

Willsboro Central School District-Wide School Safety Plan

**Willsboro Central School District
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Willsboro Central School
DISTRICT-WIDE SCHOOL SAFETY PLAN
PROJECT SAVE (Safe Schools Against Violence in Education
Commissioner’s Regulation 155.17

Introduction

Emergencies and violent incidents in school districts are critical issues that 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 plan is responsive to the needs of all schools within the district and is consistent with the more detailed emergency response plans required at the school building level. Districts stand at risk from a wide variety 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 each school district and its schools.

The Willsboro Central School District supports the SAVE legislation and intends to facilitate the planning process. The Superintendent of Schools encourages and advocates an ongoing district-wide cooperation and support of Project SAVE.

Section I: General Considerations & Planning Guidelines

A. Purpose

The Willsboro Central School District safety plan was developed pursuant to Commissioner’s Regulation 155.17. At the direction of the Willsboro Central School District Board of Education, the Superintendent of the Willsboro Central School District appointed a district-wide school safety team and charged it with the development and maintenance of the district-wide school safety plan.

B. Identification of Chief Emergency Officer

The Willsboro Central School district designates the School Superintendent as the district’s Chief Emergency Officer, whose duty shall include, but are not limited to:

- Coordination of the communication between school staff, law enforcement, and other first responders;
- Lead the efforts of the district-wide school safety team in the completion and yearly update of the district-wide safety plan and the coordination of the district-wide plan with the building-level emergency response plan;
- Ensure staff understanding of the district-wide safety plan;

- Ensure the completion and yearly update of the building-level emergency response plans for each school building;
- Assist in the selection of security related technology and development of policies for the use of such technology;
- Coordinate appropriate safety, security, and emergency training for district and school staff, including required training in the emergency response plan yearly by September 15th;
- Ensure the conduct of required evacuation and lockdown drills in all district buildings as required by Education Law section 807.

C. Identification of School Teams

- The Willsboro Central School District has created a district-wide school safety team consisting of, but not limited to, representatives of the school board, teacher, administrator, and parent organizations, school safety personnel, and other school personnel. The members of the team by title are as follow:
 - Justin Gardner, Superintendent of Schools
 - Michael Douglas, Principal
 - Allison Sucharzewski, Business Manager
 - John Sucharzewski, Supt. of Buildings/Grounds/Transportation
 - Chris Ford, School Counselor
 - Charmaine Flynn, Teacher

D. Concept of Operations

- The district-wide school safety plan is directly linked to the individual building-level emergency response plan to the school. Protocols reflected in the district-wide school safety plan guide the development and implementation of individual building-level emergency response plan.
- In the event of an emergency or violent incident, the initial response to all emergencies at an individual school is by the building-level emergency response team. (BERT)
- Upon the activation of the building-level emergency response team (BERT), the Superintendent of Schools or their designee is notified and, where appropriate, local emergency officials are notified.
- Efforts may be supplemented by County and State resources through existing protocols.

E. Plan Review & Public Comment

- This plan shall be reviewed and maintained by the Willsboro Central School District districtwide school safety team and reviewed on an annual basis. A copy of the plan is available in the Superintendent's office.
- Pursuant to Commissioner's Regulation 115.17(e)(3), this plan is available for public comment for a 30-day period prior to adoption. The district-wide and building-level plan will be adopted by the School Board after the public

hearing that provided for the participation of school personnel, parents, students, and any other interested parties. The plan must be formally adopted by the Board of Education.

- While linked to the district-wide school safety plan, the 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. The building-level emergency response plan shall be kept confidential and shall not be disclosed except to authorized department or school staff and law enforcement officers.
- Full copies of the district-wide safety plan and any amendments are submitted to the New York State Education Department within 30 days of adoption by posting this public plan on the district's website. The building-level emergency response plan is supplied to law enforcement agencies in Essex County and the New York State Police within 30 days of adoption.

Section II: General Emergency Response Planning

The district-wide school safety plan provides the framework for the building-level emergency response plan. The purpose of a uniform plan is to ensure district-wide continuity for emergency responses. These general emergency responses are used to assist school employees, students, parents, and emergency responders in learning one system that can be used in the Willsboro Central School District.

A. Identification of Sites of Potential Emergency, Including:

1. A list of areas has been identified as having the potential to have an impact within the district. This list has been created for reference and awareness. The list is not all-inclusive for every emergency. However, these areas have been identified as having the most probable impact on district facilities or district boundaries should they have or create an emergency. A list of potential community-based hazards or emergency situations has been noted in the building-level emergency response plan.
2. A list of potential internal and external hazards or emergency situations has been noted in the building-level emergency response plan.

The district has developed multi-hazard response procedures. These procedures are located in the building-level emergency response plan. They may be in response to such things as severe weather, bomb threat, missing student, weapons on campus, fire emergency, infectious disease, energy loss, structural failure, chemical spill, bus accident, and medical emergency.

- B. Plans for taking the following actions in response to an emergency where appropriate include, but are not limited to:

1. **Shelter in Place: Used to shelter students/staff inside the school**
2. **Emergency Lock-Down and Secure Response**
3. **Emergency Lock-Out Response**
4. **Evacuation: Used to evacuate students/staff from the school**
 - Before, during and after school hours, including security during evacuation and evacuation routes
 - Early dismissal emergencies include, but are not limited to:

Air Pollution	Epidemic	Medical Emergency
Anthrax/Biological	Explosion	Natural Gas Leak
Aviation Crash	Fire Alarm Activation	Radiological
Building/Structural Failure	Flood	Roof Leak/Failure
Bomb Threat	Heating System Failure	School Bus Accident
Civil Disturbance	Hostage Situation	Severe Weather Emergency
Crimes Against People	Intruder Situation	Threats of Violence
Earthquake	Loss of Building	Water Emergency
Electrical System Failure	Loss of Buses	
Energy Supply Loss	Mass Casualty	

- C. **The district has identified various district resources** that may be available for use during an emergency, including the identification of personnel, equipment, and shelters.
- D. **Using the building-level plan** the district has identified the school officials authorized to make decisions during an emergency. Through the building-level plan, the procedure to coordinate the use of school district resources and manpower during emergencies are clearly defined. The building plan also identifies the staff members and their backups assigned to provide assistance during emergencies.
- E. **The district has policies and procedures for annual multi-hazard school safety training for staff and students, including the strategies for implementing training related to multi-hazards.** All staff will undergo annual training by September 15 and each subsequent September 15 thereafter on the building-level emergency response plan which includes components on violence prevention and mental health. New employees hired after the start of the school year receive this training within 30 days of hire or as part of the district’s existing new hire training program, whichever is sooner. The district certifies that the training is completed during the October NYSED BEDS data collection. The following procedures, which have been established to provide this training on an annual basis, include but are not limited to: early dismissal/go home drill, shelter-in place, hold-in-place, evacuation/fire drills, lockout, and lockdown.
- F. **The district conducts drills** to tests components of the emergency response plan. A debriefing concludes each test to determine if changes to the plan are necessary.

Education Law §§ 807(1-a), 807 (b): Fire and Emergency Drills

The July 2016 amendments expanded fire drill requirements to also include emergency drills to prepare students to be able to respond appropriately in the event of a sudden emergency. The statute now requires twelve drills to be conducted each school year, four of which must be lockdown drills, the remaining eight are required to be evacuation drills. There is still a requirement that eight of the required drills must be completed in the first half of the school year. However, the date of completion has been changed from December 1 to December 31 of each school year.

The statute now explicitly requires schools to conduct lock-down drills, which are essential, because they prepare students and staff to respond to the highest level of threat with the most urgent action and the least margin for error. Other protective actions such as lockout or shelter in place are emergency actions that are usually preceded by some degree of warning time and do not require the immediate response necessary for a lock-down. While the school should be well versed in their lock-out and shelter in place protocols, lock-down is the only type of protective action that is specifically required by the statute.

Section III: Responding to Threats and Acts of Violence

- A. **Crisis Intervention in the building-level emergency response plan.** This is reviewed by the district-wide school safety team to ensure content and consistency throughout the district. These policies and procedures are for responding to implied or direct threats of violence by students, teachers, other school personnel, and visitors to the school, including threats by students against themselves, which includes suicide. The following types of procedures are addressed in the plan:
- Informing the Superintendent or designee of implied or direct threats.
 - Determining the level of threat with the Superintendent and building-level emergency response team members.
 - Contacting appropriate law enforcement agencies, if necessary.
 - Monitoring the situation, adjusting the district's responses as appropriate to include possible implementation of the building-level emergency response team.
 - Communication with parent/guardian. When a student implies or specifically threatens self-inflicted violence including suicide, the school's Superintendent directly contacts the respective parents/guardians.
- B. **The Multi-Hazard Emergency Response** in the building-level emergency response plan and/or the district code of conduct provides guidance on the district's policies and procedures for responding to direct acts of violence by students, teachers, other school personnel, and visitors to the school, including consideration of zero-

tolerance policies for school violence. The following types of procedures are addressed in the plans:

- Inform the Superintendent/designee
- Determine the level of threat with the Superintendent/designee and the building-level emergency response team.
- Monitor the situation; adjust the level of response as appropriate; if necessary, initiate lockdown, evacuation, sheltering and/or early dismissal procedures if needed.
- Contact appropriate law enforcement agency. NOTE: The Willsboro Central School District's "Code of Conduct" describes policies and procedures for responding to acts of violence by students, teachers, and other school personnel, and visitors to the school.
- Record the name(s) of person(s) who reported seeing a weapon and provide information to law enforcement.
- The Superintendent will assess the situation to determine follow-up steps.

C. **The following protocols for appropriate responses to emergencies** are provided as examples of responses to dangerous situations:

- Identification of decision-makers
- Plans to safeguard students and staff.
- Procedures to provide transportation, if necessary.
- Procedures to notify parents.
- Procedures to notify media

D. **The district has established policies and procedures to contact parents**, guardians, or persons in parental relation to the students in the event of a violent incident or an early dismissal. In the Willsboro Central School District, the following communication methods are used:

- Individual contact with parents/guardians.
- Written, video, audio, or other electronic methods.

Section IV: Communication with Others

A. **The Willsboro Central School District is fortunate to have substantial ties** to the communities of Willsboro and Essex, as well as Essex County. If there were an emergency within our facility, we would call 911 for emergency assistance. If involvement is needed from other local government agencies, the Superintendent or designee would act as the contact person. Additional procedures for communications can be found in the Building-Level Emergency Response Plan including local emergency contacts and phone numbers. These contacts provide guidance for obtaining assistance during emergencies from emergency services organizations and local government.

Section V: Prevention & Intervention Strategies

- A. **The district has developed policies and procedures related to school building security**, including a secure entrance wherein visitors are observed and buzzed in, and must sign in and obtain a badge.
- B. **Willsboro Central School District has implemented procedures for the dissemination** of informative materials regarding the early detection of potentially violent behaviors, including, but not limited to: the identification of family, community, and environmental factors to teachers, administrators, parents and other persons in parental relation to students of the school district or board, students, and other persons deemed appropriate to receive such information. The district has and continues to participate in programs such as:
- Announcements from the Nurse
 - Counseling Groups
 - Athletic Programs
 - Student Government
 - DASA Policy (Incorporated in the Code of Conduct)
- C. **The district has created and supported strategies** for improving communication among students and between students and staff and reporting of potentially violent incidents as noted above.
- D. **The Willsboro Central School District will create descriptions of duties**, hiring and screening processes, and requirements for training of school safety personnel if the district hires such persons in the future. In accordance with Project SAVE, after July 1, 2001, all new full and part-time employees were fingerprinted and had background checks completed.

Section VI: Recovery

Recovery addresses the help needed for all involved to heal and to restore the school community to “normal” operations. The District Plan supports the school building plan by deploying district resources that support the school’s building-level emergency response team.

- A. **District Support for the Willsboro Central School District** The Building-Level Emergency Response Plan provides resources for supporting the building level emergency response team. This provides team members the opportunity to rotate personnel, to fill in if assigned personnel are unavailable, and to debrief in a supportive environment.

The district realizes that some emergencies may overwhelm an individual school’s ability to manage an extreme crisis. If/when the school is faced with an emergency

such as threats of violence or actual violent incidents, the district-wide school safety team assists as follow:

- Acting as a sounding board regarding the implied or direct threats and/or violent acts.
- Assisting in determining the level of threats and appropriate response.
- Monitoring the situation and adjusting the district's response as appropriate.
- Assisting the coordinating buildings and grounds security in conjunction with local and State Police
- Assisting with offering a backup post-incident response team (i.e., another school district's team and/or an outside group) as needed, if needed.
- Offering debriefing sessions as needed working in conjunction with local, Essex County, and/or State emergency responders.

B. Disaster Mental Health Services If/when a building-level emergency response team is faced with an emergency that may overwhelm the school's ability to manage an extreme crisis, the district-wide school safety team assists as follows:

- Offering district support and looking for continued feedback from those directly impacted during the incident, with projected plans to assist if needed during heightened stressful times such as a re-occurrence of a similar event and anniversaries of the original event.
- Assisting with parent/guardian, student, and faculty/staff debriefing and/or post-incident crisis intervention. The debriefing is also used in part to evaluate the district's plan for possible revisions. If needed, assisting in contacting additional outside mental health resources such as the National Organization for Victim Assistance (1-800-trynova; www.try-nova.org).
- Assisting the school with written statements going out to faculty/staff, parents/guardians, press releases and media requests through the district's Public Information Officer. The district supports the recovery phase and reevaluates current multi-hazard and violence prevention practices and school safety activities.