receive prior approval from the Superintendent.

Finger Print and Background Checks

The following hiring and screening practices are followed for the hiring of all personnel:

Fingerprinting and Criminal Background Checks

For all employees hired by the school district, the district completes a fingerprinting and criminal background check prior to appointment. Employees include: any person receiving compensation for work from the school district; any employee of a contracted service provider involved in direct student contact; any worker assigned to a school under a public assistance employment program (includes part-time employees and substitutes) and volunteers (in compliance with OSPRA guidelines).

Reference Checks

References are thoroughly checked prior to extending an employment offer.

- Reference check forms are used for instructional, non-instructional and transportation personnel.
- Reference checks are completed and reviewed by the administrative team along with the application.
- Prior to making a job offer to a prospective employee, the following mandatory questions are asked during reference checks with immediate and/or past supervisors:
 - Do you have knowledge of any violations of safety or security by (prospective employee) related to students, employees or others?
 - Why did (prospective employee) leave your employment? Or, Do you know why (prospective employee) is leaving your employment?
 - Would you rehire (prospective employee)? If no, why not?

B. Early Detection of Potentially Violent Behaviors

The district has implemented policies and procedures related to the early detection of potentially violent behaviors. Each building principal is responsible for the dissemination of informative materials regarding the early detection of potentially violent behaviors to employees and parents each school year. (See Appendix 5). In addition, employees shall receive training on the districts Code-of-Conduct and awareness training on violent behaviors, to be conducted or coordinated by the Superintendent.

C. Hazard Identification

The following sites have the potential for internal or external emergency situations:

Building
Hoosick Falls 7-12 Secondary School Telephone: 518-686-7321 ext. 1500
Hoosick Falls K-6 Elementary School Telephone: 518-686-9492 ext. 1300

The buildings and grounds associated with each of these facilities have the potential for a district or building-level emergency or incident.

The following items/facilities that are proximate to the Hoosick Falls Central School District have been identified as having a potential for presenting emergencies that could affect the district:

- CSX (formerly Conrail)
- Routes 22 and 7 (traffic and hazardous materials transportation)
- Flooding (the river)
- Bennington Airport
- Commercial flammable gas storage proximate to bus garage
- Local industrial sites

RESPONSE

A. Notification and Activation (Internal and External Communications)

- In cases of a serious violent incident, the district would use the procedure listed below to meet the requirements for notification and activation. A serious violent incident is an incident of violent criminal conduct that is, or appears to be, life threatening and warrants the evacuation of students and employees because of an imminent threat to their safety or health, this includes but is not limited to: the use or threatened use of a firearm, explosive, bomb, incendiary device, chemical, or biological weapon, knife or other dangerous instrument capable of causing death or serious injury, riot, hostage-taking, or kidnapping.
 - Communications systems are:

Internal

Teachers and building staff	Public address system
Administrators and Office staff	Activation of emergency all-call system
Students	Public address system and verbally from supervising teachers
Superintendent of Schools	Phone by principal’s secretary
Buildings and Grounds	Phone or radio by principal’s secretary
Board of Education	Phone

External

State Police/Rensselaer County Sheriff	911
County Emergency Dispatch	911
Town of Hoosick Rescue Squad	911
Hoosick Fire Department	911 (Direct to specific entrance)
Parents	By School Messenger All Call system whenever possible; mass direction via radio to a neutral location. Efforts by Hoosick Falls Police Department to keep parents from removing students is paramount
News Media	Superintendent of Schools

- The Superintendent of Schools shall be responsible for conveying emergency information to educational facilities within the Hoosick Falls Central School District. The Superintendent shall take appropriate steps to secure the following information about each educational agency within the

district: number of students, number of employees, transportation requirements associated with the evacuation of each facility; and the business and home telephone numbers of key officials of each agency. Such information shall be updated at least annually by the Superintendent. Each such agency would report material changes to such data to the Superintendent of Schools, in writing, within 7 days of such change.

Non-Public schools within the Hoosick Falls Central School district are:

Hoosac School
Pine Valley Road
PO Box 9
Hoosick, NY 12089
Headmaster Telephone: (518) 686-7331

St. Mary's Academy
4 Parsons Avenue
Hoosick Falls, NY 12090
Principal Telephone: (518) 686-4314 (ext. 201)

Head Start
75 River Road
Hoosick Falls, NY 12090
Center Manager Telephone: (518) 686-5045

A list of daycare centers in the Hoosick Falls Central School District are listed in the building-level plan.

- Information will be provided to parents, guardians or persons in parental relation to the students in the event of a violent incident or an early dismissal through the use of School Connects (preferred option), or via phone at the building level using the student/parent directory and/or local and regional radio and TV stations. These are the same stations that are used to announce official school delays or closings. This information is provided to parents through the School District website and building handbooks. Additionally, if an event occurs at the school district where students cannot be released immediately, a parent/community public information center may be established at:

The Ice-Skating Rink
Barton Avenue, Hoosick Falls
Hoosick Falls Armory

In the event that this public information center is established, parents and community members are encouraged not to report to the school district where a building may be in crisis, but rather gather at the Ice-Skating Rink where regular public information statements will be made by the Superintendent or designee.

B. Situational Responses – Multi-Hazard Response and Response Protocols

Staff cooperation is critical when an act of violence occurs. In the event of a criminal act, bomb threat, civil disturbance, intrusion, hostage-taking, kidnapping, serious violent incident, or other threatening event, staff response may include:

1. Verbal instructions to cease the behavior.
2. Call for assistance from other staff.

3. Verbal instructions to follow classroom emergency procedures based on the administrator's instruction over the public address system.
4. Call law enforcement and other necessary emergency response agencies.
5. Removal of any onlookers that could aggravate the situation.
6. Not invading the space of the individual(s) involved.
7. Removal of any potentially dangerous weapons or objects.
8. Physical restraint if other actions do not stop the violence.

In the event of a violent incident, the following policies and procedures are to be followed at the district level:

- The Superintendent will ensure the building-level team has adequate resources to respond to the emergency.
- The Superintendent will develop a public information strategy to communicate necessary information to the media, parents and staff.
- The District Office will notify the Committee on Special Education (CSE) Chair who is the leader of the district's Crisis Intervention Team of the event.
- The Superintendent will notify appropriate Board of Education members of the incident.
- The Superintendent will notify the BOCES District Superintendent that the school's emergency plan has been activated and file any necessary information with the State Education Department (for example, school bomb threat data cards).

In the event of a violent incident, the following policies and procedures are to be followed at the school building level:

- Student reports an incident to an adult or adult observes an incident.
- Adult takes appropriate action as necessary to respond to the incident.
- A written referral is forwarded to the building principal after the event has been managed.
- School guidance counselor, social worker and nurse are involved when necessary.
- Building principal will conference with the student(s) involved to determine the problems/issues.
- If parental notification is necessary, building principal will contact the parent(s) and may arrange a parent conference.
- Appropriate discipline will be administered following the District Code of Conduct and incident reported to the State Education Department, when appropriate.

Follow-up of the violent incident should include:

1. Investigation of the incident by building principal and law enforcement, as necessary
2. Preparation of written accounts of the incident by all involved as soon as possible but always within 24 hours
3. Review of written accounts by the building principal for any disparities
4. Appropriate disciplinary action according to the code of conduct
5. Review of the entire incident by administration for future planning:
 - a. What happened?
 - b. Where did it happen?
 - c. When did it happen?
 - d. Why did it happen?
 - e. How did it happen?
 - f. How many individuals were involved?
 - g. Are the individuals associated with a group?

- h. How could the incident have been prevented?
 - i. What warning signs were missed?
 - j. What can we do to prevent a future incident?
6. Counseling or other needed support for the victim(s), other students and staff involved in the incident.
 7. Necessary reporting and parental notification.

Each school's building-level plan lists building specific response actions to criminal acts, serious violent incidents, bomb threats, civil disturbance, intrusion, hostage-taking, kidnapping, as well as technological and natural disasters.

Response Protocols

The Hoosick Falls Central School District has a comprehensive multi-hazard Emergency Response Plan. Such plan is updated annually. Copies of the plan are available in each Principal's Office as well as in the Superintendent's Office and the District Office. Elements of the plan include:

- Chain of Command
- Other Relevant Parties
- Emergency Planning Committee
- Emergency Telephone Numbers
- Telephone Tree
- First Aid List
- Fleet List
- A list of hazardous incidents and a response plan for each (e.g. bomb threat, hostage, intruder, natural disaster, structural failure, et. al.)

Chain of Command

Superintendent
 Business Administrator
 7-12 Secondary Principal
 UPK-6 Elementary Principal
 Superintendent of Buildings and Grounds
 Director of Special Education
 7-12 Assistant Principal
 UPK-6 Assistant Principal

Arrangements for Obtaining Emergency Assistance from Local Government

The School's Administration shall use the following process in making arrangements for obtaining assistance during emergencies from emergency services organizations and local county government agencies including the Village and Town of Hoosick Falls:

- Superintendent/Designee in an emergency contacts dispatch point or 911 center for fire or EMS response. Contact information is contained in the Building-Level School Safety Plan in Appendix 11.
- Superintendent/Designee contacts highest-ranking local government official for notification and/or assistance.

Procedures for Obtaining Advice and Assistance from Local Government Officials

The School's Administration shall use the following protocol for obtaining advice and assistance from local government officials including the county or city officials responsible for implementation of Article 2-B of the Executive Law:

- Superintendent/Designee in an emergency will contact 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: (examples include the Red Cross, fire department, police, Rescue Squad, private industry, private individuals, religious organizations and others).

District Resources Available for Use in an Emergency

The Hoosick Falls Central School District has created a comprehensive list of resources available during an emergency, including fuel sources, communications, food service capability, school bus and maintenance vehicle lists, medical supplies, and AED, CPR and First Aid trained staff. Specific information in each of these categories is contained in the building-level plan.

Procedures to Coordinate the Use of School District Resources and Manpower during Emergencies

The district shall use the following procedure to coordinate the use of school district resources and manpower during emergencies:

- The Building Principal of the affected facility shall contact the Superintendent or the District-wide Safety Team and request the necessary manpower or resources.
- The Superintendent of Schools, or the highest-ranking person in the chain of command shall assess the request and allocate personnel and resources as necessary.

Protective Action Options

The Hoosick Falls Central School District shall follow the protocols set forth below in assessing the appropriate protective action option. The decision to cancel school, to dismiss early, shelter in place or evacuate shall be made in cooperation with state and local emergency responders as appropriate.

- School cancellation
 - Monitor any situation that may warrant a school cancellation – *Superintendent/ District Team.*
 - Make determination – *Superintendent.*
 - Contact local media – *Superintendent.*
- School delay
 - Monitor any situation that may warrant school delay – *Building Administrators/ Superintendent/District Team.*
 - If conditions warrant, delay opening of school – *Superintendent.*
 - Contact Transportation Supervisor to coordinate transportation issues.
 - Contact local media to inform parents of delayed opening.
 - Set up information center so that parents may make inquiries as to situation.
 - Provide for safety and security of employees and students who do come to school.
- Early dismissal
 - Monitor situation – *Superintendent/District Team.*
 - If conditions warrant, close school – *Superintendent.*

- Contact Transportation Supervisor to arrange transportation.
 - Contact local media to inform parents of early dismissal.
 - Set up an information center so that parents may make inquiries as to the situation.
 - Retain appropriate district personnel until all students have been returned home.
- Evacuation (before, during and after school hours, including security during evacuation and evacuation routes)
 - Determine the level of threat – *Superintendent*.
 - Contact Transportation Supervisor to arrange transportation – *Superintendent or Designee*.
 - Clear all evacuation routes and sites prior to evacuation.
 - Evacuate all employees and students to pre-arranged evacuation sites.
 - Account for all students, employees and visitors. Report any missing employees, students or visitors to Building Principal.
 - Verify the building is safe for re-occupancy.
 - Make determination regarding early dismissal – *Superintendent or Designee*.
 - If determination was made to dismiss early, contact local media to inform parents of early dismissal.
 - Ensure adult supervision or continued school supervision/security.
 - Set up an information center so that parents may make inquiries as to the situation.
 - Retain appropriate district personnel until all students have been returned home.
 - Verify the building is safe for re-occupancy.
- Sheltering sites (internal and external)
 - Determine the level of threat – *Superintendent/Incident Commander /Designee*.
 - Determine location of sheltering depending on nature of incident.
 - Account for all students and employees. Report any missing employees or students to designee.
 - Determine other occupants in the building.
 - Make appropriate arrangements for human needs.
 - Take appropriate safety precautions.
 - Establish a public information officer to provide information and current status of the situation to parents and other inquiring parties.
 - Retain appropriate district personnel until all students have been returned home.

RECOVERY

A. District Support for Buildings

The Hoosick Falls Central School District District-wide Team will support the Building-level Emergency Response Team and the Crisis/Post-Incident Response Teams in affected schools.

B. Disaster Mental Health Services

The district office shall assist in the coordination of Disaster Mental Health Resources, in support of the Post-Incident Response Teams in the affected schools. The Superintendent or his/her designee may gain additional resources as the situation requires. Potential providers include the Hoosick Falls Church Association, Unified Services, Samaritan Hospital, and the Rensselaer County Department of Mental Health.

APPENDICES

Appendix 1:

Listing of all school buildings covered by the District-wide School Safety Plan with addresses of buildings, and contact names and telephone numbers for building employees.

Listing of District-wide Safety Team Members.

Appendix 2:

Summary of Building-level plan.

Appendix 3:

Copy of the Hoosick Falls Central School District Code-of-Conduct.

Appendix 4:

Internal resources of the Hoosick Falls Central School District.

Appendix 5:

The Early Detection of Potentially Violent Behaviors – A Guide for Families and Communities

Appendix 1 - Listing of all school buildings covered by the District.

Hoosick Falls Central School District Office

21187 Route 22

Hoosick Falls, NY 12090

Telephone: 518-686-7012

Hoosick Falls 7-12 Secondary School

21187 Route 22

Hoosick Falls, NY 12090

Telephone: 518-686-7321

Hoosick Falls K-6 Elementary School

21187 Route 22

Hoosick Falls, NY 12090

Telephone: 518-686-9492

Hoosick Falls Bus Garage

21429 Route 22

Hoosick Falls, NY 12090

Telephone: 518-686-9663

Appendix 1

District-Wide Safety Team Membership 2018-2019 School Year

Superintendent
Business Administrator
7-12 Secondary Principal
UPK- 6 Elementary Principal
Director of Special Education
7-12 Assistant Principal
UPK-6 Assistant Principal
Superintendent of Buildings and Grounds
Transportation Supervisor
K-6 Elementary Nurse
7-12 Secondary Nurse
Teacher, K-6 Elementary
Teacher, 7-12 Secondary

Appendix 2

Hoosick Falls Central School District Building-Level Emergency Response Plan Summary

Commissioner's Regulation 155.17

INTRODUCTION

Emergencies in schools must be addressed in an expeditious and effective manner. Schools are at risk 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 schools.

The Hoosick Falls Central School District supports the SAVE Legislation and intends to facilitate the planning process. The Superintendent of Schools encourages and advocates on-going district-wide cooperation and support of Project SAVE.

GENERAL CONSIDERATIONS AND GUIDELINES

A. Purpose

The Hoosick Falls Central School District's Building-level Emergency Response Plan was developed pursuant to Commissioner's Regulation 155.17. At the direction of the Hoosick Falls Central School District Board of Education, the Principals of the Hoosick Falls Central School District schools appointed a Building-level School Safety Team and charged it with the development and maintenance of the School Emergency Response Plan.

B. Identification of School Teams

Each building has developed three emergency teams:

- Building-level School Safety Team
- Building-level School Emergency Response Team
- Building-level Post-incident Response Team

C. Concept of Operations

- The initial response to all emergencies will be by the School Emergency Response Team.
- Upon the activation of the School Emergency Response Team, the Superintendent of Schools 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.

D. Plan review and public comment

- This plan will be reviewed periodically during the year and will be maintained by the Building-level School Safety Team. The required annual review will be completed on or before September 1 of each year after its adoption by the Board of Education.

- Pursuant to Commissioner’s Regulation 155.17 (e)(3), a summary of this plan will be made available for public comment at least 30 days prior to its adoption. The School Board may adopt the district-wide and building-level plans only after at least one public hearing that provides for the participation of school personnel, parents, students and any other interested parties. The plans must be formally adopted by the Board of Education.
- 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 Education Law Section 2801-a.
- Full copies of the Building-level Emergency Response Plan will be supplied to both local and State Police within 30 days of adoption but no later than October 15 of each year.

PLAN SUMMARY

RISK REDUCTION/PREVENTION AND INTERVENTION

A. Designation of School Teams

- A Building-level School Safety Team, including the members required by regulation, has been created. Members of the team include: school safety personnel; local law enforcement officials; representatives of teacher, administrator, and parent organizations; local ambulance and other emergency response agencies; community members; other school personnel; and other representatives appointed by the Board of Education.
- A Building-level Emergency Response Team, including the members required by regulation, has been created. Members of the team include: school personnel, local law enforcement officials, representatives from local, regional, and/or State emergency response agencies; and other appropriate incident response teams.
- A Building-level Post-incident Response Team, including the members required by regulation, has been created. Members of the team include: school personnel; medical personnel; mental health counselors; and others who can assist the school community in coping with the aftermath of a serious violent incident or emergency.

B. Prevention/Intervention Strategies

- Training for emergency teams and individuals who have safety responsibility, including de-escalation training, has been conducted as determined in the district-wide plan.
- Procedures for an annual review and the conduct of drills and exercises to test components of this school’s plan, including the use of tabletop exercises, in coordination with local and county emergency responders and preparedness officials have been developed and will be implemented.
- The District-wide School Safety Plan requires annual multi-hazard training for students and staff. The school’s plan describes how this training will be provided to staff and students in the building.

C. Identification of Sites of Potential Emergencies

The District-wide School Safety Plan requires an identification of sites of potential emergency. The Building-level School Safety Team has identified both internal and external hazards that may warrant protective actions, such as the evacuation and sheltering of the school population.

RESPONSE

A. Assignment of Responsibilities

A chain of command consistent with the National Interagency Incident Management System (NIIMS)/Incident Command System (ICS) will be used in response to an emergency in the building. In the event of an emergency, the building's response team may adapt NIIMS/ICS principles based on the needs of the incident.

B. Continuity of Operations

The building has developed procedures to continue operations during an emergency.

C. Access to Floor Plans

Procedures have been developed to ensure that crisis response, fire and law enforcement agencies have access to floor plans, blueprints, schematics or other maps of the school's interior, school grounds and road maps of the immediate surrounding area.

D. Notification and Activation

Procedures have been developed to ensure that crisis response, fire and law enforcement agencies have access to floor plans, blueprints, schematics or other maps of the school's interior, school grounds and road maps of the immediate surrounding area.

Internal and external communication systems have been developed that will be used in emergencies.

Procedures are in place for notification and activation of the Building-level Emergency Response Plan.

E. Hazard Guidelines

The District-wide School Safety Plan includes multi-hazard response plans for taking actions in response to an emergency. The school building's plan includes building-specific guidelines for the following types of emergencies: Threats of Violence, Intruder, Hostage/Kidnapping, Explosive/Bomb Threat, Natural/Weather Related, Hazardous Material, Civil Disturbance, Biological, School Bus Accident, Radiological, Gas Leak, Epidemic, or Others as determined by the Building-level School Safety Team

F. Evacuation Procedures

Policies and procedures have been developed for the safe evacuation of students, teachers, other school personnel and visitors to the school in the event of a serious violent incident which include at least the following:

- Evacuation before, during and after school hours (including security during evacuation)
- Evacuation routes (internal & external)
- Sheltering sites (internal & external)
- Procedures for addressing medical needs
- Transportation
- Emergency notification of persons in parental relation to the students
- Other procedures as determined by the Building-level School Safety Team.

G. Security of Crime Scene

Policies and procedures have been established for securing and restricting access to the crime scene in order to preserve evidence from being disturbed or destroyed in cases of violent crimes on school property.

RECOVERY

The Building-level Emergency Response Plan will be coordinated 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.

Short-term actions for recovery include:

- Mental health counseling (students and staff)
- Building security
- Facility restoration
- Post-incident response critique
- Other

Long-term actions for recovery include:

- Mental health counseling (monitor for post-traumatic stress behavior)
- Building security
- Mitigation (to reduce the likelihood of occurrence and impact if it does occur again)
- Other

Appendix 3

Copies of the Student Handbooks are inserted in this section.

Appendix 4 - Listing of internal resources for Hoosick Falls Central School District.

The District has the following resources available during times of crisis:

Fuel Sources

The district has a number of forms of fuel sources available for emergency use. For specific information consult building level plans.

Communications

The district has radios that have been distributed to key personnel in the buildings. For complete information refer to the building-level plan.

Food Service Capability

Each building-level plan lists the school's ability to provide food during times of emergencies, including total number of meals available on hand, and information on how kitchen appliances are powered.

Vehicle List

Each building-level plan lists the school bus vehicles and maintenance vehicles that might be available during times of emergency.

Medical Supplies

Each building-level plan lists medical supplies available during emergencies through the health office, as well as lists of AED, First Aid and CPR trained staff members.

Appendix 5 - The Early Detection of Potentially Violent Behaviors – A Guide for Families and Communities

Early Warning Signs

It is not always possible to predict behavior that will lead to violence. In some situations and for some youth, different combinations of events, behaviors, and emotions may lead to aggressive rage or violent behavior toward self or others. School personnel and students as well as parents are often in a good position to observe these early warning signs.

None of these signs alone is sufficient for predicting aggression and violence. Moreover, it is inappropriate--and potentially harmful--to use the early warning signs as a checklist against which to match individual children. Rather, the warning signs are offered only as an aid in identifying and referring children who may need help. A good rule of thumb is to assume that these warning signs, especially when they are presented in combination, indicate a need for further analysis to determine an appropriate intervention.

The information that follows and such other information as may be appropriate concerning Early Warning shall be made available to all employees in a form to be determined by the Superintendent. It is the policy of the Hoosick Falls Central School District that employees and students use the early warning signs only for identification and referral purposes. Trained professionals should make diagnoses in consultation with the child's parents or guardian.

The following early warning signs are cited by the United States Department of Education in its publication entitled **Early Warning, Timely Response: A Guide to Safe Schools** and are presented with the following qualifications: they are not equally significant and they are not presented in order of seriousness. They include:

- Social withdrawal. In some situations, gradual and eventually complete withdrawal from social contacts can be an important indicator of a troubled child. The withdrawal often stems from feelings of depression, rejection, persecution, unworthiness, and lack of confidence.
- Excessive feelings of isolation and being alone. Research has shown that the majority of children who are isolated and appear to be friendless are not violent. In fact, these feelings are sometimes characteristic of children and youth who may be troubled, withdrawn, or have internal issues that hinder development of social affiliations. However, research also has shown that in some cases feelings of isolation and not having friends are associated with children who behave aggressively and violently.
- Excessive feelings of rejection. In the process of growing up, and in the course of adolescent development, many young people experience emotionally painful rejection. Children who are troubled often are isolated from their mentally healthy peers. Their responses to rejection will depend on many background factors. Without support, they may be at risk of expressing their emotional distress in negative ways-including violence. Some aggressive children who are rejected by non-aggressive peers seek out aggressive friends who, in turn, reinforce their violent tendencies.
- Being a victim of violence. Children who are victims of violence-including physical or sexual abuse-in the community, at school, or at home are sometimes at risk themselves of becoming violent toward themselves or others.

- Feelings of being picked on and persecuted. The youth who feels constantly picked on, teased, bullied, singled out for ridicule, and humiliated at home or at school may initially withdraw socially. If not given adequate support in addressing these feelings, some children may vent them in inappropriate ways—including possible aggression or violence.
- Low school interest and poor academic performance. Poor school achievement can be the result of many factors. It is important to consider whether there is a drastic change in performance and/or poor performance becomes a chronic condition that limits the child's capacity to learn. In some situations--such as when the low achiever feels frustrated, unworthy, chastised, and denigrated--acting out and aggressive behaviors may occur. It is important to assess the emotional and cognitive reasons for the academic performance change to determine the true nature of the problem.
- Expression of violence in writings and drawings. Children and youth often express their thoughts, feelings, desires, and intentions in their drawings and in stories, poetry, and other written expressive forms. Many children produce work about violent themes that for the most part is harmless when taken in context. However, an overrepresentation of violence in writings and drawings that is directed at specific individuals (family members, peers, other adults) consistently over time, may signal emotional problems and the potential for violence. Because there is a real danger in misdiagnosing such a sign, it is important to seek the guidance of a qualified professional--such as a school psychologist, counselor, or other mental health specialist--to determine its meaning.
- Uncontrolled anger. Everyone gets angry; anger is a natural emotion. However, anger that is expressed frequently and intensely in response to minor irritants may signal potential violent behavior toward self or others.
- Patterns of impulsive and chronic hitting, intimidating, and bullying behaviors. Children often engage in acts of shoving and mild aggression. However, some mildly aggressive behaviors such as constant hitting and bullying of others that occur early in children's lives, if left unattended, might later escalate into more serious behaviors.
- History of discipline problems. Chronic behavior and disciplinary problems both in school and at home may suggest that underlying emotional needs are not being met. These unmet needs may be manifested in acting out and aggressive behaviors. These problems may set the stage for the child to violate norms and rules, defy authority, disengage from school, and engage in aggressive behaviors with other children and adults.
- Past history of violent and aggressive behavior. Unless provided with support and counseling, a youth who has a history of aggressive or violent behavior is likely to repeat those behaviors. Aggressive and violent acts may be directed toward other individuals, be expressed in cruelty to animals, or include fire setting. Youth who show an early pattern of antisocial behavior frequently and across multiple settings are particularly at risk for future aggressive and antisocial behavior. Similarly, youth who engage in overt behaviors such as bullying, generalized aggression and defiance, and covert behaviors such as stealing, vandalism, lying, cheating, and fire setting also are at risk for more serious aggressive behavior. Research suggests that age of onset may be a key factor in interpreting early warning signs. For example, children who engage in aggression and drug abuse at an early age (before age 12) are more likely to show violence later on than are

children who begin such behavior at an older age. In the presence of such signs it is important to review the child's history with behavioral experts and seek parents' observations and insights.

- Intolerance for differences and prejudicial attitudes. All children have likes and dislikes. However, an intense prejudice toward others based on racial, ethnic, religious, language, gender, sexual orientation, ability, and physical appearance--when coupled with other factors--may lead to violent assaults against those who are perceived to be different. Membership in hate groups or the willingness to victimize individuals with disabilities or health problems also should be treated as early warning signs.
- Drug use and alcohol use. Apart from being unhealthy behaviors, drug use and alcohol use reduces self-control and exposes children and youth to violence, either as perpetrators, as victims, or both.
- Affiliation with gangs. Gangs that support anti-social values and behaviors--including extortion, intimidation, and acts of violence toward other students--cause fear and stress among other students. Youth who are influenced by these groups--those who emulate and copy their behavior, as well as those who become affiliated with them--may adopt these values and act in violent or aggressive ways in certain situations. Gang-related violence and turf battles are common occurrences tied to the use of drugs that often result in injury and/or death.
- Inappropriate access to, possession and use of firearms. Children and youth who inappropriately possess or have access to firearms can have an increased risk for violence. Research shows that such youngsters also have a higher probability of becoming victims. Families can reduce inappropriate access and use by restricting, monitoring, and supervising children's access to firearms and other weapons. Children who have a history of aggression, impulsiveness, or other emotional problems should not have access to firearms and other weapons.
- Serious threats of violence. Idle threats are a common response to frustration. Alternatively, one of the most reliable indicators that a youth is likely to commit a dangerous act toward self or others is a detailed and specific threat to use violence. Recent incidents across the country clearly indicate that threats to commit violence against oneself or others should be taken very seriously. Steps must be taken to understand the nature of these threats and to prevent them from being carried out.

Identifying and Responding to Imminent Warning Signs

Unlike early warning signs, imminent warning signs indicate that a student is very close to behaving in a way that is potentially dangerous to self and/or to others. Imminent warning signs require an immediate response.

No single warning sign can predict that a dangerous act will occur. Rather, imminent warning signs usually are presented as a sequence of overt, serious, hostile behaviors or threats directed at peers, employees, or other individuals. Usually, imminent warning signs are evident to more than one employee member--as well as to the child's family.

Imminent warning signs may include:

- Serious physical fighting with peers or family members.
- Severe destruction of property.
- Severe rage for seemingly minor reasons.

- Detailed threats of lethal violence.
- Possession and/or use of firearms and other weapons.
- Other self-injurious behaviors or threats of suicide.

Threat Assessment

A threat is an expression of intent to do harm or act out violently against someone or something. A threat can be written, spoken, or symbolic – as in motioning with one’s hands as though shooting or strangling another person. There are principally four types of threats – direct, indirect, veiled and conditional.

Threats are made for a variety of reasons: as a warning signal, a reaction to fear of punishment, anxiety, demand for attention or as retribution for a perceived or actual slight or affront. Threats may be intended to taunt, intimidate, assert power, punish, manipulate, coerce, frighten, terrorize, compel desired behavior, to strike back for an injury, injustice or slight; to be disruptive, to challenge authority or to protect oneself.

Individuals who make threats normally manifest other behaviors or emotions that are indicative of a problem. These can include: signs of depression, prolonged brooding, evidence of frustration or disappointment; fantasies of destruction or revenge in conversations, writings, drawings or other actions; expressions of intense love, fear, rage, revenge, excitement or pronounced desire for recognition. Use of alcohol or drugs can be an aggravating factor, as can a romantic breakup, failing grades or conflicts with parents or friends.

Personality Traits

Personality traits and behaviors that should be considered in assessing the likelihood of a student carrying out a threat include:

- a student intentionally or unintentionally revealing clues to feelings, thoughts, fantasies, attitudes, or intentions that may signal an impending violent act;
- low tolerance of frustration, easily hurt, insulted, angered by real or perceived injustices;
- poor coping skills, demonstrating little ability to deal with frustration, criticism, disappointment, failure, rejection or humiliation;
- lack of resiliency, is unable to bounce back from frustrating and disappointing experiences; failed love relationship, cannot accept or comes to term with humiliation or rejection;
- injustice collector, nurses resentment over real or perceived injustices, will not forgive or forget those who s/he believes are responsible;
- depression manifested by lethargy, physical fatigue, morose or dark outlook on life, malaise, lack of interest in activities once enjoyed, unpredictable anger, generalized or excessive hatred to others, hopelessness about the future, psychomotor agitation, restlessness, inattention, sleep and eating disorders;
- narcissism, self-centered, lacking insight to the needs / feelings of others, blames others for failure and disappointment, may embrace the role of victim, display signs of paranoia, self-importance or grandiosity masking feelings of unworthiness, notably thick or thin skinned;
- alienation, feels different or estranged from others, more than being a loner, involves feelings of isolation, sadness, loneliness, not belonging or fitting in;
- dehumanizes others, fails to see others as humans, sees them as objects to be thwarted;
- lacks empathy, demonstrates inability to understand feelings of others, may ridicule displays of emotion as weak or stupid;
- exaggerated sense of entitlement, has a sense of being superior and constantly expects special treatment and consideration;

- attitude of superiority, has a sense of being superior to others, smarter, more creative, talented, experienced, more worldly;
- exaggerated / pathological need for attention, positive or negative, regardless of the circumstances;
- externalizes blame, consistently refuses to take responsibility for own actions, blames others, often seems impervious to rational argument and common sense;
- masks low self-esteem, may display arrogance, self-glorifying attitude, avoids high visibility or involvement, may be considered a “non-entity” by peers:
- anger management problems, manifested by consistent temper tantrums, melodramatic displays, brooding, sulking, seething silence, reacts out of proportion to cause, may direct anger to those who have no connection to triggering incident;
- intolerance; racial, ethnic, religious and other, displays symbols and slogans of intolerance on self or possessions;
- inappropriate humor, macabre, insulting, belittling, or mean.
- Attempts to manipulate others, attempts to con and manipulate to win trust so others will rationalize aberrant behavior;
- Lack of trust, is untrusting and suspicious of the motives and intentions of others, may approach clinically paranoid state;
- Closed social group, introverted, with acquaintances rather than friends, may associate only with a single small group to the exclusion of others;
- Manifests a dramatic change in behavior, academic performance, disobedience of school rules, schedules, dress codes etc.
- Rigid and opinionated, judgemental and cynical, strong opinions on topics about which little knowledge is possessed, disregards facts, logic and reasoning;
- Demonstrates unusual interest in sensational violence;
- Fascination with violence-filled entertainment, movies, TV, computer games, music videos, printed material, inordinate amount of time with violent computer games and websites involving violence weapons and disturbing objects;
- Has negative role models, drawn to negative, inappropriate role models, Hitler, Satan or others associated with violence and destruction;
- Manifests behavior that is relevant to carrying out a threat, spends inordinate amount of time practicing with firearms, on violent websites, begins excluding normal pursuits such as homework, class, work, and/or time with friends.

Family Dynamics

Family dynamics that should be considered in assessing the likelihood of a student carrying out a threat include:

- Turbulent parent / child relationship, relationship is particularly difficult, can be uniquely evident following recent or multiple moves, loss of parent, addition of step-parent, dismisses parents role in his / her life, evidence of violence in the home;
- Acceptance of pathological behavior, parents do not react to behavior that most would find disturbing, parents appear unable to recognize or acknowledge problems in their children, respond quite defensively to real or perceived criticism of child, parents appear unconcerned about, minimize or reject reports of inappropriate behavior by child;
- Access to weapons, family keeps guns, weapons, explosives materials in the home and accessible to the children, weapons treated carelessly, without normal safety precautions, parent or role model may handle weapons irresponsibly or use as devices for intimidation;
- Lack of family intimacy or closeness;
- Student “rules the roost,” few limits set for children, parents regularly submit to child’s demands, student insists on inordinate degree of privacy, parents have little information about student activities, school life, friends, or other relationships.

- No limits or monitoring of TV or Internet, parents do not supervise, limit or monitor TV, Internet, computer use or access.

School Dynamics

School dynamics that should be considered in assessing the likelihood of a student carrying out a threat include:

- Student attachment to school, student appears detached from school, other students, teachers, and school activities;
- Tolerance for disrespectful behavior, school does little to prevent or punish disrespectful behavior between students, bullying is part of the school culture, school authorities are oblivious to bullying, little or no intervention by school authorities, school atmosphere promotes racial or class divisions, allows them to remain unchallenged;
- Inequitable discipline, discipline is inequitably applied or is perceived as such by students or employees;
- Inflexible culture, official and unofficial patterns of behavior, values and relationships among students, teachers and administrators are static, unyielding and insensitive to changes in society and the changing needs of newer students;
- Pecking order among students, certain groups have more prestige and respect – both officially and unofficially by students and school officials;
- Code of silence, prevails among students, little trust between students and employees;
- Unsupervised computer access, access is unsupervised and unmonitored, students are able to play violent games, explore inappropriate websites, promote violent hate groups, give instruction in bomb making etc.

Social Dynamics

Social dynamics that should be considered in assessing the likelihood of a student carrying out a threat include:

- Media, entertainment and technology; easy unmonitored access to media, entertainment and Internet sites with violent themes and images;
- Peer groups; intense and extensive involvement with a group that shares fascination with violence or extremist beliefs;
- Drugs and alcohol; knowledge of student's use of drugs or alcohol or changes in such use is important;
- Outside interests; outside interests of students are important to note as they can mitigate or increase the school's level of concern in assessing a threat;
- Copycat effect; school shooting and other violent incidents that receive intense media attention can generate threats or copycat violence elsewhere, school employees should be highly vigilant in the aftermath of such incidents.