



REACH Academy Charter School

Charter-Wide Safety Plan

2020-2021

Commissioner's Regulation 155.17

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.

Adopted 10/22/2020

A detailed version of this Emergency Response Plan is located at:
REACH Academy Charter School
115 Ash Street Buffalo, New York 14204

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Resources:

- ❖ Project SAVE – Safe Schools Against Violence in Education: Guidance Document for School Safety Plans The University of the State of New York, The State Education Department, Albany, NY 12234 (www.nysed.org) (April 2001)
- ❖ School Safety Plans - (SAVE) Safe Schools Against Violence in Education The University of the State of New York, The State Education Department, Albany, NY 12234 (www.nysed.org) (April 2010)
- ❖ Quick Guide to Emergency Response Planning Requirements in Education Law §§ 807 and 2801-a and Commissioner’s Regulation 155.17 (March 2018)
- ❖ School Safety Reference Guide – A quick guide to responsibilities under State law New York State School Board Association (www.nyssba.org) (April 2018)

SECTION I: GENERAL CONSIDERATIONS AND PLANNING GUIDELINES

INTRODUCTION

Emergencies and violent incidents in schools are critical issues that must be addressed in an expeditious and effective manner. Charters are required to develop a Charter-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. Analysis of violent and disruptive incident reports is a valuable tool to determine issues that require attention. The Charter-Wide Safety Plan is responsive to the needs of all schools within the charter and is consistent with the more detailed emergency response plans required at the school building-level. Schools are at risk of a wide variety of acts of violence and natural and technological disasters. This *School Safety Plans Guidance Document* is designed to assist in the comprehensive planning effort that is needed to address risk reduction and prevention, intervention, response, and recovery with respect to the variety of emergencies that confront or could confront charters and their schools.

PURPOSE

The REACH Academy Charter-Wide School Safety Plan was developed pursuant to Commissioner’s Regulation 155.17 by a team appointed by the Board for this purpose. The team consisted of representatives from the Board, parents, teachers, administrators, school safety personnel and other school personnel.

IDENTIFICATION OF SCHOOL TEAM REPRESENTATIVES

<u>CHARTER-WIDE SCHOOL SAFETY TEAM REPRESENTATIVES</u>	
Member	Title
Linda Marszalek	Head of Schools
Michael Olsen	Director of Facilities & Technology
Amie Caster	Director of Operations & Student Services
Robin Nellis	Chief Information Office & Student Intake Coordinator
Lisa Rogers	Dean of Students & Family Services Coordinator
Jim Higgins	Physical Education
Lisa Cowpewart	School Nurse
Anna Chiavaroli	Instructional Coach
Dolores Prezyna	Board of Trustee
Dena McDougald	Family Representative
Officer Sharpe	School Safety Officer

CONCEPT OF OPERATIONS

The Charter-Wide Team has built on what was already in place, specifically the existing emergency response plan that had been developed pursuant to previous Commissioner's Regulations. The plans have been revised over the years to adapt to changes in recommendations and regulations. The current update will incorporate best practices from state police and SED as presented by the "Guidance Document for School Safety Plans."

Staff development activities for the future will address issues related to school violence, the planning process for dealing with crises, violent behavior in our society, assessing threats and violent potential of students.

The Charter-Wide School Safety Plan is linked directly to the individual Building-Level Emergency Response Plans. In the event of an emergency or violent incident, the initial response at an individual building will be by the Building-Level Safety/Emergency Response Team. The Building-Level Safety/Emergency Response Team will immediately notify the Head of Schools and, where appropriate, will also notify local emergency officials. If the emergency or violent incident has an impact beyond the individual building, the Charter-Wide Safety/Emergency Response Team will be activated and will coordinate the response.

As a part of developing the Charter-Wide School Safety Plan, input was gathered from both the local police and the state police. We will continue to work closely with the law enforcement agencies, the ambulance departments and fire departments that have jurisdiction over our campuses. We will also continue to seek resources and support through other state and county agencies.

This plan seeks to develop a solid framework upon which the charter can provide:

- a safe learning environment for our students and a safe working environment for staff.
- a thorough and thoughtful process for responding to a wide range of emergency situations.

PLAN REVIEW AND PUBLIC COMMENT

The plan will be reviewed periodically and will be maintained by the Charter-Wide School Safety Team. The required annual review of the plan will be completed on or before July 1 of each year. A copy of the plan will be available in the main office of REACH Academy. Pursuant to Commissioner's Regulation 155.17 (e) (3), this plan was made available for public comment. The Board of Trustees may adopt the Charter-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 Board of Trustees formally adopted the plan. While linked to the Charter-Wide School Safety Plan, Building-Level Emergency Response 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.

Full copies of the Charter-Wide School Safety Plan and any amendments will be submitted to the New York State Education Department within 30 days of adoption. Building-Level Emergency Response Plans will be supplied to both local and state police.

SECTION II: RISK PREVENTION AND INTERVENTION

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

PREVENTION/INTERVENTION AND PROGRAM INITIATIVES

The REACH Academy Charter School, through its Charter-Wide and School Building-Level Teams, will examine a wide range of prevention and intervention programs and activities to determine the most appropriate and effective approaches to achieve a safe environment.

Currently in place are:

- Non-violent conflict resolution training programs
- Peer mediation programs (Restorative Justice)
- Extended day and after-school programs
- Youth run programs
- Mentors for students concerned with bullying and violence
- Anonymous reporting process for school violence
- All staff and students are educated on the reasons for emergency preparedness.
- Safety stations (nurses office, counselors office) have been established throughout the school.
- Positive Behavioral Interventions and Support (PBIS) has been implemented

TRAINING, DRILLS, AND EXERCISES

All personnel who regularly answer telephones will receive updated training on protocols for data gathering in the event of a bomb threat made over the telephone. This training will be provided by the charter school.

We may have one or more of the following trainings this school year which will be coordinated with local agencies which may include but are not limited to police, fire, ambulance, local emergency management offices and BOCES Risk and Safety Department:

- Early release or go home early drill
- Shelter in place, evacuation or lock down
- Table tops and drills for specific responses for instance bomb threats, hostage taking etc.
- Emergency response team exercises

IMPLEMENTATION OF SCHOOL SECURITY

Each building, as a part of developing the Building-Level Emergency Response Plan, examines specific security needs for their building. Different strategies are required to address needs specific to individual schools as indicated by the programs offered and the age of the students that are served. Administrators conduct a comprehensive security assessment survey of their school's physical design, safety policies, and emergency procedures.

Each building develops and enforces restrictions about students loitering in parking lots, hallways, bathrooms, and other areas. Restrictions are included in the student handbook/code of conduct.

The Head of Schools, as well as, key office staff in each building has a communication system allowing for communication among key staff in an emergency.

All employees are required to wear photo ID badges.

All visitors are required to sign in/out and to wear identification badges to indicate their "visiting" status. school safety/emergency teams meet routinely to review and discuss issues related to school safety and security. In addition, the hiring and screening of all staff is in accordance with charter school policies and in conformance with SAVE legislation.

Each building has a single point of entry. All other doors are locked, and they are checked periodically throughout the day. Security personnel and cameras monitor entry and exit points at the school.

EARLY DETECTION OF POTENTIALLY VIOLENT BEHAVIORS

The Charter-Wide Safety Team will recommend training so that staff attends workshops and training that address issues related to threat assessment strategies, characteristics in children that predict violent behavior, and the appropriate actions to be taken. (Threats are alarming statements or behaviors that give rise to concern about subsequent violence.) Training will be conducted by in house, local agencies or others and will include topics such as:

- What constitutes school violence and the school code of conduct
- Written information on potentially violent behavior
- How to report incidents of violence including threats and verbal abuse
- Review measures implemented to prevent school violence including threats and verbal abuse such as: security equipment, safety procedures, and diffusion of hostile situation
- Emergency response procedures
- Post incident procedures

SECTION III: RESPONSE

NOTIFICATION AND ACTIVATION

INTERNAL AND EXTERNAL COMMUNICATION:

In the event of an emergency or pending emergency, staff members should immediately inform the Head of Schools who will:

- Immediately notify the local law enforcement officials if the situation warrants (using 911).
- Notify the Head of School.
- Determine if the Building Level Safety/Emergency Response Team requires activation.

The Head of Schools will determine whether any emergency action needs to be taken. The internal phone system as well as the emergency cell phones system will be utilized. The Head of School will also determine if the Charter Wide Safety/Emergency Response Team requires activation. In the event of an emergency situation, school closing, or delay, School Messenger will be used. This is an automated system that enables us to contact parents and staff via telephone and/or e-mail quickly and efficiently with important information. The following TV stations are also notified: ***Channel 2, 4 & 7 News.***

EMERGENCY RESPONSE PROTOCOLS

All specifics to response to emergencies are maintained within the Building-Level Emergency Response Plans.

VITAL EDUCATIONAL AGENCY INFORMATION

The Building Response Plan will contain vital information such as school population, number of staff, transportation needs, and telephone numbers of key educational officials.