



# **School Safety Plan**

## **2019-2020**

# Vital Information Fact Sheet

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# Introduction

Emergencies and violent incidents 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 potential 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.

Academy of Health Sciences Charter School supports the SAVE legislation, and intends to facilitate the planning and implementation process in order to be prepared, protect students and staff, and quickly disseminate information to parents/guardians and the appropriate authorities. Our Safety Plan and Emergency Response Procedures represents a comprehensive planning effort that addresses risk reduction/prevention, response and recovery with respect to a variety of emergencies that could occur in our school. The Academy of Health Sciences Charter School Board of Trustees and administration encourages and advocates on-going school-wide cooperation and support of Project SAVE.

# I. General Considerations and Planning Guidelines

## A. Purpose

Academy of Health Sciences Charter School's Safety Plan was developed pursuant to Commissioner's Regulation 155.17 to properly plan for and address appropriate responses to a variety of emergency situations. At the direction of the Academy of Health Sciences Charter School Board of Trustees, the Principal appointed a building-level School Safety Team and charged it with the development and maintenance of the building-level Safety Plan and Emergency Response Procedures.

## B. Designation of School Safety Officers

The Director of Operations is designated as the District Chief Emergency Officer. The duties of the District Chief Emergency Officer include but are not limited to:

- coordination of communication between school staff, law enforcement, and other first responders;
- leading the efforts of the School Safety Team in the completion and yearly update of the district-wide safety plan and the building-level emergency response procedures by the dates designated by the Commissioner;
- ensuring staff understanding of the district-wide school safety plan;
- assisting in the selection of security related technology and the development of procedures for the use of such technology;
- coordination of appropriate safety, security, and emergency training for all staff; and
- ensuring the conduct of required drills as required by Education Law section 807.

Every member of our staff is integral to the overall safety of our school and the School Safety Team is identified below.

The School Safety team is responsible for helping to identify possible risks, assist with the planning process, and assist with subsequent revisions of the School Safety Plan. The following positions comprise the School Safety team:

- Principal
- Director of Operations
- Dean of Students
- Counselor
- Representative of the Board of Trustees
- Parent representative

- Teacher representative

### **C. Plan Review and Approval**

- The School Safety Plan will be formally adopted by AHS's Board of Trustees and subsequently recommended for approval from the State Education Department.
- As it is a "living document", the plan will be reviewed periodically during the year and will be monitored and maintained by the Building-level School Safety Team. The required annual review by the School Safety Team will be completed on or before July 1 of each year and the revised plan will be approved by the Board of Trustees by September 1 of each year. Local officials including police and fire responders may be consulted for advice and assistance in revising the Safety Plan on an annual basis.
- Full copies of this plan will be provided to both local and state police within 30 days of adoption.
- This 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.

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

Upon approval of the School Safety Plan and Emergency Response Procedures, the members of the Chain of Command will meet with appropriate officials within Rochester to disseminate the plan. Further, the School Safety Team will identify resources for an emergency from: the Red Cross, the Salvation Army, the Rochester YMCA, and the Rochester Police and Fire Departments.

## II. Risk Reduction/Prevention and Intervention

### A. Prevention and Intervention Strategies

#### School Culture

Academy of Health Sciences Charter School believes that a strong school culture based on high expectations and mutual respect promotes a safe learning environment that prevents violent or dangerous behaviors from occurring. The following are some of the initiatives at AHS that promote a strong school culture and safe learning environment:

- AHS holds students accountable to a Code of Conduct as published in our annual Student & Family Handbook.
- AHS implements the requirements of the Dignity for All Students Act in order to prevent discrimination, harassment or bullying.
- AHS believes in the importance of setting forth high expectations for all community members. Character Education at AHS is achieved through a full-school culture and expectations setting process by which all students, staff, and families internalize high expectations and investment into the school community and their individual goals.
- Students are also taught conflict resolution and anti-bullying strategies by all staff through a restorative practices principles including: 1. Restorative Practices focuses on harms rather than rules or persons and the consequent needs of victims, offenders and communities. 2. Restorative Practices addresses obligations of the offender resulting from those harms, as well as the community's obligations to both victims and offenders. 3. Restorative Practices uses inclusive, collaborative processes. 4. Restorative Practices involves all individuals (victims, offenders, parents, students, staff, and faculty) who have a legitimate stake in a given situation. 5. Restorative Practices seeks to put right the wrongs that have been done, so that victims feel safe and valued, and offenders feel restored to the school community.
- The role of the dean of students and school counselor is to provide interventions to any student experiencing emotional and/or behavioral challenges that may negatively impact their well-being and the well-being of others.
- Students are encouraged to approach any staff member in the building whenever they have a concern, especially when it involves violence,

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danger, or an emergency. They will be taught, “When you see something, say something.” Parents have an open line of communication to school leadership via phone call, text, emails all times for all matters, including safety and violence prevention. Parents are strongly encouraged to visit and observe within classroom as well as attend parent meetings that support student safety and success.

### Staff Monitoring & Prevention

Staff routinely observe classrooms, offices, and hallways in order to monitor for any potential emergency situations. A strong staff presence also provides a sense of safety and helps prevent dangerous situations. The following are some of the ways that staff supervise the building for safety on a daily basis:

- AHS conducts background checks through NYSED on all staff and volunteers having contact with students.
- The Executive Assistant’s office is located inside the main entrance in order to continually monitor access to the school building.
- The Principal, Dean of Students, and Counselor frequently monitor halls and participate in arrival, lunch, and dismissal duties in order to monitor behavior.
- Various staff members, including the Director of Operations, have 2-way radios by which they can communicate with the main office for immediate assistance.

## **B. Training, Drills and Exercises**

### Training

- Staff will receive appropriate training in emergency procedures, violence prevention, and mental health by September 15 of each year or within 30 days of hire, whichever is sooner. Staff members will receive training on response to a variety of hazards, including intruders, severe natural disasters, and weather emergencies.
- Students will be instructed in basic emergency response to hazards such as fire. Students will be instructed in the procedure to be followed in the event that a fire occurs during lunch or assembly. This training will be age-appropriate, and provided either by teachers or local authorities.

### Drills:

In order to test components of the emergency response plan, the School Safety Team will regularly conduct building-wide drills, including fire, general evacuation, and lockdown. To ensure preparedness of students and staff, AHS varies its drills, including holding unannounced drills and drills at different times of the school day. The Director of Operations keeps an electronic log of drills. Each drill will be followed by a meeting of the Safety Team to assess necessary improvements/alterations. At least eight of the required drills will be conducted by Dec. 31 of each year.

- Evacuation Drills: In accordance with NYSED regulations, evacuation (e.g. fire) drills will be conducted at least eight times per school year. At least

- four drills will include secondary means of egress. At least one drill will be an early dismissal drill no more than 15 minutes before regularly scheduled dismissal; this drill will include notifying parents/guardians at least one week prior to the drill and testing the usefulness of communications and transportation systems during emergencies.
- Lockdown Drills: In accordance with NSYED regulations, lockdown drills will be conducted at least four times per school year, including applicable communication and transportation procedures. Staff and students will receive clarifying feedback and instruction prior to and after the test to increase understanding, decrease anxiety and enhance the efficacy of the plan.
  - Other Drills: AHS may also conduct shelter-in-place, lock-out, early dismissal or bus drills as necessary to test preparedness.

### **C. Implementation of School Security**

- AHS will work collaboratively with local law enforcement, specifically the Rochester Police Department, to assess the overall effectiveness of our school safety and emergency response protocols and procedures.
- AHS will also provide interior floor plans to the local fire department, police department, and Rochester City School District; detailed floor plans are also on file with Education Success Foundation's Facility Manager. Plans of each floor are also posted in each classroom and office.
- The Executive Assistant monitors internal and external security cameras throughout the day. The Principal and Director of Operations also have access to view security cameras. Camera footage is kept on a server for 30 days.
- All school entrances are secured with electronic controlled access systems. To enter the main entrance, all visitors must ring a doorbell and the Executive Assistant will release the lock. All visitors must proceed to the main office, where the Executive Assistant will log the visitor's identity. The Director of Operations will maintain a log of restricted individuals so that the Executive Assistant can prevent their entry. The Executive Assistant then alerts staff of the visitor upon their arrival, and visitors are escorted to their destination by an AHS staff member.
- All AHS staff, students, and visitors wear an ID card on a lanyard whenever they are in the school building in order to be easily identified.
- Release of students: Executive Assistant conducts attendance tally by 10:30 AM daily. The Executive Assistant limits release of students during non-dismissal hours to those accompanied by an approved parent/guardian as deemed by school records. At the end of the school day, the Principal monitors any students remaining after dismissal, so that no student is left unmonitored after school hours, and conducts an "all-clear" prior to leaving the building. If a parent is unable or unwilling to accept a child, the school shall first contact other family members or designated emergency contacts; if necessary, the school will contact Child

Protective Services or 911 as a last resort for temporary placement.

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

The school acknowledges the importance of early recognition and intervention into conflicts and potentially violent behaviors.

Policies, procedures, and strategies to detect and prevent potentially violent behaviors are communicated and established during staff training prior to the start of the school year. They are also regularly reviewed and staff receive customized coaching support that ensures the successful and consistent implementation of these policies, procedures, and strategies. A key component of the overall strategy for detection and prevention of violent behaviors is effective relationship building in which staff can regularly assess for possible shifts and triggers in environmental, emotional, or physical factors that may increase the likelihood of violence.

In addition, all staff will regularly collaborate with the dean of students, school counselor, and parents in order to ensure that interventions are proving successful and to acknowledge growth made and new information that informs decision making on the best course of action for each child and situation.

AHS commits to achieving a consistently violence-free environment and culture. Students, staff, and parents are strongly encouraged to communicate and address any potentially violent actions or behaviors.

## III. Response

### A. Identification of Potential Emergencies

This Safety Plan & Emergency Response Procedures handbook is based on multi-hazard emergencies in two possible hazard categories.

- **Natural Disasters:** Possible natural disasters include fire or tornado. Analysis of common weather patterns for our area suggest that the highest likelihood of a natural disaster would occur from a sudden winter storm. Severe thunderstorms with high winds have also been known to sometimes cause significant damage in our vicinity.
- **Man-made Disasters:** Possible man-made disasters could include but are not limited to, acts of violence or terrorism, explosion, plane crashes, toxic releases from highway accidents and chemical/hazardous material spills, water line breaks or electrical malfunctions.

Therefore, procedures for managing these types of emergencies are included in this plan.

### B. School Resources Available for Use in an Emergency

Communication tools: AHS has a variety of means of communication available for use in an emergency, including but not limited to: two-way radios, landline phones, and an intercom system.

Space: In addition to leased classrooms and offices, AHS has access to several additional spaces during an emergency, including but not limited to: cafeteria, gymnasium, auditorium, and parking lots. In addition, AHS may request use of spaces leased by the co-located Exploration Elementary Charter School for Science and Technology in the event of an emergency. As the Rochester City School District is responsible for meeting the transportation needs of our students, AHS cannot rely on transportation for the purposes of school-wide evacuation. All building evacuations will be on foot and commence at the designated area(s).

Medical resources: AHS has access to an automatic external defibrillator. Each classroom will have a first-aid kit with gloves, bandages, and gauze.

Expert consultation: AHS has identified third-party providers for the following services when necessary: threat assessment (case consultations to evaluate potentially disturbing student or staff behaviors); crisis communications; and trauma/grief counseling.

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

The Principal will determine what outside agencies to contact given the situation. In emergency situations, 911 will be called and police and/or fire departments will dispatch. In the event of a potentially life-threatening situation or a person in dire need of immediate medical attention, any adult should call 911.

Depending on need and the scope of the emergency, additional help may be sought from the following sources:

- Rochester Fire Department
- Rochester Police Department
- Emergency Medical Services
- Monroe County Sheriff's Department
- New York State Police

### **D. Procedures to Coordinate the Use of School Resources and Manpower During an Emergency**

Upon learning of an emergency situation, the Incident Commander (Principal or his designee) will:

- Take control
- Gather information and make appropriate decisions
- Notify the Emergency Response Team
- Formulate and implement an appropriate plan of action following the procedures outlined in this document
- Contact local authorities as appropriate. If an emergency requires the involvement of police or fire personnel, the Incident Commander will turn authority over to local emergency crews to ensure optimal response.

In the event of an emergency requiring immediate parent/guardian notification, the Principal and/or his designee will authorize such notification by any and all effective means of communication, such as phone or robo-calls, text messages, media broadcasts or other forms of electronic communication such as the school website.

In the event that emergency responders need access to locked buildings, the Incident Commander will provide his or her own key fob or call Education Success Foundation staff to provide access.

### **E. Situational Multi-Hazard Responses**

It is the policy of AHS to deal with all threats in a serious, deliberate manner. Specific procedures are detailed in Appendix M.

### **F. Policy on School Violence**

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Implied or Direct Threats or Acts of Violence:

Teachers and staff at AHS will receive professional development training in conflict resolution and de-escalation of potentially dangerous situations.

When a staff member becomes aware of an implied or direct threat against the school or any staff member or student, they will immediately report it to the Principal and/or the Director of Operations. The Principal and/or Director of Operations will gather information to assess the threat, and will use their most conservative judgment in determining what further action needs to be taken. In all cases where a threat may be serious, they will contact local emergency authorities. The situation will be closely monitored and appropriate adjustments will be carried out as necessary until the threat has dissipated or local law enforcement officials have taken control of the situation.

When an act of violence has occurred, regardless of whom it involves, the principal or designee must quickly obtain all essential information to try to determine the degree of threat or danger and decide what actions might mitigate further risk.

As soon the principal or designee according to the Chain of Command is alerted to the violent act, he or she will:

- Determine the immediate need for Medical or Police assistance and initiate steps to ensure prompt notification;
- Monitor the situation and adjust response as appropriate;
- If necessary, initiate early dismissal, sheltering or evacuation procedures

If a behavior presents an imminent threat of serious harm to the school community, or when the student's behavior seriously affects the safety of others in the school and/or educational process, In and Out of Suspension Levels may be used, determined by the factors related to the infraction and the progressive guidelines in place.

Written notice will be provided to parents of the students carrying out the violent act in the incident by personal delivery, express mail delivery, or equivalent means reasonably calculated to assure receipt of such notice within 24 hours of suspension at the last known address; and where possible, notification by telephone. Such notice shall provide a description of the incident(s) for which suspension is proposed and shall inform the parents or guardian of their right to request an immediate informal conference with the Principal. Such notice and informal conference shall be in the dominant language of mode of communication used by the parent(s) or guardian.

Reinstatement requires a parent conference with the principal and dean of students to review the incident and prevent future occurrences. All disciplinary sanctions will be in accordance with the articles of the AHS Code of Conduct as set forth in the Student and Family Handbook and related provisions found under the New York State Education Law, Regulations of the Commissioner of Education

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and other applicable local laws.

Visitors participating in any violent acts on school grounds will be subject to appropriate sanctions as imposed by local law enforcement. All visitors are bound by the Board of Trustees policies as outlined in the AHS Code of Conduct. Violators will be subject to prosecution to the fullest extent of applicable laws when deemed appropriate.

In keeping with the tenets of mandated reporting, child abuse reporting procedures will be followed for all acts of violence committed against students learned to have occurred in or outside of school.

*Suicide Threats:*

When a staff member becomes aware of a suicide threat by a student, they will immediately report it to the Principal and/or Director of Operations. The Principal and/or Director of Operations will consult with the School Counselor to gather information to assess the threat using the Columbia Suicide Severity Rating Scale. If the threat appears serious and immediate, they will call Police or Emergency Medical Services for an emergency removal. If the threat does not appear serious and immediate, they will develop a plan with the School Counselor. In all cases, the Principal or his/her designee will immediately call the family.

## IV. Recovery

The following guide provides suggestions on how to proceed after a crisis has occurred and there is no longer an imminent threat to the school or its occupants. For the purposes of this guide, a crisis is defined as a sudden, generally unanticipated event that profoundly and negatively affects a significant segment of the school population and often involves serious injury or death. Post-incident Response Team members should convene at the earliest possible time following the crisis to begin implementing plans for trauma counseling, a safety plan review, and the next school day. The Team may meet daily, for as many days as necessary, to process events and decide measures needed to meet the needs of students, staff, family and community.

### Trauma Counseling

After any emergency which has resulted in the serious injury, death or emotional trauma of a student or staff member, the Post-Incident Response Team will work with the School Counselor to coordinate counseling services. In the event that the school's needs outstrip the counseling services available in-house or that long-term services are needed, the Post-Incident Response Team will seek additional services from trusted community partners.

### Safety Plan Review

The School Safety Team will meet to review the specific incident to determine if the school's response plan was adhered to and if any improvements are needed to enhance the plan. This review may, depending on the nature and degree of the incident, include input from representatives of local emergency response agencies, the Board of Trustees, students, staff, and family members. The Team shall then make recommendations to improve functions when appropriate.

### Preparing for Next School Day

The Post-Incident Response Team will coordinate with Education Success Foundation facilities staff, Exploration Elementary Charter School for Science and Technology, and community agencies on facilities restoration and building security in order to ensure the school is safe for students to return.

# Appendix A: Multi-Hazard Procedures

## Bomb Threats:

Depending on the imminent nature of the threat, the following procedures may be used by the school:

- The receiver of the threat should attempt to get all information possible from the caller/suspect.
- Receiver of the threat notifies the Principal. The Principal will remain in the office to receive further directions. The Principal's office will be designated as the Command Center. The Principal or Director of Operations will have floor plans, spare room keys and all other security materials.
- Contact the Rochester Police Department if necessary. When in doubt, contact the police for their input and assistance.
- The Principal or Director of Operations will initiate (with available staff) a visual search of the hallway for any unusual object. Nothing should be touched. If something out-of-the-norm is found, the staff member will directly report it to the Principal.
- According to police authorities, urgent evacuation is NOT normally needed.
- Evacuation sites can include another building, city streets, or buses. An external evacuation site and routes to it must be secured before anyone is to move to the area. This mirrors our fire drill procedure of street evacuation.
- If and once the evacuation is authorized, the Principal and Director of Operations will lock all doors to the threatened floor. No public access will be allowed.
- Once all sites have been secured, the Principal will be notified when to begin the evacuation of the building.
- Staff should take attendance information and leave the door open, yet locked. Students should take with them only those possessions that they brought to school.
- Staff should move students to the evacuation site and remain there for further instructions, as they would in a fire drill.
- Maintenance/custodial staff (along with any chain of command staff) will assist police in a room-by-room search. The Principal should remain in the office to receive information.
- Public communication about the bomb threat will come from the Principal (or designee) as soon as possible after the conclusion of the incident
  - (1) A letter will be sent home (and mailed later) with the students to explain the event.
  - (2) The staff will receive an email of this letter and, if appropriate, information gained during the threat. Some information may not be

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divulged due the needs of the law enforcement agencies and their pending investigation.

(3) Any information sought by the media will be directed to and given out through the Principal (or designee).

- The Rochester City School District and the New York State Education Department will be notified of the bomb threat.

#### *Intruders, Hostage-Taking and Kidnappings*

If an intruder is found inside the building during school hours, staff will attempt to escort the intruder out of the building. If there are concerns about the safety of the situation, the Principal or Director of Operations will immediately call the police and AHS will immediately commence a Lockdown procedure. If an intruder is found in the building outside of school hours, the police will be called immediately.

In the event of a kidnapping or hostage-taking, AHS will immediately contact police and follow their instructions. In addition, AHS will immediately contact affected families.

#### *Gas Leak/Hazardous Substance Spill*

- The Principal or Director of Operations will notify the Emergency Response Team of the situation.
- If warranted, the decision to evacuate the building will be done so by sounding the fire alarm. Before an evacuation is conducted, all routes out of the building and outside meeting points must be determined to be safe and properly distanced from the hazardous area.
- The Rochester Fire Department and New York DEC will be immediately notified if it is assessed that the problem exceeds the intervention of the Safety Team

#### *School Bus Accidents*

In the event of a school bus accident, the Principal or Director of Operations will notify all families of students who normally ride the bus. Families will be informed of the nature of the accident, whether there were any injuries, and if so where students have been brought for treatment.

#### *Civil Disturbance/Terrorist Activity*

In cases of reported civil disturbance or terrorist activity in the Rochester area, the Principal or Director of Operations will consult local police for instructions. Where no police recommendations are available, children will be secured in the building until parents/guardians are able to pick them up.