

St HOPE Leadership Academy Charter School District-Wide School Safety Plan

2023-2024



St HOPE LEADERSHIP ACADEMY CHARTER SCHOOL
DISTRICT-WIDE SCHOOL SAFETY PLAN
2023-2024

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I INTRODUCTION

Emergencies in schools are defined as undesirable events that occur and have the potential to cause injury or illness to members of our school community or disrupt the orderly educational process. They range from acts of bullying or harassment to catastrophic natural or man-made events. Emergency management is the discipline of dealing with and avoiding risks. It is a discipline that involves preparing for an emergency situation or disaster before it occurs as well as supporting and rebuilding from the emergency after natural or human-made disasters have occurred.

Emergency management in our school is the continuous process by which our staff, students, administrators, parents, school groups, emergency responders and our community manages hazards in an effort to avoid or mitigate the impact of disasters resulting from hazards. Preventive measures and good planning will reduce the likelihood that emergencies will occur and allow us to address those that do in an expeditious and effective manner.

Districts and charter schools are required to develop district-wide school safety and emergency management plans designed to prevent and effectively manage such events to minimize the effects of serious incidents and emergencies. These plans also facilitate the coordination of the school with local plans and resources when incidents and emergencies occur, including the New York City Department of Education (DOE) and the City of New York (NYPD, FDNY).

As a stand-alone charter school that is co-located in a DOE building, the more detailed building-level emergency plan that is designed in partnership between the three schools that occupy the building and then submitted to the DOE and the NYPD is the primary emergency response document. This district- wide plan serves to support the building-level plan and to provide information to the school's stakeholders.

II - OVERSIGHT

The Principal will serve as the District's Chief Emergency Officer (CEO) whose duties shall include, but not be limited to:

1. Coordination of the communication between school staff, law enforcement, and other first responders
2. Completion and yearly update of the district-wide school safety plan and the coordination of the district-wide plan with the building-level emergency response plans
3. Ensuring staff understanding and compliance of the district-wide school safety plan
4. Ensuring completion and yearly update of the building-level emergency response plan. The plan shall provide for lockdown, lockout, sheltering, evacuation, early dismissal, fire and other emergency planning and notification (when necessary) to students and staff, annual drills and exercises, and coordination with local and county emergency preparedness administrators
5. Coordination of appropriate safety, security, and emergency training for district and school staff, including required training in the emergency response plan
6. Ensuring the conduct of required evacuation and lockdown drills as required by Education Law section 807

III - PLAN REVIEW & PUBLIC COMMENT

The District-wide Safety and Emergency Management Plan shall be monitored and maintained by the Principal and reviewed annually on or before August 15th of each year. A copy of the plan will be available at the school's main office and on the school website.

The Board of Trustees must formally adopt the District-wide Plan pursuant to Commissioner's Regulation, Section 155.17(c)(xiii). This plan will be made available for public comment at least 30 days prior to its adoption.

The Building-level Emergency Response Plan shall be confidential and not subject to disclosure under Article 6 of the Public Officers Law or any other provision of law in accordance with Education Law Section 2801. Full copies of the District-wide Safety and Emergency Management Plan and any amendments will be submitted to the New York State Education Department on or before October 1st of each year or within 30 days of adoption.

IV - PREVENTION AND INTERVENTION STRATEGIES

As the school is co-located in a DOE building, school safety agents are employed by the DOE. The Principal actively coordinates with the other two Principals in the building to ensure that school safety agents are meeting expectations and that the building is consistently safe and secure.

School teachers and staff, particularly counselors and leadership team members, are trained annually in proactive ways to prevent incidents and escalation of negative behaviors. This may include:

- Individual and group de-escalation techniques
- Non-violent conflict resolution skills
- Restorative practices and
- Peer mediation

The school has a range of programs to promote a positive school climate and positive youth development. Principles of character education and responsible citizenship are also integrated throughout the 6-8 curriculum. The following programs are a samples of those implemented to address behaviors and risk factors that can lead to violence:

- RTI (Response to Intervention) and PBIS (Positive Behavioral Interventions & Supports)
- Daily Advisory Lessons using CharacterStrong
- Peer Mediation
- Restorative Practices

Training may be available during staff development sessions, on conference days and via on-demand web-based training modules.

V – BUILDING-WIDE PROCEDURES

After the designated start time of the school day, the building will be appropriately secured. All exit doors will be locked with alarms set.

- All visitors, including delivery personnel, must enter the building through the main entrance and must sign in with security before proceeding to the appropriate school main office. Signing in includes producing photo identification.
- All contractors assigned to work in the building must first be authorized by the DOE School Construction Authority and receive an identification badge, which must be visible at all times when workers are on school property.

VI – STUDENT CODE OF CONDUCT

The student code of conduct is outlined and fully described in the Scholar Family Handbook that is distributed to students and families each August and is available on the school website. Students receive training and support on behavioral expectations, including bullying and intimidation, during orientation each August. Parents and students must sign that they have read and understand the handbook and submit the signature page to the school during the first week of school each year.

VII - REPORTING THREATS OR ACTS OF VIOLENCE

Students, staff, parents and others are informed annually about the importance of reporting threats or acts of violence and the procedures of reporting. The procedure for reporting is as follows:

- Students are instructed to report threats and acts of violence to staff members. This can be done anonymously
- Students are required to inform school staff about any direct or indirect threat of violence or actual act of violence to themselves, others or school property. This can be done anonymously.
- Staff members are required to immediately inform the Principal or their designee of any direct or implied threat of violence or actual act of violence by students, teachers, other school personnel and visitors to the school, including threats by students against themselves, which shall include suicide. The Principal or their designee decides whether to utilize the building's trained clinician(s) in an effort to de-escalate or defuse the situation.
- The school disseminates educational material, including but not limited to the Student Family Handbook, encouraging parents and visitors to tell school staff about any direct or implied threat of violence or actual acts of violence by students, teachers, other school personnel and visitors to the school, including threats by students against themselves.
- After considering the specificity/generality of the threat or severity of the violent act, the Principal or their designee will determine next steps, including whether or not to implement a lockdown, evacuation, etc. If this is deemed appropriate, the Principal will immediately notify the other building Principals and will follow the protocol laid out in the building-level Emergency Response Plan.
- If the threat is not immediate, the Principal or their designee will investigate the reported threat or act of violence and will determine next steps, including disciplinary measures consistent with the school's Code of Conduct. Chronic offenders may require a behavior plan or contract, close monitoring, and/or police involvement.
- Parental notification procedures for a student involved in disciplinary situations shall be consistent with the Code of Conduct and New York State law, and shall be presented clearly and concisely to staff and students each year. When a student is involved in any violent situation, or an implied or direct threat of violence by such student against themselves, including suicide, parent or guardian shall be contacted as soon as practicable.
- The Principal will keep records of serious threats and acts of violence and report them annually to the state.

VIII – TRAINING AND DRILLS

The school will conduct emergency management drills and exercises annually including, but not limited to

Twelve evacuation and lockdown drills conducted with staff and students during the regular school day (September – June) with the first eight (8) drills conducted prior to December 31st of each school year.

- Eight of all such drills shall be evacuation drills. Four of all such required drills shall be lockdown drills.
- The appropriate Fire Department may, upon mutual agreement with the school, participate in some or all of the drills and offer feedback regarding effective building evacuation in the event of a fire.
- The appropriate Police Department may upon mutual agreement with the school, participate in some or all of the lockdowns drills and offer feedback regarding the effectiveness of these drills.
- Drills shall be conducted at different times of the school day with at least one of the eight required evacuation drills occurring during a mass gathering event such as lunch or assemblies.
- The Principal will receive training and be certified by the DOE bi-annually to conduct safety drills and provide building emergency oversight.
- All general staff will receive annual training on drills and the building-level emergency response plan. This training shall occur onsite and in person prior to September 15th of each school year or within 30 days of joining the school's staff.

IX - EARLY DETECTION OF POTENTIALLY DANGEROUS BEHAVIOR

- All new employees will be provided with a copy of the student Code of Conduct at the time of hire and will receive an orientation session to review.
- All teachers and other staff members will receive a copy of the student Code of Conduct annually and will be provided with professional development on how to support students in their efforts to abide by the Code.
- Efforts are made schoolwide to prevent and resolve potentially dangerous behavior at the earliest possible stage. Grade teams and counselors meet regularly to work with classroom staff in identifying and preventing potentially dangerous behavior. Nurses, outside agencies (when appropriate), administrators, teachers, parents/guardians and students may be involved in this process.
- Each of the school's counselors may facilitate counseling groups for identified students around issues related to poor social skills development, managing emotions, and good decision-making.
- Certified and noncertified staff members working with students who have been identified by the Committee on Special Education as being at-risk for engaging in violent behaviors receive annual training in crisis prevention and intervention.
- The school may work in collaboration with building-level and District-wide PTAs to offer parents/guardians information regarding early-warning signs of potentially dangerous and/or violent behavior, as well as a forum to discuss specific parental concerns.

X - HAZARD IDENTIFICATION

In conjunction with other building Principals and building custodians, the Principal will identify and locate areas of potential emergencies in and around its building on an annual basis. These sites are to include electrical, gas, heating, ventilation, water supply and sewage systems locations and shut-off valves. DOE and FDNY personnel will participate as appropriate.

Potentially dangerous sites indicated below that are contained within school property and under the jurisdiction of the DOE, will be checked regularly and inspected by building safety personnel on a regular schedule, at least annually. They include but are not limited to:

- Electrical panels/shut-offs
- Gas lines/shut-off
- Gas appliances
- Heating plant
- Sewage system
- Structural failure
- HVAC
- Water supply/shut-off
- Chemical storage and cleaning supplies
- Industrial arts room
- Science rooms and labs
- Isolated areas near the school
- Air conditioning supplies or equipment
- Playground equipment

XI – HIRING OF SAFETY PERSONNEL

The interviewing and hiring of safety personnel follows the DOE practices for hiring of new staff. All new staff employed by the DOE and by the school must be fingerprinted in order to be employed. Duties include but are not limited to:

- actively monitoring the building and supporting the staff with student safety and traffic during all school hours and permitted activities (afterschool, etc)
- checking that school procedures are being adhered to
- guiding the arrival and dismissal processes
- escorting students if needed
- enforcing our visitor policy

XII- EMERGENCY RESPONSE

A. NOTIFICATION AND ACTIVATION INTERNAL

After receiving key information from the Incident Commander at the scene, an email will be sent from the Principal's office to all staff in the building alerting them to the nature and status of any incident in and around the school. The mass communication system may be used to provide information as deemed appropriate by the Incident Commander.

Alyssa's Law, signed into law by Governor Hochul on June 23rd 2022, which amends Educational Law 2801-a, requires schools to consider a silent panic alarm system. This silent panic alarm system would bypass 911 calls and discreetly and immediately access emergency response enforcement. Upon further research, the service provider Guard911 Active Shooter Apps was considered for purchase. Upon consideration, this purchase will not be purchased for the 2023-2024 school year. It will be reconsidered for the 2024-2025 school year. <https://www.guard911.com/pricing/schoolguard/>

EXTERNAL

Anyone with knowledge of an emergency event is encouraged to immediately call 911 on a landline or a cell phone.

By definition, emergency events are unforeseen and unpredictable. The safety of students and staff is the primary focus of all activities surrounding an emergency event. Every effort will be made to contact parents and the general public once the situation has stabilized. It is the responsibility of all parents and guardians to ensure that emergency contact information for students is always up-to-date and complete.

The school's mass communication system will be used to provide information to parents/guardians and emergency contacts. Updated information throughout an incident will be shared as deemed appropriate by the Incident Commander.

Parents/guardians are notified through multiple contacts:

- phone/email messages
- school Website – www.sthopeleadershipacademy.org
- school Facebook page
- school Instagram account
- announcements through local media

During an emergency, all contact with the media will be handled either by the Principal or their designee. The media and public will be informed and updated as soon as practicable on all developments in statements released by the Principal or their designee. Students, staff and parents should refer all questions and requests for information to the Principal in order to assure the release of factual and current information.

B. RESPONSES

In the event of an emergency, a Command Center will be set up at a safe location in collaboration with emergency responders. Each building has specific plans for dealing with a wide range of hazards. Specific response procedures

are sensitive in nature and therefore are contained within the school's confidential building-level emergency response plan.

C. SCHOOL CANCELLATION

The Principal or their designee will monitor any situation that may warrant a school cancellation and will make the determination to do so. The Principal's office will activate use of the school's mass communication system to notify parents/families.

D. EARLY DISMISSAL

The Principal or their designee will monitor any situation that may warrant an early dismissal and will make the determination to do so. The Principal's office will activate use of the school's mass communication system to notify parents/guardians and will designate people to arrange transportation for students, as appropriate.

E. EVACUATION

The Principal or their designee will determine the level of the threat. If evacuation is required, the Principal will move all students and staff to a pre-arranged sheltering site as outlined in the building level plan. Prior to evacuation, school safety will clear an evacuation route. Once safely at the sheltering site, attendance will be taken and all missing staff or students will be reported. The Principal will arrange for student-parent reunification.

F. PROTOCOLS FOR RESPONDING TO BOMB THREATS, HOSTAGE-TAKINGS, INTRUDERS, ABDUCTION, AND OTHER EMERGENCY SITUATIONS

The school has procedures and provides training for emergencies. Specific response steps are confidential and contained within the Building-level Emergency Response Plan. Emergencies include but are not limited to the following situations.

- Abduction
- Armed Intruders / Active Shooters
- Bomb Threat
- Explosions
- Fires
- Hazardous Material Incident
- Homeland Security Threats
- Hostage Situations
- Severe Weather
- Student-Made Threats
- Suicidal Students
- Suspicious Package Protocol
- Suspicious Persons

G. IDENTIFICATION OF RESOURCES WHICH MAY BE AVAILABLE FOR USE DURING AN EMERGENCY

Building resources are available and stored in a central location. The building-level Emergency Response Plan designates a Command Post that contains the information, below. The list, which is not meant to be inclusive, requires the following items:

- Copy of District-Wide School Safety Plan
- Building-level Emergency Plan
- Quick reference Emergency Management Procedures
- List of emergency telephone numbers

- Building floor plans
- Telephones
- Computers
- Radio communications
- Photocopier
- Student rosters
- Staff rosters
- Lists of individuals with special needs and specific evacuation plans
- Flashlights

H. COORDINATION OF SCHOOL RESOURCES AND MANPOWER DURING EMERGENCIES

The School will, as appropriate, utilize all available manpower during an emergency.

Coordination of available employees is typically performed by the Principal or their designee. Specific job duties will be assigned based on the type of emergency and in compliance with the appropriate building emergency response procedure. The Principal or their designee will call in all available custodial staff and school safety staff to support during an emergency as needed. Assistance from outside government agencies may also be requested.

I. ASSIGNMENT OF RESPONSIBILITIES

A chain of command consistent with the National Interagency Incident Management System (NIMS)/Incident Command System (ICS) will be used in response to an emergency. Members of the Building-Level Emergency Response Team comprise the key personnel who respond to any building emergency. The response team will adopt NIMS/ICS principles based on the size, scope, and character of the emergency. Key positions are as follows:

- Incident Commander – Responsible for the direction of the building response in a building level emergency (Building Administrator/designee).
- Public Information Officer – Compiles and releases information to the public.
- Safety Officer – Monitors the response to prevent injuries from occurring to both those involved in the incident and those trying to resolve it.
- Liaison – Represents the school by working with responding agencies (law enforcement, fire department, EMS, utilities, etc.) and other schools that may be involved in the incident.
- Incident Log – Keeps a written log of all incident events and updates appropriate command post personnel on significant developments.
- Operations – responsible for directing the implementation of action plans and strategies for incident resolution.

XIII. PANDEMIC CONTINUITY OF OPERATIONS PLAN

This plan has been developed to meet the requirements of subsection (2)(m) of Education Law 2801-a which requires public employers to prepare a plan for the continuation of operations in the event that the Governor declares a public health emergency involving a communicable disease. This plan is built upon the components of the District-Wide School Safety and the Building-Level Emergency Response Plan(s). The Plan includes elements of the COVID-19 Reopening Plan and will be updated to reflect current guidance and best practices. The District-Wide School Safety Team assumes responsibility for development and compliance with all provisions of this plan and implementation at the building level through the Building-Level Emergency Response Team.

The school will work closely with the New York City Department of Health (NYCDOE) to determine the need for activation of this plan. The school will report suspected and confirmed cases of communicable diseases and submit it to the local health department as directed. The local health department will monitor city-wide communicable

disease cases and inform school districts as to appropriate actions.

Communication with parents, students, staff, and the school community is important throughout a pandemic outbreak. Communication methods will include postings to the school's website, email, social media, school communication apps, and public media. The Principal and Director of Operations will coordinate this effort.

The school will assess devices and technology needs of all non-essential employees and contractors in order to enable telecommuting. Options for assessing needs include meetings with the leadership team and Director of Operations to ascertain:

- Who will need devices at home,
- What programs will need to be added to these devices, and
- The availability of viable existing at-home internet service.

The-Director of Operations, will be responsible for supporting remote work. Any requests for assistance with remote work needs should be submitted via the appropriate google form.

Depending on the exact nature of the communicable disease and its impact, the school is prepared to use the strategies below to reduce traffic congestion and maintain social distancing:

- Limit building occupancy to 25%, 50%, or 75% of capacity or the maximum allowable by state or local guidance.
- Forming employee work shift cohorts to limit potential contacts.
- Limit employee travel within the building and/or between buildings.
- Limit restroom usage to the second floor, to be separate from our co-located schools.
- Stagger arrival and dismissal times.
- Alternate work days or work weeks.
- Limit or eliminate visitors to the building.

PPE

The school will procure a 1-month supply of face coverings and PPE required for essential work tasks. Disposable PPE will be provided in quantities of 1 per work day.

- KN95 in child and adult sizes
- 3-Ply in child and adult sizes

The use of face coverings to reduce the spread of communicable diseases is important to the health and safety of faculty, staff and students. PPE and face coverings will be stored in the basement, with a daily supply readily available in the main office. These supplies will be monitored by the Office Manager to ensure integrity and track usage rates.

Faculty, staff, and students will be trained on proper hand hygiene. Information will be provided to parents and/or legal guardians on ways to reinforce hand hygiene at home.

The school must also be prepared for communicable disease outbreaks in their local communities and for individual exposure events to occur in their facilities, regardless of the level of community transmission. The CDC and

NYSDOH have provided recommendations for strategies to follow after an exposure:

- Close off areas used by a sick person and not using these until after cleaning and disinfection has occurred;
- Open outside doors and windows to increase air circulation in the area;
- Wait at least 24 hours before cleaning and disinfection;
- Clean and disinfect all areas used by the person suspected or confirmed to have a communicable disease, such as offices, classrooms, bathrooms, lockers, and common areas;
- Once the area has been appropriately cleaned and disinfected it can be reopened for use.
- Individuals without close contact with the person suspected or confirmed to have a communicable disease can return to the area and resume school activities immediately after cleaning and disinfection.

The school has established protocols and procedures, in consultation with the local health department, about the requirements for determining when individuals, particularly students, who screen positive for communicable disease symptoms can return to the in-person learning environment at school. This protocol includes:

- Documentation from a health care provider following evaluation
- Negative COVID-19 diagnostic test result
- Symptom resolution

The school will refer to the NYSDOH's Pre-K to Grade 12 COVID-19 Toolkit and other applicable guidance regarding protocols and policies for faculty, staff, and students seeking to return to work after a suspected or confirmed communicable disease case or after the faculty or staff member has close or proximate contact with a person with a communicable disease.

The school requires that individuals who were exposed to communicable disease complete quarantine and have no symptoms before returning to in-person learning. The discharge of an individual from quarantine and return to school will be conducted in coordination with the local health department.

The school will ensure adherence to hygiene and cleaning and disinfection requirements as advised by the CDC and NYSDOH.

The school will notify the state and local health departments immediately upon being informed of any positive communicable disease diagnostic test result by an individual within school facilities or on school grounds, including students, faculty, staff, and visitors of the district. The school may assist with contact tracing by:

- Keeping accurate attendance records of students and staff members;
- Ensuring student schedules are up-to-date;
- Keeping a log of any visitor which includes date and time, and where in the school they visited; and
- Assisting the local health departments in tracing all contacts of the individual in accordance with the protocol, training, and tools provided through the DOE.

Confidentiality must be maintained as required by federal and state laws and regulations. School staff should not try to determine who is to be excluded from school based on contact without guidance and direction from the local health department.

Re-establishing the normal school curriculum is essential to the recovery process and should occur as soon as possible. The school will:

- Work toward a smooth transition from the existing learning methods to the normal process;
- Use the described communication methods to keep the school community aware of the transition process;
- Work closely with NYSED to revise or amend the school calendar as deemed appropriate;
- Evaluate all building operations for normal function and re-implement appropriate maintenance and cleaning procedures.

In the event of an unprecedented communicable disease, the school will follow the guidance of the NYSDOH and CDC in terms of quarantine requirements.

XIV. EMERGENCY REMOTE INSTRUCTION PLAN

AVAILABILITY OF DEVICES AND INTERNET ACCESS

In order to facilitate the educational process in the event of an emergency situation that would require remote instruction for students, the school completes an annual Student Digital Resources survey to determine the current readiness of the school's hardware and software.

To support remote learning, the school currently provides all students with a Chromebook. Should remote instruction be necessary, the school shall make hotspot devices available to the greatest extent possible. When this is not possible, the school shall work with community partners to help ensure that public access wi-fi points are available for students and families throughout the community to allow for them to participate in remote learning (e.g., outside of all school buildings).

The school's operations department shall be responsible for assisting students with internet access, including, but not limited to, the use of hotspot devices, and may also be tasked with servicing devices that may not be working properly. This department may also be responsible for providing on-site instructional support for technology integration and for providing learning opportunities through tutorial videos and other virtual means.

Should the school determine in advance that emergency conditions may require the school to provide remote instruction, students and staff shall be informed of this possibility via their existing internal and external communication channels with as much advance notice as possible. The school may communicate this information via the public address system, verbal communication, letters sent home, social media posts, phone calls, and via text messages.

Inevitably, there may be students in the school community for whom remote learning is not appropriate or possible. In these situations, the school shall assess that individual's unique needs and try to accommodate them with in-person learning, to the extent that is possible. The school may also consider utilizing 1:1 aides, instruction by phone, or the creation and dissemination of paper materials to the students home, as well as other methods, to better support their individual needs.

PROVISION OF SPECIAL EDUCATION AND RELATED SERVICES

Should remote learning become necessary, the school shall ensure that special education services are provided to students who need them, in accordance with their individualized education programs (IEPs) and to ensure that they receive a free appropriate public education (FAPE). In order to facilitate the provision of special education and related services the school shall ensure that:

- Consultant teachers and integrated co-teachers shall be available to provide on-going support and to deliver IEP services.
- Special education classrooms shall collaborate regularly with co-teachers to provide differentiated virtual learning experiences for students on their caseload.
- Students are provided with prioritized standards-based lessons via Google Meet
- Students are directly provided with modifications and accommodations as per their IEP
- All differentiated assignments shall be compliant with NYS guidelines and the student's IEP
- Accommodations shall be provided through the student's 504 plans
- Special Education teachers shall attend professional learning communities, grade level meetings, and department meetings to discuss continuity of instruction, struggling students, and learning activities
- Students are provided with daily synchronous instruction via Google Meet

Ensuring clear, ongoing, and shared communication and collaboration is critical to ensuring equitable access to special education programs and services and the continued offer of FAPE for students with disabilities. The school will promote continuous communication and develop collaborative relationships with all educational partners, especially parents/caregivers, to ensure provision of services consistent with recommendations on students' individualized education programs.

EXPECTATIONS FOR TIME SPENT IN MODALITIES AND FOUNDATION AID

In the event that the school was required to go to emergency remote instruction, the school schedule shall mirror what the in-person schedule for the day would have been. Portions of the day will be synchronous to provide live instruction for students. Students shall be provided with opportunities throughout the course of the day to interact with teachers and their peers during live instruction, including group work and question and answer sessions within the classroom structure. For students not able to access remote instruction via technology, paper copies of work assignments will be available for pick up.

For state aid purposes, the school estimates that they will spend approximately six hours per school day of time in remote instruction due to emergency conditions.