

**Niskayuna Central School District**  
**DISTRICT–WIDE SCHOOL SAFETY PLAN**  
**Project SAVE (Safe Schools Against Violence in Education)**  
**Commissioner’s Regulation 155.17**

## **Introduction**

Emergencies and violent incidents in school districts are critical issues that must be addressed in an expeditious and effective manner. Districts are required to develop a District-wide School Safety Plan designed to prevent or minimize the effects of serious violent incidents and emergencies and to facilitate the coordination of the district with local and county resources in the event of such incidents or emergencies. The District-wide School Safety Plan is responsive to the needs of all schools within the district and is consistent with the more detailed building-level emergency response plans required at the school building level. The District-wide School Safety Plan provides the framework for the Building-level Emergency Response Plans.

Districts stand at risk from a wide variety of acts of violence, natural, and manmade disasters. To address these threats, the State of New York has enacted the Safe Schools Against Violence in Education (SAVE) law. Project SAVE is a comprehensive planning effort that addresses mitigation/prevention, preparedness, response, and recovery with respect to a variety of emergencies in each school district and its schools.

The **Niskayuna Central School District**, supports the SAVE Legislation and intends to facilitate the planning process. The Superintendent of Schools encourages and advocates on-going district-wide cooperation and support of Project SAVE.

Niskayuna Central School District has designated the Superintendent of Schools as the district’s Chief Emergency Officer (CEO). The CEO is responsible for:

1. Coordination of the communication between school staff, law enforcement, and other first responders;
2. Leading the efforts of the district-wide school safety team in the 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 of the district–wide school safety plan;
4. Ensuring completion and yearly update of building-level emergency response plans for each school building;
5. Assisting in the selection of security related technology and development of procedures for the use of such technology;
6. Coordinating appropriate safety, security, and emergency training for district and school staff, including required training in the emergency response plan;

7. Ensuring the conduct of required evacuation and lock-down drills in all district buildings as required by Education Law section 807; and
8. Ensuring the completion and yearly update of building-level emergency response plans by the dates designated by the commissioner.

## **Section I: General Considerations and Planning Guidelines**

### A. Purpose

The District-wide School Safety Plan was developed pursuant to Commissioner’s Regulation 155.17. At the direction of the Board of Education, the School Superintendent appointed a District-wide School Safety Team and charged it with the development and maintenance of the District-wide School Safety Plan.

### B. Identification of School Teams

The district has created a District-wide School Safety Team consisting of, but not limited to, representatives of the School Board, teachers, administrators, nurses, emergency services including police and fire officials, communications, facilities, transportation, information technology services, counseling services and school safety personnel.

### C. Concept of Operations

The District-wide School Safety Plan is directly linked to the individual Building-level Emergency Response Plans for each school building. Protocols reflected in the District-wide School Safety Plan guides the development and implementation of individual Building-level Emergency Response Plans.

In the event of an emergency or violent incident, the initial response to all emergencies at an individual school will be initiated by the Building Principal/Designee. The Niskayuna Central School District consists of the following facilities:

<b>Building</b>	<b>Address</b>
Niskayuna High School	1626 Balltown Road, Niskayuna, NY 12309
Iroquois Middle School	2495 Rosendale Road, Niskayuna, NY 12309
Van Antwerp Middle School and District Office	2253 Story Avenue, Niskayuna, NY 12309
Birchwood Elementary School	897 Birchwood Lane, Niskayuna, NY 12309
Craig Elementary School	2566 Balltown Road, Niskayuna, NY 12309
Glenclyff Elementary School	961 Riverview Road, Rexford, NY 12148

Hillside Elementary School	1100 Cornelius Avenue, Niskayuna, NY 12309
Rosendale Elementary School	2455 Rosendale Road, Niskayuna, NY 12309
Transportation and Operations and Maintenance Department	1301 Hillside Avenue, Niskayuna, NY 12309

When appropriate to the emergency, non-district schools within our boundaries will also be contacted:

St. Kateri – Tekakwitha Parish School	1801 Union St. Schenectady
Our World Montessori	1335 Balltown Rd., Niskayuna

All information pertaining to an emergency or violent incident will be directed to either the Building Principal or Designee. Upon the activation of Building-Level Emergency Response procedures, the Superintendent of Schools or his/her designee is notified and, where appropriate, local emergency officials are also notified. The Building-Level Emergency Response Teams are activated to support an appropriate response to an emergency and play a central role in overall planning for responses to emergencies at the building level. Efforts may be supplemented by County and State resources through existing protocols when needed.

D. Plan review and public comment

The district-wide and building-level plans were originally adopted in 2001-2002, by the School Board after one public hearing that provided for the participation of school personnel, parents, students and any other interested parties, and has been adopted on an annual basis thereafter. This plan was formally adopted by the Board of Education on August 13, 2019. Pursuant to Commissioner’s Regulation 155.17 (c)(3), this plan was available for public comment for 30 days prior to its adoption.

The commissioner’s regulation requires that this plan be reviewed by the District-wide School Safety Team on an annual basis on or before September 1 of each year, and recommendations for updates provide to the Superintendent. Herein after, all updates made by the District-wide School Safety Team shall be presented to the Board of Education for adoption pursuant to the aforementioned regulations. In most cases, recommendations are specific and included in the building-level plans. While linked to the District-wide School Safety Plan, the Building-level Emergency Response Plans are confidential and shall not be subject to disclosure under Article 6 of the Public Officers Law or any other provision of law, in accordance with Education Law Section 2801-a.

The District-wide School Safety Plan is posted on the district’s website ([www.niskayunaschools.org](http://www.niskayunaschools.org)) as requested by the New York State Education Department and available at the Niskayuna Central School District Office at 1239 Van Antwerp Road, Niskayuna, New York.

NOTE: Building-level Emergency Response Plans are supplied to both local and State Police within 30 days of adoption.

## **Section II: General Emergency Response Planning**

The District-wide School Safety Plan provides the framework for the Building-level Emergency Response Plan. The purpose of a uniform plan is to ensure district-wide continuity for emergency responses. These general emergency responses will provide one consistent response system that will be used by all school employees, students, parents and emergency responders. This is particularly beneficial as students move from elementary to middle school and then to high school, and as full-time, part-time and substitute employees travel among the schools.

The district team has identified many factors that could cause an emergency in our schools and facilities within the district as well as factors that need to be considered when responding to an emergency. The detailed list of potential internal and external hazards or emergency situations is included in the confidential building-level emergency response plans.

### **A. Identification of sites of potential emergency, including:**

- Detailed plans for each school building;
- The location of potential command and evacuation sites; primary and secondary for each site;
- The kinds of action to be taken in the event of emergency, and
- The potential internal or external hazards or emergency situations.

### **B. Multi-Hazard Response Guidelines**

**1. Actions** - Included in the building-level safety plans are actions for handling multi-hazard emergencies that are in compliance with the Incident Command System (ICS). These guidelines include but not limited to:

- Initial actions
- Command post location (primary and secondary)
- Before, during and after school evacuation including evacuation routes and relocations sites (internal and external)
- Shelter in place
- Lockdown/lockout
- Duck and cover
- Emergency school cancellations, closing, early dismissal and delays including after-school, evening activities and weekends.

**2. Emergencies** - These include, but are not limited to the following Multi-hazard Response Guidelines

Air Pollution	Hazardous Materials Incident – Off Site
Anthrax/Biological Threat	Hazardous Materials Incident – On Site
Aviation Crash	Heating System Failure
Bomb/Explosive Threat	Hostage Situation
Building Structural Failure	Intruder
Civil Disturbance	Loss of Building Use
Crimes Against Persons (includes Assault, Abuse, Hostage-Taking, Kidnapping and Robbery)	Loss of Transportation Fleet
Earthquake	Medical Emergencies
Electrical Systems Failure	Multiple Casualty Incident
Energy Supply Loss	Natural Gas or Propane Leak
Epidemic	Radiological Incident
Explosion	Roof Failure or Leak
Fire and Alarm Activation	School Bus Accident
Flooding	Severe Weather Emergency
	Toxic Exposure
	Water Emergency

**3. Resources** - The district has identified various resources that may be available for use during an emergency, including: the identification of personnel via school building teams; use of Incident Command System (ICS); a list of volunteer faculty/staff trained in first aid, CPR and AED use; master list of all vehicles in the Transportation Department; building floor plans/maps with shut-offs. The specific, detailed information is included in the confidential building-level safety plans.

**4. Incident Command System (ICS)** - The district has identified school personnel authorized to make decisions during an emergency. Through ICS the procedures to coordinate the use of school district resources and manpower during emergencies are clearly defined. ICS identifies the staff members and their backups assigned to provide assistance during emergencies. Each school building has a safety team that works under the Incident Command System. Each team is documented in detail. This document is given only to the building-level emergency response teams, district administration, the New York State Police, Niskayuna Police Department, Niskayuna Fire Department, Schenectady County Sheriff's Department and the Saratoga County Sheriff's Department. The safety team details are located in the confidential building-level safety plans.

**5. Policies and Procedures for Training** - The district has developed policies and procedures for annual multi-hazard school safety training for staff and students, including the strategies for implementing training related to multi-hazards. All drills required by the NYS Department of Education are satisfied annually. The district has established the following procedure(s) for annual multi-hazard school safety training for staff and students:

- The District will submit certification to NYSED that all district and school staff have undergone annual training on the emergency response plan, and that the school safety training includes components on violence prevention and mental health. New employees

hired after the start of the school year will receive training within 30 days of hire. The District will certify that all school staff receives this training by September 15th of each school year, or within 30 days of hire, whichever is sooner.

Faculty and staff in each building will be provided information about drills through training and/or teacher's manual. Families will receive this information through the back-to-school brochure at the beginning of each school year.

- Full participation in the Annual Early Dismissal - Go Home Evacuation Drill. The drill is no more than 15 minutes before the normal dismissal time. Procedures include -notifying parents and guardians at least one week prior to the drill; and testing the usefulness of the communications and transportation system during emergencies.
  - Full participation in an On-Site Sheltering and Accountability Drill.
  - Full participation with 4 Building Lockdown/Security Drills annually.
  - The District conducts 8 Fire Alarm Activation and Evacuation Drills annually.
  - Any combination of eight of the required evacuation or lockdown drills is completed by December 31st of each year.
  - At least two additional drills must be held during summer school in buildings where summer school is conducted. One drill must be held during the first week of summer school.
  - Pupils are instructed in the procedure to be followed in the event that a fire occurs during the lunch period or assembly.
  - For after-school programs, events or performances conducted within a school building and include persons who do not regularly attend classes in the building, the principal or other person in charge of the building must require the teacher or person in charge of the after-school program, event or performance notify attendees of the procedures to be followed in an emergency.
  - The District conducts 4 School Bus Safety and Evacuation Drills annually.
  - The District-wide School Safety Team participate in simulated tabletop exercises.
  - The District has conducted drills and other training exercises to test components of the emergency response in coordination with the following agencies:
    - Niskayuna Fire Department
    - Rexford Fire Department
    - Niskayuna Police Department
    - Saratoga County Sheriff's Department
    - Schenectady County Sheriff's Department
    - Capital Region BOCES Health-Safety-Risk Management Services
    - Mutual aid departments as needed

**6. Implementation of School Security** - The district has developed policies and procedures related to school building security, including the following:

- All visitors entering school buildings are directed to the Main Office to provide identification, sign-in, and receive a visitor badge. Anyone who is found in the building without identification is directed back to the Main Office to sign in.
- Each building has a secured front entrance with video monitor and remote access hardware.
- The District Office at Van Antwerp Middle School has a secured entrance with remote access hardware.
- Video surveillance systems are installed in district facilities. Video surveillance capabilities will be reviewed and expanded as needed.
- Installation of exterior blue lights in the event of a lock-down.
- Safety walkthroughs are performed by building personnel on an annual basis.

Note: Policies and procedures are continually being evaluated and shaped by real life experiences, such as bomb threats, forced entry into the school building with vandalism and outbursts of potentially violent behavior by students.

### **Section III: Responding to Threats and Acts of Violence**

**A. Policies and Procedures** - Schools will activate their Building-level Emergency Response Team and will refer to their Building-level Emergency Response Plan and the Multi-Hazard Response Guide. The Multi-Hazard Response Guides are reviewed by the District-wide School Safety Team to ensure content and consistency throughout the district. These policies and procedures are for responding to implied or direct threats of violence by students, teachers, other school personnel and visitors to the school. Threats of violence by students include threats by students against themselves, which may include threats of suicide. The following types of procedures are addressed in the confidential Building-level Emergency Response Plans:

- Contacting appropriate law enforcement agency, if necessary.
- Inform the building principal and Superintendent.
- The use of staff trained in de-escalation or other strategies to diffuse the situation. Informing the building principal of implied or direct threats.
- Determine the level of threat with principal and Superintendent/designee.
- Monitoring the situation, adjusting the district's response as appropriate to include possible implementation of the safety team.
- If the situation warrants, isolate the immediate area and evacuate if appropriate.
- If necessary, initiate lockdown procedure and contact appropriate law enforcement agency.
- Monitor the situation; adjust the level of response as appropriate; if necessary, initiate early dismissal, sheltering or evacuation procedures.
- Communication with parent/legal guardian, and general public, as needed.

*NOTE: The Niskayuna Central School District Code of Conduct also describes policies and procedures for responding to acts of violence by students, teachers, other school personnel and visitors to the school. The district's code of conduct also supports school safety and security. The code of conduct is pursuant to the district's safe and drug-free schools policy and the no weapons policy.*

**B. Response Protocols** – These are identified in the Building-Level Emergency Response Plans, along with definitions of ICS roles and responsibilities. The Multi-Hazard Emergency Response Guides address specific procedures and protocols for responding to bomb threat, intruders, hostage takings and kidnapping including:

- Identification of decision-makers.
- Notification of administrators/agencies.
- Plans to safeguard students and staff.
- System for student release (reunification).
- Procedures to provide transportation, if necessary.
- Debriefing procedures.

**C. Notification and Activation of Internal and External Communications**

1. The district policies and procedures for contacting appropriate law enforcement officials in the event of a violent incident are located in each Building-Level Emergency Response Plan. Each plan identifies individuals who are authorized to initiate contact with local law enforcement agencies. All communications during an incident at the school will flow through the Incident Command Post. Emergency services will be requested through the 911 system.
2. The district has also posted “If You See Something, Say Something™” posters and window clings around the district.
3. In the event of an emergency, staff, students and visitors will be contacted in one or more of the following manners: telephone (landline and cellular), intercom, runner with verbal message, automated notification system, district radio system, website, email and radio.
4. The district has established policies and procedures to contact parents, legal guardians or persons in parental relation to the student in the event of a violent incident or an early dismissal. In the event that a student threatens violence, including violence against themselves, the parent of that student will be contacted by the school. Such communication will be made in consultation with first responders, and will vary depending on the particular details of the incident, including one or more of the following: media (TV, radio, newspaper), school district website, social media and direct email, phone and text communication. Community meetings and/or press conferences may be scheduled in a timely manner to discuss the particulars of the incidents and the district's response.

## **Section IV: Prevention and Intervention Strategies**

The District strives to provide and enhance emergency and violence prevention and intervention strategies. Such strategies include improving communications among students and between students and staff, reporting of potentially violent incidents and establishing reporting mechanisms for school violence.

A. The school climate is viewed as an important part of school safety. The Dignity for All Students Act supports an environment free of harassment and discrimination. The District provides training around bullying prevention through curriculum integration, which is overseen by the District's Dignity Act Coordinator. The BOE Policy 7550 supports intervention and defines Disciplinary Consequences/Remediation. If appropriate, disciplinary action will be taken by the administration in accordance with the district's Code of Conduct, as applicable. If the behavior rises to the level of criminal activity, law enforcement will be contacted.

B. Policies and procedures related to school building security, including, where appropriate, the use of security monitors and or/security devices or procedures:

- All entrances are secured daily. The District utilizes an electronic buzzer system for visitors at only one entrance to each building (two at the high school) wherein persons must be identified and cleared prior to allowing them access to the building.
- Security cameras have been installed in strategic areas throughout the district.
- Staff has been issued swipe cards in order to access the buildings.

C. Policies and procedures for the dissemination of informative materials regarding the early detection of potentially violent behaviors, including, but not limited to:

- The district employs school social workers, counselors and psychologists/behavioral specialists who assist the district in identifying early warning signs in students and early intervention/prevention strategies. Designated personnel also play a key role in suicide prevention programs.
- All faculty and staff will receive Mental Health Awareness and Violence Prevention Training and the District's Code of Conduct is made available. The Superintendent of Schools will determine if additional persons should be given such information based on facts or circumstances arising.

D. Appropriate prevention and intervention strategies and strategies for improving communication among students and between students and staff and reporting of potentially violent and unsafe incidents. Highlights of the major programs are noted below (not all inclusive).

### High School

- Natural Helper Program
- Health class, drug awareness training
- Extracurricular clubs designed to promote healthy decisions
- NCAP grant to support drug/alcohol prevention

### Middle School

- Access
- Drug Awareness Training
- Banana Splits
- Family life/health
- Extracurricular clubs designed to promote healthy decisions

### Elementary School

- Traffic Safety Programs
- Fire Safety Programs (local fire departments)
- Character Education
- Bullying Prevention
- Elementary Counseling programming in classrooms
- Banana Splits
- Family Life
- Bus Safety

E. Description of duties, hiring and screening process, and required training of, security monitors, campus supervisors and other school safety personnel are maintained in the District Office.

F. The district has many Board of Education (BOE) policies that support school safety, including but not limited to:

<u>Policy</u>	<u>Title</u>
8211	Access to Buildings
8120	Accident Prevention & Safety Procedures
6150	Alcohol, Drugs and Other Substances (Personnel)
7320	Alcohol, Drugs and Other Substances (Students)
5471	Drug and Alcohol Testing for School Bus Drivers
4328	Alternative Education Programs
5311	Bill of Student Rights and Responsibilities
8110	Buildings & Grounds Inspections & Maintenance
8200	Buildings & Grounds Management.
8414.1	Bus Driver Qualifications & Training
5311.4	Care of School Property by Students (See 8212)
8123.1	Contagious Diseases
7110	Comprehensive Student Attendance
4300	Curriculum
4200	Curriculum Development
7360	Weapons in School and the Gun-Free Schools Act
5313	Disciplinary Consequences for Students

6151	Drug-Free Workplace
8134	Emergency Closings
5683	Fire and Emergency Drills, Bomb Threats, and Bus Emergency Drills
8121	First Aid
4315	Health Education
8123	Hygiene Precautions and Procedures
8612	Mail and Delivery Services
5470	Missing Children
5450.1	Notice of Releases of Sex Offenders
8115	Pesticides and Pest Management
7551	Sexual Harassment of Students
3230	Public Complaints
3410	Code of Conduct on School Property
3420	Non-Discrimination and Anti-Harassment in the School District
8111	Reporting of Hazards
8100	Safety program
5681	School Safety Plans
5330	Searches and Interrogations
5640	Smoking/Tobacco Use
9150	Staff-Student relations
5310	Student Discipline
5420	Student Health Services
5311.5	Student Personal Appearance Code
5450	Student Safety
8410	Student Transportation
5400	Student Welfare
5431	Suicide Prevention
7530	Suspected Child Abuse and Maltreatment
4810	Teaching about Controversial Issues
4313	Teaching about Religion
8240	Traffic & Parking on School Property
3280	Use of School Facilities, Materials and Equipment
3210	Visitors to the Schools
7420	Student Records Access and Challenge

## **Section V: Recovery**

Recovery addresses the help needed for all involved to heal and to restore the school community to “normal” operations. The District supports the school buildings by deploying district resources that support the Emergency Response Teams and the Post-Incident Response Teams in the affected school(s).

Recovery plans include mental health/emotional recovery, academic, physical and business recovery, and can continue long after the actual emergency. The District has social worker and counselor resources and support systems. The District has the ability to coordinate with school, local, County and State disaster mental health services. The District's role with mental health services includes looking at the school culture and climate, providing student access to services and following threat assessment procedures.

#### A. District Support for Buildings

Each Building-level Emergency Response Plan provides resources for supporting the Emergency Response Teams and Post-Incident Response Teams. The district's Incident Command System (ICS) identifies backups to relieve team members. This provides team members the opportunity to rotate personnel, to fill in if assigned personnel are unavailable and to debrief in a supportive environment. The district realizes that some emergencies may overwhelm an individual school's ability to manage an extreme crisis. If/when a Building-level Emergency Response Team or Post-Incident Response Team is faced with an emergency such as threats of violence or actual violent incidents, the district-wide Emergency Response Team will assist as follows:

- Acting as a sounding board for the building principal/supervisor regarding the implied or direct threats and/or violent acts.
- Assisting in determining the level of threat and appropriate response.
- If safe to do so, sending a district-wide team member to support the Building-level Team(s).
- Monitoring the situation and adjusting the district's response as appropriate.
- Assisting with parent/guardian, faculty/staff, and media communication.
- Assisting with coordinating building and grounds security in conjunction with local and State Police.
- Assisting with offering a backup Post-Incident Response Team (i.e., another school team and/or an outside group) if needed.
- Offering debriefing sessions as needed working in conjunction with local, County and/or State emergency responders.

#### B. Disaster Mental Health Services

If/when a Building-level Emergency Response Team or Post-Incident Response Team is faced with an emergency that may overwhelm an individual school's ability to manage an extreme crisis, the district-wide Emergency Response Team will assist as follows:

- If safe to do so, sending a district-wide team member to each affected school/building as a liaison between the school/building and the District Office.
- Activating the district-wide Post-Incident response Team. The district and schools have school counselors, school psychologists, school nurses, and social workers that have local connections to:
  - Neighboring school districts
  - Saratoga County Department of Mental Health

- Schenectady County Mental Health service providers
- Ellis Hospital-Ellis Health Center and/or
- Northeast Parent and Child Society
- Offering district support and looking for continued feedback from those directly impacted during the incident, with projected plans to assist if needed during heightened stressful times such as a re-occurrence of a similar event and anniversaries of the original event.
- Assisting with parent/guardian, student, and faculty/staff debriefing and/or post-incident crisis intervention. If needed, assisting in contacting additional outside mental health resources.
- Assisting the schools with written statements going out to faculty/staff, parents/guardians, press releases and media requests through the district's Public Information Officer and Communications Office.

The district supports the recovery phase and reevaluates current multi-hazard and violence prevention practices and school safety activities.