

**DISTRICT-WIDE  
SCHOOL  
SAFETY  
PLAN**

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# **Gates Chili Central School District District-Wide School Safety Plan**

*Commissioner's Regulation 155.17*

## **INTRODUCTION**

School safety is the job of the entire school community. This effort requires leadership and coordination by school administration, and involvement and participation from all sectors of the school community. Planning, conducting drills, and participating in exercises with law enforcement, fire, emergency officials and other members of the school community ensures a comprehensive, unified approach to school emergency response planning. Building relationships and community engagement are vital to building a safer school community.

The purpose of the District-Wide School Safety Plan and each school's Emergency Response Plan (ERP) is to help school officials identify and respond to potential emergencies by assigning responsibilities and duties of the school employees, students, families, and community stakeholders. It is important to develop, maintain, train and exercise ERPs in order to respond quickly before, during and after an incident. A well developed and practiced ERP provides parents/guardians and the community reassurance that the school has established guidelines and procedures to respond to threats and hazards efficiently and effectively. The Gates Chili Central School District uses the New York State suggested planning format to assist schools in meeting legislative mandates contained in 8 NYCRR Section 155.17 and provides the use of best practices to improve outcomes following emergency situations.

The content, organization, and terminology provided in the New York State Guide to School Emergency Response Planning aligns with the Federal Emergency Management Agency's "Guide for Developing High-Quality School Emergency Operations Plans (2013)". The organization of this guide supports two key practices being adopted in New York State. First, the guide provides standardized language that is consistent with current national emergency response protocols. Secondly, consistent formatting in each Building ERP aligns critical information necessary to improve rapid response to emergencies together in the following sections:

- The Basic Plan
- Functional Annexes
- Threat/Hazard Specific Annexes
- Appendices

The Basic Plan standardizes language and provides a structured framework for school ERPs statewide. Individualized policies and procedures have been developed by the Gates Chili Central School District based on potential circumstances and resources. Tools to manage an emergency include response procedures that are developed through threat assessments, safety audits, planning, and training before an incident occurs. The Gates Chili Central School District uses the recommended New York State Functional Annexes in order to standardize the terminology used by district employees and emergency responders during an emergency.

Functional annexes focus on critical operational functions and the courses of action developed to carry them out.

Actions and best practices are outlined in each of the district's Building Plans Threat/Hazard Annexes section, detail what to do in the event of various emergencies. These ERP's provide current information about school response team members, students and staff with special needs and any other information critical to each school building. The district has also identified appropriate staff to fill specific roles related to incident command and appropriate response teams. All of the district's building principals, assistant principals and other key members have been trained in the Incident Command System. The district has also appointed a Chief Emergency Officer as required in order to coordinate and communicate between staff and law enforcement and first responders. The Chief Emergency Officer is responsible for ensuring the completion and yearly update of the Building-Level Emergency Response Plans. All Building Level Emergency Response Plans are confidential but are submitted to New York State and local emergency responders for review. Appropriate training and drilling is required to ensure that all district personnel and students understand the plan and their roles and responsibilities.

## **SUMMARY OF LAWS**

The following is a summary of New York State law pertaining to building level school emergency response plans. In 2000, Chapter 181 enacted Education Law §2801-a (Project SAVE) requiring the implementation of certain school safety plans. Education Law §2801-a required that every school district, Board of Cooperative Educational Services (BOCES) and county vocational education extension board, as well as the Chancellor of the City School District of the City of New York, develop a building-level school safety plan regarding crisis intervention and emergency response ("school emergency response plan"). Section 2801-a prescribed minimum requirements of a school emergency response plan, which included policies and procedures relating to responding to certain threats. These plans were designed to prevent or minimize the effects of emergencies and to facilitate the coordination of schools and school districts with local and county resources in the event of such emergencies. The Commissioner of the New York State Education Department, prescribed requirements into regulation 8 NYCRR Section 155.17.

155.17 (b) Development of school safety plans. Every board of education of a school district, every board of cooperative educational services and county vocation education and extension board and the chancellor of the City School District of the City of New York Shall adopt by July 1, 2001, and shall update by July 1<sup>st</sup> of each succeeding year, a district wide school safety plan and building level school safety plans regarding crisis intervention and emergency response and management.

155.17 (e)(2) School Emergency Response Plan. A school emergency response plan shall be developed by the building-level school safety team and shall include the following elements:

- 155.17 (e)(2)(i) Policies and Procedures for Safe Evacuation
- 155.17 (e)(2)(ii) Designation of Response Teams

- [155.17 \(e\)\(2\)\(iii\)](#) Procedures for Emergency Responder Access to Building Plans and Road Maps
- [155.17 \(e\)\(2\)\(iv\)](#) Communication in Emergencies
- [155.17 \(e\)\(2\)\(v\)](#) Definition of the Chain of Command Consistent with NIMS/ICS
- [155.17 \(e\)\(2\)\(vi\)](#) Coordinated Plan for Disaster Mental Health Services
- [155.17 \(e\)\(2\)\(vii\)](#) Procedures for Annual Review
- [155.17 \(e\)\(2\)\(vii\)](#) Procedures for the Conduct of Drills
- [155.17 \(e\)\(2\)\(viii\)](#) Procedures for Restricting Access to Crime Scenes

[155.17 \(e\)\(3\)](#) A copy of each building level safety plan and any amendments thereto, shall be filed with the appropriate local law enforcement agency and with the State Police within 30 days of adoption.

[155.17 \(j\)](#) Drills. Each school district and board of cooperative educational services shall, at least once every school year, and where possible in cooperation with local county emergency preparedness officials, conduct one test of its emergency plan or its emergency response procedures under each of its building level school safety plans, including sheltering or early dismissal.

## **Risk Reduction/Prevention and Intervention**

### **A. Prevention/Intervention Strategies**

The administration of the Gates Chili Central School District (GSCD) believes that improved communication among students, parents/guardians, and school staff adds to the quality of life and sense of safety at all of our schools. Such communication allows for the reporting, intervention, and prevention of potentially violent incidents before they actually occur. The following is a brief list of programs and initiatives that are in place at some or all of the Gates Chili Schools that promote open communication and have a positive impact on the quality of life in our schools:

- Positive Behavioral Interventions and Supports (PBIS)
- Bullying Reporting Process
- Peer Mediation
- Anonymous 24-hour “Safe School Helpline” for reporting issues relative to school violence and safety
- School Resource Officer Program in cooperation with the Gates Police Department
- Truancy Reduction Program
- Trauma, Illness and Grief (TIG) Teams
- National Incident Management System (NIMS)
- Incident Command System (ICS)

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

#### Training

The district understands the importance of training. All school staff, students, and others deemed appropriate by the school should receive training during the school year to better prepare them for an incident. The annual training will review the District-Wide School Safety Plan, individual ERP's, and brief staff on their roles and communication procedures during an emergency. The district also submits certification to the NYSED that all district and school staff have undergone annual training components on violence prevention and mental health. New employees hired after the start of the school year receive training within 30 days of hire. All other school staff will receive this training by September 15<sup>th</sup> of each school year.

#### Multi-Hazard Training

The district will provide annual multi-hazard school safety training for staff and students. The components of this training will be consistent district-wide. Staff training will be routinely conducted at the school level followed by drills with the entire school population. These drills will focus on our standard response actions to a potentially threatening incident to include: early dismissal, lock down procedures, hold-in-place procedures, shelter-in-place procedures, lockout procedures, and evacuations. The use of tabletop drills to accomplish or compliment this training will be considered when live drills are impractical or not sufficient to meet the training goals.

## Drills and Exercises

At a minimum, the school will conduct the following exercises/drills annually:

- Section 807 of the Education Law mandates twelve emergency drills each school year to prepare students to be able to respond appropriately in the event of a sudden emergency. The statute requires that four of the twelve drills be lockdown drills. The remaining eight are evacuation drills. Eight of the required twelve drills must be completed in the first half of the school year (by December 31<sup>st</sup>).
- 8 NYCRR Section 155.17 (3) states each building level emergency response plan shall be tested including sheltering and early dismissal (no earlier than 15 minutes before normal dismissal) The district will ensure that each building conducts drills and other exercises to test the components of their Building-Level Emergency Response Plan.
- 1 lockdown drill will be conducted in the 1<sup>st</sup> marking period and 3 lockdown drills will be unannounced (1 each quarter) following the first announced drill.
- Lockdown drills will be conducted internally to ensure that school staff have the ability to secure the facility and students against an immediate threat to life and safety. Such drills will cause minimal interruption to academic activities and will involve the clearance of hallways, locking of classrooms and positioning of students and staff in pre-designated “safe areas” within each room. Where possible, the school should seek out opportunities to conduct full-scale response exercises with law enforcement.
- Whenever a lockdown drill will be conducted, whether announced or unannounced, the school will notify local law enforcement and/or the regional 911 Emergency Dispatch Center prior to **and at the conclusion of the drill**. This will be done to ensure that law enforcement does not receive a false report that the school is in actual lockdown. Any announcements made during a drill will be preceded and ended with the phrase “this is a drill”. This will ensure that all involved recognize that this is a drill and not a real incident (i.e. “may I have your attention, this is a drill – LOCKDOWN – this is a drill”). Additionally, a sign or notice will also be placed at all public entrances indicating that a drill is in progress and to wait for service “**SAFETY DRILL IN PROGRESS - PLEASE WAIT.**” This will serve to notify any uninformed parents or visitors and prevent unwarranted panic.

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

As described in the district’s Code of Conduct, all members of each school’s community share a responsibility in promoting and maintaining a safe and orderly school environment. Some of the more specific measures are expanded upon below.

## Security Personnel – Hiring and Training

All Gates Chili Central security guards are hired and trained consistent with the New York State Security Guard Act of 1992 and the requirements set forth in the New York State Division of Criminal Justice Services. Continual training is provided to maintain licensing and skills.

## Security Personnel – Responsibilities and Authority

The district employs security personnel to assist the schools in dealing with all manners of security and safety issues. The principal role of our security personnel is to safeguard the district's students, staff and visitors from harm; to deter, detect, respond to, and report infractions of the Code of Conduct and New York State Law; and to protect the district's assets from theft and damage. Security personnel employed by the district are authorized to carry out this role consistent with the Policies and Regulations of the district, applicable New York State Law, Security Standard Operating Procedures and district training.

## Security Guard Standard Operating Procedures

These district-wide security guidelines, procedures, and practices within the district will be periodically updated.

## Limited Access

All exterior doors will be locked with the exception of one controlled point of access during the school day.

## Visitor Access

School access will be controlled during the regular school day by locking down the building and utilizing the front door buzzer/intercom/camera to screen visitors prior to entrance into the building. Consistent with GCCSD Board Policy and Code of Conduct, an approved visitor to a school will present valid government issued photo identification and be given a pass prior to gaining access to the building.

## Video Surveillance

All district school buildings provide video surveillance to enhance the safety of our students and staff. The cameras may/may not be actively monitored, but the recordings are available for district officials and local law enforcement use.

## Intrusion Detection

The district's buildings are protected by an intrusion detection alarm system that is linked to a central monitoring station.

## Security Review

Through the coordination of the Safety Committee, District-Wide School Safety Team and the Supervisor of School Safety and Security, there is an on-going review of security issues.

### **D. Vital Educational Agency Information**

The district maintains certain information about each school building within the district including, but not limited to: school populations, transportation needs, and business and home telephone numbers of key personnel. In addition, similar information on other district departments as well as the assets that those departments could provide in the event of an emergency is also maintained at the district level.

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

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

- The district will ensure that appropriate school violence prevention and intervention training will be incorporated into teacher conference days and be provided to all staff during regularly scheduled staff training sessions. All threats of violence are taken seriously and investigated.
- We recognize that despite our best efforts, students and parents may need additional assistance to respond to bullying. To ensure a quick response to parent and student concerns, the district has developed a bullying reporting process.
- Students and staff are encouraged to share information regarding any conflicts or potentially violent behaviors with an administrator (and law enforcement when appropriate) so an investigation can commence. The district has established an anonymous 24-hour "Safe School Helpline" to provide another means for such information to be brought to the attention of those who need to know so that the situation can be addressed in a timely manner.
- The district has developed policies and procedures for contacting parents, guardians or persons in a parental relation to a student in the event of an implied or direct threat of violence by a student against themselves, including threat of suicide.

### **F. Hazard Identification**

The list of sites of potential emergency include all school buildings, playground areas, properties adjacent to schools, on and off-site athletic fields, buses and off-site field trip locations. These hazards (and how to handle each issue) will be documented in each Building-Level Emergency Response Plan.

## **DISTRICT RESOURCES & CONTACTS**

### **Emergency Operations Group**

During an emergency, the Emergency Operations Group shall function under the command of the Superintendent of Schools and the district's Chief Emergency Officer. The district's Chief Emergency Officer will be designated at a Board of Education meeting annually.

### **Superintendent's Cabinet**

The Superintendent's Cabinet includes all Assistant/Associate Superintendent's and the Director of Athletics. This group may be activated to provide assistance to any building in need.

### **Command Post**

During an emergency, the Superintendent of Schools or their designee may activate the Emergency Operations Group when necessary, and they will meet at a designated location. In addition to the Emergency Operations Group, the Superintendent may summon additional cabinet members and resources to report to this location. This designated location will be referred to as the Command Post although the exact location may vary depending on the type and extent of the event.

### **District Data and Contacts**

An updated list of district data and contacts is will be updated and made available to key personnel (including all building principals) but is not available to the general public.

### **District-Wide School Safety Team**

The District-Wide School Safety Team will meet at least two times per year to discuss school safety issues under the direction of the Chief Emergency Officer, and/or Supervisor of School Safety and Security. The Team will consist of staff members from across the district, community members and emergency responders. This team will make recommendations to the Superintendent of schools regarding school safety issues and develop the District-Wide School Safety Plan.

# GENERAL PROCEDURES

## GENERAL RESPONSE ACTIONS FOR EMERGENCIES

Subsequent sections of this District-Wide School Safety Plan outline specific response actions for individual emergency situations. If an emergency situation occurs at the building-level, it is the responsibility of each and every district employee to take those actions which are geared toward preserving the health and safety of all students and staff.

### A. Concept of Operations

The overall strategy of the District-Wide School Safety Plan and building ERP's is to execute effective and timely decisions and actions that prevent harm, protect lives and property, mitigate damages, restore order and aid recovery. These plans are based upon the concept that the incident management functions that must be performed by the school generally parallel some of their daily routine functions. To the extent possible, the same personnel and material resources used for daily activities will be employed during incidents. Because personnel and equipment resources are limited, some routine functions that do not contribute directly to the incident may be suspended. The personnel, equipment, and supplies that would typically be required from those routine functions will be redirected to accomplish assigned incident management tasks.

#### **Implementation of the Incident Command System (ICS)**

The Incident Command System (ICS) will be used to manage all incidents and major planned events/drills. In general the initial Incident Commander at the school will be the building principal and will be the delegated authority to direct all incident activities within the school's jurisdiction. The Incident Commander will establish an Incident Command Post (ICP) and provide an assessment of the situation to the emergency responders, identify incident management resources required, and direct the on-scene incident management activities from the ICP. If no Incident Commander is present at the onset of the incident, the most qualified individual will assume command until relieved by a more qualified Incident Commander. [8 NYCRR Section 155.17 \(e\)\(2\)\(v\)](#) requires a definition of a chain of command consistent with the Incident Command System.

#### **Initial Response**

School personnel are likely to be the first on the scene of an incident in a school setting. Staff and faculty are expected to respond as appropriate and notify the principal, or designee until command is transferred to someone more qualified and/or to an emergency response agency with legal authority to assume responsibility (Police, Fire or EMS dependent upon the nature of the incident). Staff will seek guidance and direction from the school district and emergency responders.

Any staff person or faculty in a building that sees or is aware of an emergency shall activate the building ERP.

## **B. Organization and Assignment of Responsibilities**

This section establishes the operational organization that will be relied on to manage an incident and includes examples of the types of tasks that may be performed by different positions.

The Incident Commander is not able to manage all of the aspects associated with an incident without assistance. The school relies on other key school personnel to perform tasks that will ensure the safety of students and staff during a crisis or incident. The Incident Command System (ICS) uses a team approach to manage incidents. It is difficult to form a team while a crisis or incident is unfolding. Roles should be pre-assigned based on training and qualifications. Each staff member and volunteer must be familiar with his or her role and responsibilities before an incident occurs.

### **Principal**

The principal (or their designee) will serve as the **Incident Commander** and designate a minimum of two qualified individuals to serve as alternates in the event that the principal is unable to serve in that role. At all times, the principal still retains the ultimate responsibility for the overall safety of students and staff.

Responsibilities include:

- Provide direction over all incident management actions based on procedures outlined in the District-Wide School Safety Plan and building ERP
- Take steps necessary to ensure the safety of students, staff and others
- Determine which emergency protocols to implement as described in the functional annexes of this District-Wide School Safety Plan and the building ERP
- Coordinate/cooperate with emergency responders
- Keep the Superintendent and Chief Emergency Officer informed of the situation

### **Teachers / Substitute Teacher / Student Teachers**

Teachers shall be responsible for the supervision of students and shall remain with students unless directed to do otherwise.

Responsibilities include:

- Supervise students under their charge
- Take steps to ensure the safety of students, staff, and other individuals.
- Take attendance when class relocates to an inside or outside designated area or to an evacuation site
- Report missing students to the appropriate Emergency Response Team Member
- Execute assignments as directed by the Incident Commander
- Obtain first aid services for injured students from the school nurse or person trained in first aid. Arrange for first aid for those who are unable to be moved
- Render first aid or CPR if certified and deemed necessary

### **Teaching Assistants**

Responsibilities include assisting teachers as directed and actions to ensure the safety of students.

### **Counselors, Social Workers & School Psychologists**

Responsibilities include:

- Take steps to ensure the safety of students, staff and other individuals during the implementation of the ERP
- Provide appropriate direction to students as described in the District-Wide School Safety Plan and the building ERP for the incident type
- Render first aid or CPR and/or psychological aid if trained to do so
- Assist in the transfer of students, staff and others when their safety is threatened by an emergency
- Administer counseling services as deemed necessary during or after an incident
- Execute assignments as directed by the Incident Commander

### **School Nurse/Health Assistant**

Responsibilities include:

Administer first aid or emergency treatment as needed

- Supervise administration of first aid by those trained to provide it
- Organize first aid and medical supplies
- Execute assignments as directed by the Incident Commander

### **Custodians/Maintenance Staff**

Responsibilities include:

- Survey and report building damage to the Incident Commander
- Control main shutoff valves for gas, water, and electricity and ensure that no hazard results from broken or downed lines
- Provide damage control as needed
- Assist in the conservation, use and disbursement of supplies and equipment
- Control locks and physical security as directed by the Incident Commander
- Keep Incident Commander informed of the condition of the school
- Execute assignments as directed by the Incident Commander

### **Principal's Secretary/Office Secretaries**

Responsibilities include:

- Answer phones and assist in receiving and providing consistent information to callers
- Provide for the safety of essential school records and documents
- Provide assistance to the Incident Commander/Principal
- Monitor radio emergency broadcasts
- Execute assignments as directed by the Incident Commander

### **Food Service/Cafeteria Workers**

Responsibilities include:

- Prepare and serve food and water on a rationed basis whenever the feeding of students and staff becomes necessary during an incident
- Execute assignments as directed by the Incident Commander

### **Bus Drivers**

Responsibilities include:

- Supervise the care of students if disaster occurs while students are on the bus
- Transfer students to new location when directed
- Execute assignments as directed by the Incident Commander

### **Other Staff/Security**

Responsibilities include:

- Execute assignments as directed by the Incident Commander

### **Students**

Responsibilities include:

- Cooperate during emergency drills, exercises and during an incident
- Follow directions given by facility and staff.
- Know student emergency actions and assist fellow students in an incident
- Report situations of concern (e.g. "If you see something, say something.")
- Develop an awareness of the high priority threats/hazards and how to take measures to protect against and mitigate those threats/hazards

### **Parents/Guardians**

Responsibilities include:

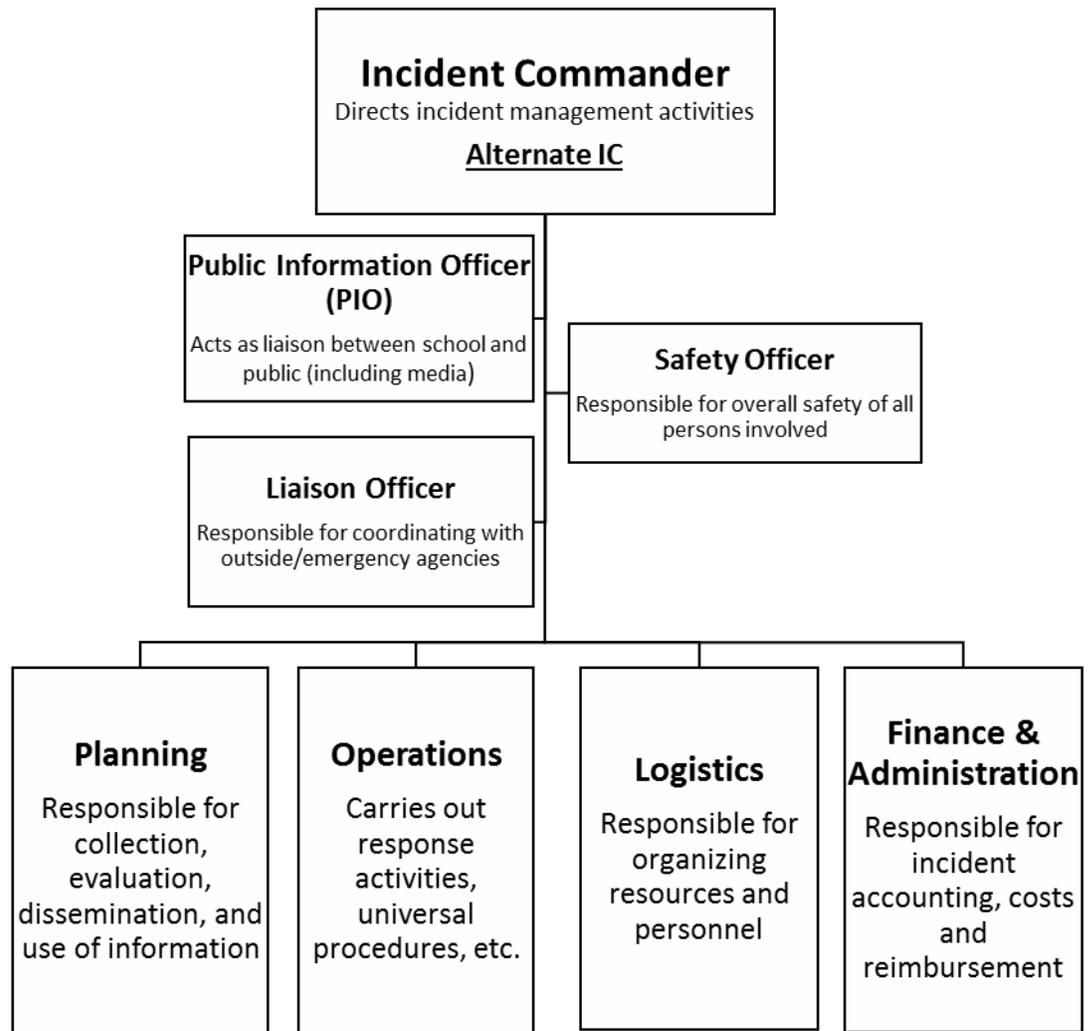
- Encourage and support school safety, violence prevention and incident preparedness programs within the school
- Participate in volunteer service projects for promoting school incident preparedness
- Provide the school with requested information concerning the incident, early/late dismissals and other related release information
- Listen to and follow directions as provided by the school district.

## C. Direction, Control, and Coordination

### School Incident Command System

To provide for effective direction, control and coordination of an incident, the School ERP will be activated through the implementation of the Incident Command System (ICS).

Staff are assigned to serve within the ICS structure based on their expertise, training and the needs of the incident. Roles should be pre-assigned based on training and qualifications. The school ICS is organized as follows:



## **School Incident Command System (ICS) Roles Defined**

The Incident Command System is organized into the following functional areas:

### **Incident Command**

Directs the incident management activities using strategic guidance provided by the Superintendent or their designee.

Responsibilities and duties include:

- Establish and manage the command post, establish the incident organization and determine strategies to implement protocols (adapt as needed)
- Monitor incident safety conditions and develop measures for ensuring the safety of building occupants
- Coordinate media relations and information dissemination with the Superintendent/Principal/Incident Commander
- Develop working knowledge of local/regional agencies, serve as the primary on-scene contact for outside agencies assigned to an incident, and assist in accessing services when the need arises
- Document all significant activities

### **Operations Section**

Directs all tactical operations (actions) of an incident including the implementation of response/recovery activities according to ICS, care of students, first aid, psychological first aid, search and rescue, site security, damage assessment, evacuations and the release of students to parents.

Responsibilities and duties include:

- Monitor site utilities (i.e. electric, gas, water, heat/ventilation/air conditioning) and shut off only if danger exists or directed by the Incident Commander and assist in securing the facility.
- Establish medical triage with staff trained in first aid and CPR, provide and oversee care given to injured persons, distribute supplies, and request additional supplies from the Logistics Section.
- Provide and access psychological first aid services for those in need and access local/regional providers for ongoing crisis counseling for students, staff and parents/guardians.
- Coordinate the rationed distribution of food and water, establish secondary toilet facilities in the event of water or plumbing failure, and request needed supplies from the Logistics Section.
- Document all activities

As needed, Emergency Response Teams may be activated within the Operations Section. [8 NYCRR Section 155.17 \(e\)\(2\)\(ii\)](#) requires the designation of individuals assigned to emergency response teams.

## **Planning Section**

Collects, evaluates and disseminates information needed to measure the size, scope and seriousness of an incident and to plan appropriate incident management activities.

Responsibilities and duties include:

- Assist Incident Commander in the collection and evaluation of information about an incident as it develops (including site map and area map), assist with ongoing planning efforts and maintain incident log
- Document all activities

## **Logistics Section**

Supports ICS by securing and providing needed personnel, equipment, facilities, resources and services required for incident resolution. Coordinates personnel, assembling and developing volunteer teams and facilitates communication among incident responders. This function may involve a major role in an extended incident.

Responsibilities and duties include:

- Establish and oversee communications and activities during an incident (two-way radio, written updates, etc.) and develop telephone tree for after-hours communication
- Establish and maintain school and classroom preparedness kits, coordinate access to and distribution of supplies during an incident and monitor inventory of supplies and equipment
- Document all activities

## **Finance/Administration Section**

Oversees all financial activities including purchasing necessary materials, tracking incident costs, arranging contracts for services, timekeeping for emergency responders, submitting documentation for reimbursement and recovering school records following an incident.

Responsibilities and duties include:

- Assume responsibility for overall documentation and recordkeeping activities; when possible, photograph and videotape damage to property
- Develop a system to monitor and track expenses.
- Account for financial losses in accordance with district policy and secure all records

## **Coordination with Responders**

The school ERP may have a set of interagency agreements with various agencies to aid in timely communication. Agreements with these agencies and services (including, but not limited to, mental health, law enforcement and fire departments) could help coordinate services between the agencies and the school. The agreements could specify the type of communication and services provided by one agency to another

In the event of an incident involving outside agencies, a transfer of command from the school Incident Commander to a responding agency will occur.

### **Source and Use of Resources**

The school will use its own resources and equipment to respond to incidents until emergency responders arrive. It will be the responsibility of the Emergency Operations Group and the Superintendent's Cabinet to help secure these resources.

## **D. Information Collection, Analysis and Dissemination**

The School will collect, analyze, and disseminate information during and after an incident.

### **Types of Information**

During an incident, the school will assign administrative staff to monitor weather and local law enforcement alerts. This information will be analyzed and shared with the Incident Commander.

After an incident, the school will assign staff to monitor websites and hotlines of mental health, emergency management and relief agencies. The school will also monitor the school district information portal, to determine any information pertinent or critical to the school's recovery effort.

### **Information Documentation**

The assigned staff member will document the information gathered including:

- Source of information
- Staff member who collected and analyzed the information
- Staff member to receive and use the information
- Format for providing the information
- Date and time the information was collected and shared

## **E. Administration, Finance and Logistics**

### **Agreements and Contracts**

If school resources prove to be inadequate during an incident, the school will request assistance from local emergency agencies, other agencies and industry in accordance with existing Memoranda of Understanding. Such assistance includes equipment, supplies and/or personnel. All agreements are entered into by authorized school district and school officials

## **Documentation**

The ICS section chiefs will maintain accurate logs recording key incident management activities including:

- Activation or deactivation of incident facilities
- Significant changes in the incident situation
- Major commitments of resources or requests for additional resources from external sources
- Issuance of protective action recommendations to staff and students
- Evacuations
- Casualties
- Containment or termination of the incident

## **Incident Costs**

The ICS Finance/Administration section is responsible for maintaining records summarizing the use of personnel, equipment and supplies to obtain an estimate of incident response costs that can be used in preparing future school budgets and to share these costs with the Superintendent and District Business Office. These records may be used to recover costs from the responsible party or insurers or as a basis for requesting financial assistance for certain allowable response and recovery costs from the State and/or Federal government. In General, under normal circumstances, the Assistant Superintendent will fill this role.

## **Preservation of Records**

In order to continue normal school operations following an incident, records such as legal documents and student files must be protected (i.e. in the event of a fire and flood).

## **F. Authorities and References**

The following are State and Federal authorizations upon which this School ERP is based. These authorities and references provide a legal basis for emergency management operations and activities.

- The New York State Safe Schools Against Violence in Education (Project SAVE) and [8 NYCRR Section 155.17](#) require that school emergency plans define the chain of command in a manner consistent with the Incident Command System (ICS).
- New York State Executive Order 26.1 (2006), established ICS as the state's standard command and control system that will be utilized during emergency operations.
- Homeland Security Presidential Directive (HSPD) – 5 required the development of National Incident Management System (NIMS), of which ICS is a critical component.

## **G. Communications**

### **Communication between School and Emergency Responders**

The school will contact and maintain communications with emergency responders during an incident. The School Incident Commander or Chief Emergency Officer will transfer command to the appropriate emergency responder who arrives on the scene to assume management of the incident, including coordination of internal and external communications. The Incident Commander will use the communication platform described in the District-Wide School Safety Plan to notify the principal/designee of the school's status and needs. The District's Community Relations Manager and emergency responders will coordinate the release of information to ensure that information is consistent, accurate and timely.

### **Internal Communications**

The school has a Community Relations Manager or public information officer (PIO) who will be responsible to:

- Help create the policies and plans for communicating emergency information internally and to the public.
- Follow the communications policies and procedures established by the school.
- Help establish alternative means to provide information in the event of a failure of power, phone or other lines of communication.
- Develop materials for use in media briefings.
- Act as the contact for emergency responders and assist in coordination of media communications.

### **Communication between School Officials and Staff Members**

School personnel will be notified when an incident occurs and kept informed as additional information becomes available. They will also be informed as plans for management of the incident evolve (keep staff informed to the greatest degree possible).

### **Communication between School Officials and Students**

Communication of emergency information between school officials will primarily take place through the school's public address system or face-to-face between faculty and students. Other methods of communication with students may also be used.

### **External Communications**

School officials must communicate with the larger school community on how incidents will be addressed on a regular basis. However, once an incident does occur, parents, media and the community at large will require clear and concise messages from the school about the incident. This will include what is being done and the safety of the children and staff.

## **Communication with Parents**

- Before an incident occurs, the school will:
  - Inform parents on how to access alerts and incident information.
  - Inform parents that the school has developed a District-Wide School Safety Plan and individual building ERP's, their purpose and objectives. Information will be included in the yearly school calendar and is also available on the district website.
  - Be prepared with translation services for non-English-speaking families and students with limited English proficiency.
- In the event of an incident, the school will:
  - Disseminate information through the Blackboard Connect system to inform parents about what is known to have happened.
  - Implement a plan to manage phone calls and parents who arrive at the school.
  - Describe how the school and school district are handling the situation.
  - Provide a phone number, web site address or recorded hotline where parents can receive updated incident information if deemed necessary.
  - Inform parents and students when and where school will resume.
  - After an incident, school administrators will schedule and attend an open question-and-answer meeting for parents/guardians as soon as possible if deemed necessary.

## **Communication with the Media**

In the event of an incident, the School Incident Commander, Community Relations Manager, Chief Emergency Officer or the emergency responder Incident Commander (in the event command has been transferred), will coordinate with the public information officer and/or participate in a joint information effort to:

- Provide regular updates to the media and school community.
- Once Incident Command is transferred to emergency response authorities, so too will PIO functions be transferred to the ICS PIO.
- Monitor the release of information and correct misinformation.

## **H. Multi-Hazard Response**

There are many variables that could impact the manner in which the School Emergency Response Team responds to a particular occurrence. These variables could include (but are not limited to): time of year, time of day, weather, age of student(s) involved, location of student(s), anticipated delay from emergency responders, availability of support personnel and availability of transportation. Therefore, it would be not be practical to try and map out the steps to take for every conceivable scenario. It is more practical to focus on just a few critical decisions that need to be made in every emergency pursuant to our primary goal of preventing the loss of life and injury of students and school staff.

The building principal or their designee is designated as the Incident Commander of their school during a crisis situation until relieved by a higher authority. The principal or designee will provide leadership, organize activities and disseminate information with the assistance of the school's Emergency Operations Group or Chief Emergency Officer.

In most instances where this level of school response is warranted, the school will be seeking assistance from other emergency responders in resolving the situation. As such, the immediate objective is generally to contain the incident and successfully manage it until the emergency personnel arrive.

## **I. Emergency Notifications**

Notification of significant events or events that required a call to 9-1-1 shall be made to the Supervisor of School Safety and Security via district issued radios. In their absence, notifications may be made to any member of the Security Department. The Supervisor of School Safety and Security or Security Guard will notify the Superintendent of Schools immediately. These notifications shall occur at the earliest and safest possible time during the response phase. The Superintendent, or Chief Emergency Officer will request the additional resources necessary to assist in the buildings issue. One of the possible options will be to activate the Emergency Operations Group and the Superintendent's Cabinet. The goal of the Emergency Operations Group and the Superintendent's Cabinet is to provide assistance and resources as needed to deal with the crisis at hand.

## **J. Responses to Acts of Violence: Implied or Direct Threats**

Having acknowledged that the recognition and early intervention into potentially violent situations is critical, it shall be the policy of the district to deal with all threats and potentially threatening situations and circumstances in a serious and deliberate manner. In addition to reporting and investigating direct threats, all staff are responsible for relaying to their respective school administration information about any student behaviors or communications that suggest a threatening situation is possible. Depending on the imminent nature of the threat, the following procedures may be used by the district:

- Use of staff trained in de-escalation or other strategies to diffuse the situation.
- Inform building principal or designee of implied or direct threat or troubling behaviors or communications.
- Contact 9-1-1 if the threat may be imminent or for their advice and assistance. Direct threats to personal safety may well constitute a violation of law and the student making the threat can be prosecuted. Prosecution in Criminal or Family Court provides another opportunity for intervention
- The building principal or designee may initiate a threat assessment inquiry to attempt to determine the level of threat.
- If time permits, this inquiry would also involve interviewing potential witnesses as well as the parties involved. Some factors to consider when evaluating the level of threat include, but are not limited to, specificity of threat to a person or persons, mention of specific means or weapons, specific reason or justification, history of student, known access to weapons and propensity for violence.
- Monitor situation, adjust response as appropriate, and include the possible use of the counseling staff.
- Follow up with the appropriate procedures as outlined in the district's Code of Conduct.

## **K. Acts of Violence**

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 on what actions might mitigate further risk. General non-specific actions may include:

- Call 9-1-1 and notify security.
- Isolate the immediate area and initiate appropriate Functional Annex (e.g. lockdown) if necessary.
- Identify and separate the involved persons if possible.
- Monitor situation; adjust response as appropriate; if necessary, initiate early dismissal, sheltering or evacuation procedures.
- Follow the district's designated notification process.

## **L. Specific Response Protocols**

The district has established appropriate response actions to a variety of emergency situations. They are detailed in each building level ERP as recommended by the NYSED Safe Schools Template. Transportation safety procedures are also in place.

## **M. Obtaining Advice and Assistance from the Local Government**

In the event of an emergency where additional advice, assistance, or assets not readily available to the district are needed, the Superintendent of Schools will activate the Emergency Operations Group and the Superintendent's Cabinet to help provide needed assistance. The GCCSD is partnered with the Towns of Gates/Chili and its subdivisions (police, fire etc.) for these specific circumstances.

## **N. District Resources Available for Use in an Emergency**

The district has identified district-based resources, which may be available during an emergency. These resources are available through the Emergency Operations Group and the Superintendent's Cabinet. Each resource is described in the District Resource Section of the ERP.

## **O. Functional Annexes**

Functional Annexes focus on the critical operational functions and the courses of action developed to carry them out. In New York State, to ensure consistency, schools are provided with standardized definitions and suggested best practice of the following functional annexes:

- Shelter-in-Place
- Hold-in-Place
- Evacuation
- Lockout
- Lockdown

These five functional annexes provide a common foundation for response to all emergencies. These annexes are defined in detail in the building level ERP's and quick reference guides. Other Annexes available and listed in this section are Crime Scene Management, Communications, Accounting for all person, Continuity of Operations, and Recovery. The Medical Emergency Annex has its own section the District-Wide Safety Plan.

## **P. Crime Scene Management**

Evidence is critical to the investigation and prosecution of criminal cases. Therefore, only trained professionals should do the collection and preservation of evidence. Before those professionals arrive, it is important that the crime scene remain as uncontaminated as possible. There are things that can be done by people who arrive at the scene first to help protect the evidence. These procedures were developed around the **RESPOND** acronym, which was designed to aid in remembering the steps to securing crime scenes and evidence.

### **Actions**

#### **Respond**

- Ensure your personal safety first, then if possible, formulate a plan and make mental notes.

#### **Evaluate**

Evaluate the severity of the situation, call 911 if appropriate.

- Identify involved parties.
- Be aware of weapons, hazards, and potential evidence.
- Don't touch anything unless absolutely necessary to preserve safety.

#### **Secure**

- Clear away uninvolved people.
- Establish a perimeter that prevents people from entering the potential crime scene.

#### **Protect**

- Safeguard the scene – limit and document any people entering the area.
- Don't use phones or bathrooms within the crime scene area.
- Don't eat, drink or smoke in the crime scene area.

#### **Observe**

- Write down your observations as soon as is safe to do so.
- Record detailed information – don't rely on your memory.
- Notes will aid first responders upon arrival and could be utilized in court.

#### **Notify**

- Call 911 if not already called or police are not on scene.

#### **Document**

- Take good notes - such as: time, date, people at scene, weather, doors open or closed, lights on or off and the position of furniture.
- Be prepared to provide your notes and information to police.

## **Q. Emergency Evacuation of Non-Ambulatory Disabled Individuals with Disabilities**

Each building Principal is responsible for identifying non-ambulatory disabled staff or students and listing that information in their building level emergency plan. This includes assigning an area of rescue assistance for such person on floors above or below the level of discharge. Since building level ERP's are provided to local emergency responders, this information will be readily available during an emergency.

## **R. Accounting for all persons**

The Building Emergency Response Plan has procedures in place to:

- Take attendance and report to the Incident Commander when class relocates inside the building or an evacuation takes place.
- Report to the Incident Commander when a student, staff member, or guest cannot be located.
- Dismiss students if they have been relocated in the building.

## **S. Family Reunification Plans**

During any building evacuation it is important to have a family reunification plan. In general, families should be reunified at the each buildings evacuation site and will require assigned personnel and plans that should be detailed in each building level emergency response plan.

## **T. Crisis's Occurring Outside of Normal School Hours**

Due to the many uncertainties about building occupancy during those times when school is not in session, it is difficult to prescribe a specific course of action that will remedy any and all crises occurring within that time frame. The Building Principal will notify their immediate supervisor or the Chief Emergency Officer of the Crisis and the appropriate actions will be taken.

## **U. Procedures for Informing Other Educational Agencies of an Emergency.**

1. The Chief Emergency Officer will evaluate the impact of an emergency on other educational agencies within the school district.
2. If the impact is evident, the Chief Emergency Officer or the Supervisor of School Safety and Security will telephone the contact person at each affected educational agency and inform them of the status of the emergency.
3. If contact with other educational agencies cannot be made, the Chief Emergency Officer or Supervisor of School Safety and Security will contact the Gates Police Department, and/or Monroe County Sheriff's Department for assistance in communicating information to these educational facilities.

4. If transportation, sheltering and other types of assistance are to be provided to other educational agencies, the Chief Emergency Officer will make arrangements to implement this assistance.

## **V. Procedures for School Cancellation**

When it becomes necessary to close our schools and cancel classes, the decision to close will be made at the earliest possible time. Decisions to close are made after extensive review of conditions and consultation with other agencies, but always with the best interest of our students and staff in mind.

When a decision to close one or more of the district school's is made, this information is immediately transmitted to all local radio and TV stations for broadcast to the general public. The specific procedure is outlined in the emergency closing section of this manual.

## **W. Procedures for Sheltering Students, Staff, and Visitors**

In the event that it becomes necessary to shelter students, staff, visitors, or other individuals, the building Principal or their designee will contact the Chief Emergency Officer, or Supervisor of School Safety and Security (via cell phone). If it becomes apparent that district students will not be able to leave the facility, the school principal will make arrangements for adequate supervision of the students under their direction and to make provisions for building maintenance (custodial) and food services. It shall be the responsibility of the Chief Emergency Officer to inform appropriate police, Red Cross, and emergency preparedness officials.

The district has also partnered with different local and state agencies to provide shelter to the community during certain disasters or emergencies. The Chief Emergency Officer is the contact for those agencies during the crisis. The Chief Emergency Officer will take appropriate actions during such incidents.

## **X. Continuity of Operations Plan (COOP)**

As part of the COOP, The district will use resources to:

- Identify primary and secondary relocation sites for each building that meet the needs of school.
- Allow the COOP to be activated at any time and sustaining it for up to 30 days.
- Re-establishing essential functions, such as restoration of school operations, and maintaining the safety and well-being of students and the learning environment.
- Ensuring students receive applicable related services in the event of a prolonged closure.
- Protect vital documents and make them available at alternate sites.
- Identify personnel to assist in developing COOP and training them in activating COOP procedures.

## **Y. Recovery**

### **District Support for Buildings**

In addition to support during an emergency, the district will use all resources at its disposal to support the Emergency Operations Group, Emergency Response Teams and the Post-Incident Response Teams in the affected school(s) after the incident has been resolved to the point where recovery of normal operations can commence. Additional support includes but is not limited to mental health services, building security and facility restoration.

### **Disaster Mental Health Services**

In addition to district and Towns of Gates/Chili Human Services Mental Health Services, district office staff will assist in the coordination of Disaster Mental Health Resources, in support of the Post-Incident Response Teams, in the affected school(s). This may take the form of seeking out additional local support or could, if warranted, involve accessing federal and state mental health resources as well.

### **Review and Debriefing**

The involved school's Building Emergency Response 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 the Emergency Operations Group and/or representatives of local emergency response agencies. The review and debriefing may include the items summarized in the next section describing the Post-Incident Response Guide.

### **Post-Incident Response**

The Gates Chili Central School District has a "Responding to Tragedy and Crisis" Plan. The procedures are outlined in detail in Appendix #4. The Emergency Operations Group, Superintendents Cabinet, Trauma and Grief Team and the Building-Level Post-Incident Response Team will have the responsibility of assisting the school community and guiding staff and administration in coping with the aftermath of a serious violent incident or emergency. It is likely, however, that these duties and responsibilities will be shared by members of the T.I.G Team, Building-Level School Safety Team, Building-Level Emergency Response Teams and the remainder of the school community.

- Convene at the earliest possible time following the crisis for a meeting to help the principal prepare a written statement for the staff to be presented at the Emergency Staff Meeting. It may be most prudent to convene on the weekend in some crisis situations to effectively manage communications to staff and parents and to initiate the proper support services as needed.
- Review roles in providing support during the day of the critical incident.

- Attend end-of-school debriefing meeting for staff. Prepare to offer any support in ways needed.
- Meet with principal, following staff debriefing, if possible, to process the day's events and prepare for the next school day.
- 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.
- Solicit and encourage feedback from students, staff, family and community. Feedback will be recorded on the Building-Level Emergency Response Plan feedback form for evaluation purposes.
- Meet after the passage of two to three weeks to evaluate and possibly revise plan based on students, staff, family, and community feedback.

### **Trauma and Grief Team (T.I.G.)**

The district TIG team is a group of counselors, psychologists, social workers, nurses and other staff members who have received specialized training in responding to the emotional needs of children, teachers, and other school personnel, which arise from trauma, violence, illness, grief and loss. The TIG team will oversee the initial and on-going training program for all building crisis teams and maintain records. The TIG team is also responsible for coordinating district crisis team activities.

# THREAT AND HAZARD RESPONSE

## A. Introduction

Schools are exposed to many threats, hazards, and vulnerabilities. All of these have the potential for disrupting the school community, exposing students and staff to injury and causing damage to public or private property.

The threat and hazard specific response section provides unique procedures, roles, and responsibilities that apply to a specific hazard. They often include provisions and applications for warning the public and disseminating emergency public information.

Threat and hazard specific annexes do not repeat content, but build on information in the functional annexes and basic plan. Repeating information is not advisable for the following reasons:

- School staff and students should learn and exercise simple procedures that apply to all hazards.
- The hazard specific annexes present only hazard-unique information.
- Repeating procedures increases the possibility that there will be inconsistencies in procedures that could lead to confusion during an incident.
- The plan becomes larger and more difficult for users to comprehend.

Each Building Emergency Response Plan is customized to address specific threat and hazard protocols to fit their unique circumstances. Planning, training, drills and table-top exercises conducted with local emergency and safety officials to assist in the development of effective procedures and protocols. These activities will also help a school evaluate the appropriateness of the procedures in the plan. They assist with modifications or updating as necessary to ensure that the procedures are sufficient to provide a safe environment for students, staff and visitors.

**A list of potential hazards that is not all inclusive is included on the following example page.**

Threat and Hazard Type	Examples
Natural Hazards:	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Earthquakes</li> <li>• Tornadoes</li> <li>• Lightning</li> <li>• Severe wind</li> <li>• Hurricanes</li> <li>• Floods</li> <li>• Wildfires</li> <li>• Extreme temperatures</li> <li>• Landslides or mudslides</li> <li>• Winter precipitation</li> <li>• Wildlife</li> </ul>
Technological Hazards:	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Explosions or accidental release of toxins from industrial plants</li> <li>• Accidental release of hazardous materials from within the school, such as gas leaks or laboratory spills</li> <li>• Hazardous materials releases from major highways or railroads</li> <li>• Radiological releases from nuclear power stations</li> <li>• Dam failure</li> <li>• Power failure</li> <li>• Water failure</li> </ul>
Biological Hazards:	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Infectious diseases, such as pandemic influenza, extensively drug-resistant tuberculosis, <i>Staphylococcus aureus</i>, and meningitis</li> <li>• Contaminated food outbreaks, including <i>Salmonella</i>, botulism, and <i>E. coli</i></li> <li>• Toxic materials present in school laboratories</li> </ul>
Adversarial, Incidental, and Human-caused Threats:	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Fire</li> <li>• Active shooters</li> <li>• Criminal threats or actions</li> <li>• Gang violence</li> <li>• Bomb threats</li> <li>• Domestic violence and abuse</li> <li>• Suicide</li> </ul>

## **B. Planning Assumptions and Limitations**

Stating the planning assumptions allows the school to deviate from the plan if certain assumptions prove not to be true during operations. The District-Wide School Safety Plan and individual School ERP's are established under the following assumptions:

- The school community will continue to be exposed and subject to threats/hazards and vulnerabilities described in the Threat/Hazards Assessments Annex, as well as lesser threats/hazards that may develop in the future.
- A major disaster could occur at any time and at any place. In many cases dissemination of warning to the public and implementation of increased readiness measures may be possible; however, most emergency situations occur with little or no warning.
- A single site incident could occur at any time without warning and the employees of the school affected cannot and should not, wait for direction from local response agencies. Action is required immediately to save lives and protect school property.
- There may be a number of injuries of varying degrees of seriousness to faculty, staff, and/or students. Rapid and appropriate response can reduce the number and severity of injuries.
- Outside assistance from local fire, law enforcement and emergency services will be available in most serious incidents. Because it takes time to request and dispatch external assistance, it is essential for the school to be prepared to carry out the initial incident response until emergency responders arrive at the incident scene.
- Actions taken before an incident can stop or reduce incident-related losses.
- Maintaining the School ERP and providing frequent opportunities for training and exercising the plan for stakeholders (staff, students, parents/guardians, first responders, etc.) can improve the school's readiness to respond to incidents.

## **C. Initial Response**

School personnel are likely to be the first on the scene of an incident in a school setting. Staff and faculty are expected to respond as appropriate and notify the principal, or designee, until command is transferred to someone more qualified and/or to an emergency response agency with legal authority to assume responsibility (Police, Fire or EMS dependent upon the nature of the incident). Staff will seek guidance and direction from the school district and emergency responders. General staff responsibilities are listed in the General Response section of this plan.

Any staff person or faculty in a building that sees or is aware of an emergency shall activate the ERP.

## **MEDICAL EMERGENCIES AND MENTAL HEALTH**

A medical emergency is a result of a minor or major illness, or injury to an individual, and can be of such severity as to be life threatening, or merely cause the victim discomfort or pain. The district does not expect unlicensed staff to provide medical care. The district does expect unlicensed staff to call for emergency assistance (e.g. 9-1-1, school nurse) and stay with the victim until help arrives. In each case, the guiding principles are to provide appropriate care until competent medical or parental care is secured. Emergency care is not authorized beyond proper first aid. First aid is treatment that will attempt to protect the life and comfort of the victim until authorized medical treatment is available, or in the case of a student, until the child is placed under the care of the parent or guardian. Mobilize units, positioned at various locations throughout the district, are intended to assist those willing to provide first aid. Staff should use judicious avoidance and standard precautions in managing all emergencies. School nurses follow their standard district policies, procedures and training not listed in this section.

The number of medical emergencies that can develop is potentially endless. Each Building-Level Emergency Response Plan will designate Building-Level Response Teams that may be used to respond in a medical emergency.

The district has also developed policy and procedures for contacting parents, guardians, or persons in a parental relation to a student in the event of an implied or direct threat of violence by a student against themselves, including threat of suicide.

# Building-Level Emergency Response Plans

## 1. Introductory Material

### **Plan Development and Maintenance**

Each Gates Chili Central School District Building Level Emergency Response Plan will be developed by the Building Emergency Response Team under the direction of the Chief Emergency Officer. [8 NYCRR Section 155.17 \(b\) and 155.17 \(c\)\(11\)](#)

- requires that each school shall have a Building Level Emergency Response Team that consists of representatives from the following groups: teacher, administrator, and parent organizations, school safety personnel and other school personnel, community members, local law enforcement officials, local ambulance or other emergency response agencies, and any other representatives the board of education, chancellor or other governing body deems appropriate. A Building Level Response team and Post Incident Response team will also be appointed.

The Building Level Emergency Response Team is responsible for the overall development, maintenance, and revision of the Emergency Response Plan (ERP) and for coordinating training and exercising the School ERP. Team members are expected to work closely together to make recommendations for revising and enhancing the plan.

### **Distribution of the Plan**

[8 NYCRR Section 155.17 \(e\)\(3\)](#) mandates that a copy of the ERP and any amendments shall be filed with the appropriate local law enforcement agency **and** with the New York State Police within thirty days of adoption. This function will be completed by the Director of School Safety and Security.

#### **Send Building Level Safety Plans to:**

New York State Police  
Headquarters – Field Command  
Attn: Safe Schools NY  
1220 Washington Avenue, Building 22  
Albany, NY 12226

**Or by email to:**  
[info@safeschools.ny.gov](mailto:info@safeschools.ny.gov)

### **Record of Distribution**

Copies of the emergency response plan, including appendices and annexes are recommended to be distributed to your School Safety Team, local fire department, area law enforcement (including village, town, county and state police), local and county emergency management, the District Superintendent and any other persons deemed appropriate by the School Safety Team.

## EMERGENCY CLOSINGS

### A. District Closings

The decision to close school is based on the nature of the emergency and the expected impact that the emergency will have on student safety and welfare. Most often, school closings are the result of inclement weather conditions that adversely affect the safety of student walkers and/or bus riders. The district may close all of its schools or only one of its schools, depending upon the specific nature of the emergency. It may also elect a late starting time or an early dismissal, depending on an up-to-the-minute appraisal of the specific situation.

The Superintendent of Schools (or designee) will make every effort to decide school closings in a timely manner. This will be done after the district has thoroughly evaluated the situation and after consulting with the local municipalities, police, weather bureau, and other district departments. All school closings will be reported to local radio and television stations for broadcast to the general public and posted to [www.gateschili.org](http://www.gateschili.org). An automated phone call will also inform families of emergency closings whenever possible.

Whenever district schools close, all public, private, and parochial schools in the district are also closed. No transportation is provided for Gates Chili students attending schools outside the district and all afternoon and evening activities will ordinarily be cancelled.

Parents, staff, and students should not call their neighborhood school, District Office, or radio and television stations to ask if schools are open. Telephone lines become tied up quickly, which prevents crucial calls from going through.

Parents should instruct their children on where they are to stay when school is closed, or when school is dismissed early. Working parents should make prior arrangements with friends and neighbors for the temporary housing of their children in the event that an emergency arises while they are not at home.

While the school district will make every effort to make decisions that are in the students' best interest, weather, street, and sidewalk conditions can vary widely among individual schools because the district is so large. Weather conditions can also change radically within a very short period of time. For these reasons, parents are always the final authority in deciding if their children are to be sent to school during any given emergency when the schools are open.

The communications manager is responsible for notifying the appropriate news agency to announce school closings or delays. The up to date list of news agencies notified will be maintained by the communications manager.

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