



Explore Schools of Brooklyn

District-Wide Safety & Emergency Response Plan

20 Jay Street, Suite 211
Brooklyn, NY 11201

2024-2025 District-Wide Safety & Emergency Response Plan

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I. Introduction & Approach to Safety

At Explore Schools, our mission is to provide our scholars with the academic skills and critical thinking abilities they need to succeed in a college preparatory high school. Our ability to fulfill this mission is contingent upon our ability to create and maintain learning environments at our schools where students and staff feel safe from danger and harm.

Emergencies and violent incidents in school districts are critical issues that must be addressed in an expeditious and effective manner. The Explore Schools' District-wide School Safety Plan is 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 plan is responsive to the needs of all schools within the district and is consistent with the more detailed emergency response plans required at the school building level. Districts are at risk of a wide variety of acts of violence, natural, and technological disasters. To address these threats, the State of New York has enacted the Safe Schools Against Violence in Education (SAVE) law, one component of which is a comprehensive planning effort that addresses risk reduction, prevention, response, and recovery with respect to a variety of emergencies in the school district and its schools.

The Explore Schools School District supports the SAVE Legislation and encourages and advocates on-going district-wide cooperation and support of Project SAVE. With this, our district- and school-based teams work together to establish a culture of safety for all constituents in our building, in line with the requirements and best practices addressed as part of SAVE. The following pages outline our district's and schools' approach to maintaining the safety and well-being of our scholars, staff and other community constituents.

II. General Considerations

A. Purpose

The Explore Schools District-wide Safety Plan was developed pursuant to Commissioner's Regulation 155.17 and Project SAVE. Development was led by the district office's Operations Team, in conjunction with school-based Leadership and Operations Teams, and building supports (e.g. BRT, School Safety). The general charge is to develop and maintain the plan, in service of the safety of our district's stakeholders, with support and review by representatives of our board, family, and student bodies.

B. Identification of School Teams

The Explore Schools School District has appointed a District-wide School Safety Team consisting of, but not limited to, representatives of the Explore Schools community, students, teachers, administrators, parent organizations; school safety personnel; and, other school personnel. The members of the team and their positions or affiliations are as follows:

School-Based Safety Team: At Explore Schools of Brooklyn, we operate under the assumption that all adults that work in our schools are responsible for ensuring the safety of all students, in accordance with their school's safety plan. The school safety team, however, is the school-based team that is formally responsible for coordinating with other participants of the building response team in planning, management, and maintenance of our building-wide safety plan. The team is comprised of the school's Director of Operations, other operational staff/leaders, and at least two other appointed teammates.

Building Response Team (BRT): Building Response Team is a building wide team that is the core of the building's emergency response plan. There is one BRT team in a school building, with representation across all schools that share the campus. The team manages the information and actions taken in relation to an emergency alert. Participants are trained and prepared to fulfill specific responsibilities. The BRT is activated for every incident. At Explore Schools, each school-based safety team assigns staff to the following roles:

- **Emergency Officer:** Provide leadership and guidance to BRT members during an emergency
- **Incident Assessor:** Conduct an on-scene first assessment of the incident or emergency to assess the severity of the situation
- **Special Needs Coordinator:** Primary point of contact when issues with special needs students and staff arise during an emergency. Collect information on missing individuals with special needs
- **Post-Incident Response Team:** The post-incident response team is comprised of current staff members well-versed in these issues, including social workers, our district's Managing Director or Operations, Chief Operating Officer/ Executive Director, Director of School Culture, Director of Special Populations, and of outside experts such as physical plant rehabilitators and mental health experts who could help to repair the physical and emotional damage caused by any disaster, as necessary. This team would develop both short- and long-term plans to follow up on any violent or emergency-related incident at Explore Schools. This would involve both immediate recovery and more long-term recovery of both the physical plant and physical/emotional needs of students and staff.

NYC DOE School Safety Agents: School Safety Agents provide security and ensure the safety of students, faculty and visitors in our school buildings and surrounding premises. They coordinate with our Building Council team and Building Response Teams to respond to concerns of safety. School Safety agents patrol school premises, act as first points of contacts at school entrances (verifying identity of school visitors, operating scanning and surveillance equipment, etc.). The agents also serve as direct liaisons to city officers and officials (NYPD, etc.).

Building Council Team: In schools, Building Council teams at schools are comprised of the Director of Operations, Principals, members of the BRT, School Safety Agents and other school leaders who share responsibility for building a safe, consistent campus culture for their community. All Building Councils must host 12 meetings between August and July of the following year to make decisions around school safety planning.

School Safety Team: School Safety Agents provide security and ensure the safety of students, faculty and visitors in our school buildings and surrounding premises. They coordinate with our Building Council Team and Building Response Team to respond to concerns of safety. School Safety Agents patrol school premises, are first points of contacts at school entrances, verify identity of schools visitors and operate scanning and surveillance equipment. Safety Agents are also direct liaisons to city officers and officials (NYPD, etc).

C. Concept of Operations

- The initial response to all emergencies at Explore Schools will be by the School Based Emergency Response Team.
- Upon the activation of the School Emergency Response Team, the Managing Director of Operations or his/her designee will be notified and, where appropriate, local emergency officials will also be notified.

- Efforts may be supplemented by county and state resources through existing protocols.

D. Plan Review and Public Comment

- Pursuant to Commissioner's Regulation, Section 155.17 (e)(3), this plan will be made available for public comment at least 30 days prior to its adoption. The district-wide plan may be adopted by the Board only after at least one public hearing that provides for the participation of school personnel, parents, students and any other interested parties. The plan must be formally adopted by the Board of Education.
- Building-Level Emergency Response Plans shall be confidential and shall not be subject to disclosure under Article 6 of the Public Officers Law or any other provision of law, in accordance with Education Law Section 2801-a.
- Full copies of the District-wide School Safety Plan and any amendments will be submitted to the New York State Education Department within 30 days of adoption.
- This plan will be reviewed periodically during the year and will be maintained by the District-wide School Safety Team. The required annual review will be completed on or before July 1 of each year after its adoption by the Board of Education. A copy of the plan will be available at the district office: 20 Jay Street | Brooklyn, NY 11201.

III. Risk, Reduction, Prevention, and Intervention

A. Prevention/Intervention Strategies

Program Initiatives

Explore Schools has established a multitude of programs to create a positive, safe learning environment for students and staff and strives to minimize conflicts and altercations

- **Character Education:** Explore Schools aims to create self-aware, reflective and disciplined learners. Character Education, both the articulation of the school's core values and the day to day demonstration of these values is an essential component of our approach.
- **Mandated Counseling:** For students that have this service on their Individualized Education Program (IEP).
- **Counseling:** For students that do not have an IEP. Counselor observations and parent reports inform the effectiveness of the counseling sessions. The frequency of the observations is determined by the counselor based on each individual case.
- **Preventive Groups:** For students that do not receive mandated counseling but who have been identified to need additional support by their parent, counselor and/or teacher. These groups are designed for students that exhibit behaviors that can often be remedied through short-term intervention, as opposed to requiring year-long counseling
- **Monthly Parent Events:** The school based academic and dean teams hold monthly events throughout the school year to increase parent participation and involvement and work as a way to inform our community of additional ways they can help support outside of the school.

- **Community Meetings:** These assemblies are used as a platform to teach and reinforce Explore's core values. These meetings are also an opportunity to create dialogue about current cultural and/or social issues that affect our community.

Training, Drills, And Exercises

The Network Director of Operations completes the required Emergency Management Training provided by the NYC DOE, or sends a qualified designee. The information received during this training is presented to the whole staff as part of the professional development that occurs prior to the start of each school year. In addition, operational and administrative staff participate in First Aid/CPR/AED training on a biannual basis.

Explore Schools practices the following drills through the school year.

- Emergency Evacuations
- Soft Lockdown Drills
- Medical Emergencies and CodeBlue
- Shelter In Drills
- Bus Evacuation Drills

The Code Blue Drill is put in effect by a contracted member of the NYC Department of Education. This member observes the drill and provides feedback to all participants.

The Building Response Team (BRT) meets throughout the school year to review the school safety plan, perform safety drills and evaluate the effectiveness of the response to practice safety drills.

Vital Education Agency Information

Explore Schools uses a student database to maintain accurate student and staff population information. Explore Schools maintains information on:

- School population
- Number of staff
- Transportation Routing
- Emergency Contact information for students and staff
- Telephone numbers of key officials

This information is stored electronically and can be accessed using a computer or phone. There is also an emergency binder in main offices, included in the Emergency Go Bag, to use during an incident.

B. Early Detection of Potentially Violent Behaviors

The Explore Schools Code of Conduct is reviewed annually with staff members and provides information to identify and respond to bullying and potentially violent behavior and harassment.

C. Hazard Identification

Sites of potential emergency within Explore Schools are:

- School buildings and surrounding sidewalks
- School Buses

- Off-Site Field Trip Locations
- Parks and Playgrounds on or near schoolsites
- Online/Cyber Forums

IV. Response

A. Notification and Activation (Internal and External Communications)

Staff members of Explore Schools have been instructed to contact the Dean Team and School Leaders if they are faced with a situation that they believe requires interventions by the local law enforcement. A School leader will take lead on the incident. If necessary, the following steps will be taken in the order listed:

1. The Principal or Director of Operations will instruct a member of the BRT to call 911 to request law enforcement intervention, if not already done so.
2. The School Leader will inform the School Safety Agent or Office Team Member to use the school-wide PA system to announce any actions that need to be taken (soft lockdown, hard lockdown, emergency evacuation, shelter in).
3. The School Leader will send members of the BRT to respond to the location of the incident to isolate any members displaying unsafe, violent behavior and/or any members requiring medical assistance.
4. Any siblings of involved parties will be escorted to the Leadership Office where they will be held until the situation is resolved.
5. A member of the BRT will print out any contact and guardian information for all students directly involved for those that require law enforcement intervention and those that require medical assistance. This information will be provided to emergency personnel.
6. A member of the BRT will contact the parent/guardian of the involved parties.
7. School counselors or a member of the Dean Team will call the guardians of any students that are directly involved.
8. A member of the operational or leadership team will stand by the school entrance to provide support to any families that may be in the area during the time of the incident. This staff member will be informed of all involved scholars so that s/he is equipped to respond to families in the following ways:
 - i. If they are a parent/guardian of a scholar that is not involved: "We are dealing with a situation within the school. Emergency services have been called and the parents of any involved scholars are being contacted. Please be patient as we work to resolve this.
 - ii. If they are a parent/guardian of a scholar that is involved:
 1. Escort them to the designated location within the building
 2. Connect them with emergency personnel
 3. Reunite them with any siblings of the involved party
 4. Connect them with a school counselor, if necessary
9. A member of the BRT will wait in the lobby ready to escort emergency personnel to the incident.

If we need to contact all families in relation to the event (e.g. Early Dismissal, relocation) schools will utilize School Messenger to send an automated message via phone (voice/text) and email. If appropriate, we may use our social media to post notifications.

B. Situational Responses

Multi-Hazard Responses

Explore Schools has incorporated response protocols defined by state education department. It establishes definitions of lockout, lockdown, sheltering, hold-in-place and evacuation. Our responses are based upon these guidelines and are included in the Building Level School Safety Plan. These include response to civil disturbances, criminal actions, environmental emergencies, weather emergencies, facility related emergencies, medical and mental health related emergencies, and transportation emergencies. Examples of these emergency events include:

- Hostage/Kidnapping
- Natural Weather Related
- Civil Disturbance
- School Bus Accident
- Gas Leak
- Intruder
- Explosive/Bomb Threat
- Hazardous Material
- Biological
- Radiological
- Epidemic

Responses to Acts of Violence: Implied or Direct Threats

Explore Schools has established policies and procedures for responding to implied or direct threats of violence by students, teachers, other school personnel as well as visitors to the school, including threats by students against themselves, which include suicide.

All threats of violence are taken seriously at Explore Schools. Threats of violence from children will be reported to parent, police and/or ACS based on the situation and appropriateness as determined by the Principal, Director of Operations and Superintendent. The Principal and Director of Operations will take appropriate follow up actions. Threats of violence from adults will be reported to the police.

All threats of suicide are considered serious. In emergency situations, school personnel will call 911. Staff must follow up with the person that heard or learned of the threat and gather details. A member of the School Leadership Team should notify the Director of Operations, School Social Worker for risk assessment, and the parents or guardians of the student. School staff will encourage parents to call 911 (if the school has not already called) or take the student to ER for risk assessment. School staff will provide parents with mental health resources including referrals and mental health contact numbers. A link to mental health resources for educators compiled by the New York State Education Department can be found [here](#).

Acts of Violence

Explore Schools has established policies and procedures for responding to acts of violence by students, teachers, other school personnel, as well as visitors to the school.

When a student engages in behavior that poses a substantial risk of serious injury to the student or others, schools must determine the appropriate way to manage the behavior

and consider whether the situation can be safely de-escalated by school staff as set forth below. In such situations, the following procedures must be followed:

1. The Principal or Director of Operations must be notified of the situation and must attempt to reach the parent.
2. Every effort must be made by responding school staff to safely de-escalate the behavior where possible using strategies and interventions for addressing behavioral crises.
3. In the staff member is unable to de-escalate the behavior, the staff member should seek assistance from other appropriate staff and resources including the Principal, Director of Operations, Dean, or a member of the school safety team.
4. Where a student's behavior poses an imminent and substantial risk of serious injury to him/herself or others and the situation cannot be safely addressed by school staff or the support services set forth above, the Principal or Director of Operations must call 911. In such situations where it is not practicable to contact the Principal or Director of Operations, the responding staff member/School Safety Agent must call 911 and immediately thereafter notify the Principal or Director of Operations.

Response Protocols

Mandated Reporting: Members of the Explore Schools staff are known as "Mandated Reporters", in compliance with state law. If a member of the staff suspects that a child is being abused or neglected, they are obligated to report their suspicion to the Administration for Children's Services (ACS). Sign of abuse or neglect may include but are not limited to; patters of lateness to school and absence from school, late pick-up from school or the school bus, consistently unkept or dirty, signs of physical abuse. If a staff member suspects abuse or neglect, they should inform their supervisor and consult with the school based counseling teams to help facilitate next steps

Arrangements for Obtaining Emergency Assistance from Local Government

- The Superintendent in an emergency contacts dispatch point or 911 center for fire or EMA response
- The Superintendent contacts highest-ranking local government official for notification and/or assistance

Procedures for Obtaining Advice & Assistance from Local Government Officials

- The Superintendent is an emergency contact will contact emergency management coordinator and/or the highest-ranking local government official for obtaining advice and/or assistance.
- The district has identified resources for an emergency from the following agencies: NYPD and NYFD

V. Recovery

Following an emergency situation, the following steps will be taken:

- The Board of Trustees will be notified.
- The Director of Finance will be notified so that s/he can determine any costs resulting from the emergency and any investments we will need to apply to the recovery phase.
- A letter will be drafted to the school community to acknowledge and address the incident.
- A press release will be created and the Principal, Director of Operations and Network Leadership Team will prepare to answer questions.
- Counseling services will be made available to the victim(s) of the incident and to the school community at large.
- The BRT will meet to reflect on actions taken during the incident and identify areas for improvement.
- If needed, a community meeting will be held in order to address questions or concerns of our families.

VI. School Health Policy

See Appendix B for formal DOE policy, which is followed by all Explore Schools as they are in co-located buildings.

Appendices

A. School Site Information

School Name	Address	Phone Number	Principal
Explore LS	655 Parkside Ave, Brooklyn, NY 11226	(718) 703-4484	Casey Kean, Principal
Explore US	655 Parkside Ave, Brooklyn, NY 11226	(718) 703-4484	Karen Hicks, Principal
Excel LS	1077 Remsen Ave, Brooklyn, NY 11236	(718) 303-3245	Anna Bear Dallis, Principal
Excel US	956 E 82 nd St, Brooklyn, NY 11236	(347) 289-9555	Brian Giglio, Principal
Empower LS	188 Rochester Ave, Brooklyn, NY 11213	(718) 771-2090	Jonathan Carrington, Principal
Empower US	188 Rochester Ave, Brooklyn, NY 11213	(718) 771-2090	Janelle Samuel Baker, Principal
Exceed LS	443 St. Marks Ave, Brooklyn, NY 11238	(718) 989-6702	Marcus Findlay, Principal
Exceed US	46 McKeever Place, Brooklyn, NY 11225	(347) 689-0200	Joi Frankfort, Principal

B. **DOE COVID-19 School Health Policy** – please note that this is the current NYC DOE policy published for the 22-23 school year. As of 3/27/2023, the 23-24 COVID-19 School Health Policy has not been published.

- **We will continue to align our Covid-19 policies to the DOE, and therefore will be making the following updates in line with the DOE’s new policies:**
 - Based on updated health guidance, instead of a minimum isolation period, people with Covid-19 should stay home and away from others based on their symptoms, similar to how they would for other respiratory infections, like flu and RSV.
 - If students or staff have Covid-19 symptoms, they should still get tested and separate from others right away. Schools should continue to provide Covid-19 tests to anyone who requests one.
 - Sick individuals should stay home until, for at least 24 hours, they have had no fever without taking fever-reducing medicine and other Covid-19 symptoms are getting better.
 - If a student or staff member tests positive for Covid-19 but has no symptoms, they



do not need to stay home but they still need to take the below precautions to prevent spreading the virus to others.

- Upon returning to school, any students/staff who tested positive for Covid-19 should follow the following precautions for the next 5 days to reduce the risk of transmitting illness to others:
- Wear a well-fitting mask that covers both the nose and mouth whenever around other people.
- Continue to keep a distance from others, especially those at higher risk of serious illness. This includes people age 65 and older, people who have a weakened immune system, and people with underlying health conditions that increase the risk of serious illness.
- Practice good hygiene by covering coughs and sneezes, washing hands often, using hand sanitizer, and cleaning frequently touched surfaces.
- If a student/staff member develops a fever or starts to feel worse after they have gone back to normal activities, they should stay home again until, for at least 24 hours, their symptoms are improving overall and they have not had a fever (and are not taking fever-reducing medicine). Then take the above additional precautions for the next 5 days.
- Staff will still have access to Covid-19 leave through the rest of this school year. As such, schools should continue emailing any known Covid-19 cases to ESICOVID@explorenetwork.org, along with the last day the individual member reported to school and when they tested positive.
- It is still recommended that schools continue to use air purifiers in all rooms and, as the weather warms, open windows to increase ventilation and air circulation.