

# The Germantown Central School 2023-2024 District-Wide School Safety Plan

*Commissioner's Regulation 155.17*

## **Purpose**

The Germantown Central School District-wide School Safety Plan was developed pursuant to Commissioner's Regulation 155.17. At the direction of the Germantown Central School District Board of Education, District-wide School Safety Team was appointed and charged with the development and maintenance of the District-Wide School Safety Plan.

## **Identification of School Teams**

The Germantown Central School District has appointed a District-Wide School Safety Team consisting of, but not limited to, representatives of the School Board, teachers, administrators, parent organizations, school safety personnel, and other school personnel. The members of the team and their positions or affiliations are as follows:

Superintendent of Schools:	Benjamin Bragg
Safety Officer:	Aurora Lighthart
Business Official:	Ryan Smith
Jr. Sr. HS Principal:	Stacy Hilton
Elementary Principal:	Beverly Meagher
Board of Ed Member:	Andrea Foley
Head Custodian:	James Palmieri
Maintenance Mechanic:	Frank Savio
Teacher Representatives:	Christina Pudney Dominic Lecce
School Resource Deputy:	Jerry Rowell
District Clerk:	Lisa Shanley
Transportation:	Rebecca VanAlstyne
School Nurse:	Andrea Takacs
School Psychologist:	Shannon Miller
Social Worker	Renee Grzeskow Heather Lincoln
Counselor:	Devin Jackowski Karyn Schassler
NYS Police:	<i>Representative</i>
Questar Health & Safety:	Patrick Doran
Student Reps:	TBD (2)

The District has established an Emergency Response Team (ERT) with the following roles:

***School Incident Command Staff:***

Incident Command-IC sets objectives, strategies, and overall responsibility for safe response, has ability to stay calm and make decisions (administrators, Superintendent). Has Incident Command Training.

Public information Officer-communicates with media & parents as the only designated spokesperson (Superintendent). Has media training.

Safety Officer- -establish safe zones, monitors for protective equipment and safe/unsafe conditions. Can suspend work activities if unsafe. Has advanced training in HAZMAT, emergency response and worker safety. (Questar III)

Liaison-Is the go-between IC and other response facilities, briefs school administration.

***Operations***

- Facilities Team-Conduct sweeps and assess damage, survey, and controls utility systems, investigate, report & deal with fires, secures damaged areas (Facilities staff)
- Evacuation/Shelter Team-gather reports on missing persons & report to command post, organize staff & students for safe relocation, manage student supervision, coordinate evacuation site, manage personal needs-food, sanitation, (Superintendent, Principals, Teachers)
- Search & Rescue Team-check with accountability captain for missing persons, search for injured/missing persons, coordinate transportation for first aid needs, report injuries to command post, coordinates with first aid (Admin./Facilities)
- First Aid Team-Procures and organizes first aid area and supplies, maintains first aid station, provides first aid care, coordinates with EMS, reports status to command post, keeps records of where injured are taken and by whom, ensures injured who are transported for further medical care are tagged with name, address, medical & contact information, prepare for medication administration and special needs populations (Nurse, Athletic Director)
- Reunification team-accounts for all students at all times, manages release of students, maintains copies of student emergency cards, sign-out sheets, validates identification and documents release of student by name and time, ensures staff remains with students until all are released and accounted for, reports status to command post (Attendance Officer & Office Staff)
- Crisis Response- assist students, staff and families and with needs, counseling for both responders & staff/students (Guidance, Social Worker, Psychologist)

***Planning/Finance***

Planning/Finance Team – tracks resources, documents events, controls maps, handles

demobilization (Administrative)

**Logistics**

Logistics Team –Provides resources and services necessary for incident, coordinates communication equipment, handles transportation, coordinates food, water & sanitation, response personnel, medical services for responders, manages traffic, set up cones, maintains flow, direct emergency assistance to correct locations, directs parents to reunification area, directs media to media outpost, arranges appropriate transportation vehicles-busses, other (Transportation/Food Services)

Questar III School Emergency Response Team –school district liaison with outside agencies responding to emergencies. Keeps Incident Commander informed of situation status.

Each team shall be led by a team leader.

**Concept of Operations**

This District-wide School Safety Plan provides an overview of how the school district will operate in the event of emergency situations. The School Safety plans will be further descriptive of how to carry out the overall plan.

The District Wide School Safety Plan will be reviewed by the District Wide School Safety Team and assessed based on local environment, emergency potential, incident trends, VADIR reports and best practices developed both internally and externally with other schools, BOCES Health & Safety & ERT Team, local emergency responders and community resources.

In the event of an emergency or violent incident, the initial response to all emergencies at school will be by the Emergency Response Team (ERT). The communication designee will notify the district Superintendent by the best means available at that time.

Upon the activation of the Emergency Response Team, the Superintendent of Schools or his/her designee will be notified and, where appropriate, local emergency officials will also be notified as per the plan.

We will use county and state resources to supplement the districts efforts through existing protocols by additional support, resources, and coordination of the emergency by the following:

- State and local law enforcement provide building reviews and staff training.
- Local law enforcement and emergency services participate in planning & training exercises and develop strategies for managing building-level emergencies, e.g., a protocol has been developed for using emergency services vehicles to block roadways approaching district building for accident/incident scene management.
- A protocol exists for the school district to use other buildings for sheltering during times of emergency.
- During post incident responses, county health resources will be accessed.

### ***Plan Review and Public Comment***

Pursuant to the 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 School 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.

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 and re-adoption will be completed on or before July 1 of each year by the Board of Education. A copy of the plan will be available at the District Office.

## **RISK REDUCTION/PREVENTION AND INTERVENTION**

### ***Prevention/Intervention Strategies***

The programs and activities the district utilizes for improving communication among students and between students and staff, and reporting of potentially violent incidents, may include:

- Non-violent conflict resolution training programs
- Peer mediation programs
- Multicultural education programs
- Extended day and other school safety programs
- Creating a forum or designating a mentor for students concerned with bullying or violence
- Establishing anonymous reporting mechanisms for school violence
- Individual counseling with guidance office
- Training programs to include: Anger management, bullying, sexual harassment, date-rape, diversity.
- National Coalition Building Institute (NCBI) training for staff & students
- Adoption of in-school suspension program that incorporates behavior modification skill training & counseling services to help address the underlying causes of student defiance and misbehavior
- Comprehensive Codes-of-Conduct for students, employees and visitors to school premises that describes appropriate behavior, reporting mechanisms and consequences for non-compliance

The district utilizes the following strategies to create a positive, safe learning environment for students:

- community involvement in the school
- mentoring programs
- adjusting scheduling to minimize potential for conflicts or altercations
- single point of entry into building
- small class sizes

## **Training, Drills, and Exercises**

All administrators are required to participate in:

- School Violence Prevention
- ICS for Schools

ERT members shall be trained in the above, plus:

- Emergency Response
- Tabletop exercises
- Other training as required to fulfill effective response

Annual multi-hazard school safety training & drills for staff and students includes the following:

- An annual review of the Building Level Emergency Plan for each building occupants
- Early go-home drill to test evacuation & sheltering procedures.
- Evacuation drills (8 per year) and Lockdown drills (4 per year) to total 12 drills, 8 must take place before December 31<sup>st</sup>.
- Bus drills (3 per year)
- Assemblies & classroom activities on safety topics
- Detection of potentially violent behaviors
- Training of staff regarding students with disabilities:
  - Lifting and carrying wheelchair students and staff when fire or other rescue personnel are not readily available
  - Planning for the notification of deaf students
  - Checking lavatories and special education areas
  - Inclusion of persons with disabilities in all emergency drills
  - medical needs requiring specific procedures

After each drill or exercise, the health and safety team will review the actions to test the components of our own emergency response plan, with local and county emergency response and preparedness officials and BOCES Health and Safety as appropriate and provide a summary of response to the Superintendent.

The hiring and screening process includes the following:

- Interview
- Screening of potential new employees which includes:
  - Providing a resume and three references
  - Submitting to a criminal history background check that includes fingerprinting (for all new employees hired after July 1, 2001)

The required training of hall monitors and other school safety personnel acting in a school security capacity includes:

- de-escalation of potentially violent situations
- positive communication techniques
- characteristics of the school population

### ***Implementation of School Security/Staffing***

Our policies and procedures related to school building security include the following:

- Locked outside doors
- Secured entranceways
- All doors shall be locked when rooms are unattended by adults.
- All chemical storage/use rooms shall be locked when unattended.
- Hall monitoring by instructional staff during the passing of classes
- Adult supervision in hallways/locker/bus loading and all areas students are present
- Monitor hallways, entranceways, exits and outside grounds during school hours for unusual occurrences or unauthorized visitors
- Instructional staff monitor halls during passing of classes
- Participate in both building and district safety teams
- Participate in school investigation
- Visitor badge/sign in procedure
- Staff photo Id's
- Video surveillance in certain locations
- Security audits by security and safety professionals
- Random searches as necessary by administration
- Policies on locker use
- Student, staff & visitor code of conduct
- Classroom management
- Greeting students & visitors at the door at the beginning & end of day
- A sign at the main entrance will direct all visitors to "Report to the Office".
- All visitors are required to sign in, and if they need access to other areas of the building, they will be issued a "Visitor" ID tag or escorted by an employee.
- Radio communication devices will be utilized for inside to outside communication during Physical Education classes, recess and other outside activities.

### ***Vital Educational Agency Information***

The communications teams shall maintain information in the school district, including: school population, number of staff, transportation needs, and the business and home telephone numbers of key officials by an annual review and update at the beginning of each school calendar year or as key people change roles. (See appendix 1)

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

Using newsletters, parent meetings, and our website, we disseminate informative materials regarding the early detection of potentially violent behaviors, which include the identification of family, community and environmental factors to teachers, administrators, parents, and other persons in parental relation to students of the school district or board, students and other persons deemed appropriate to receive such information.

To prepare for violent incidents and increase student safety, staff are trained annually during conference days in identifying early warning signs in students, early intervention/prevention strategies, or development of violence prevention instruction for all staff based on recommendations from the health and safety team on relevant topics and an assessment of current needs of the district.

## ***Hazard Identification***

Sites of potential emergency for fire, natural disaster, violence include the following:

- all school buildings
- playground areas
- properties adjacent to school
- transportation routes
- on and off-site athletic fields
- buses
- off-site field trips

## **RESPONSE**

### ***Notification and Activation (Internal and External Communications)***

Any staff member is authorized to contact appropriate law enforcement officials from the designated list in the event of a violent incident.

#### **Panic Alarm System:**

All Staff in the Germantown CSD will be equipped with a panic button option through Intrado. The system allows any staff to push a panic alert from their cell phone or computer. The alert will go to all administration and for high-alert incidents, directly to 911 dispatch

Emergency Response: New York State Police, Germantown Fire Department and the Columbia County Sherriff are also responding agencies.

We will inform the entire school district of a disaster or an act of violence by means of:

- Telephone
- Fax/Email
- Panic Button
- Emergency Responders

In the event of an emergency, or impending emergency, the communications team will notify the Principals and Facilities Team of the impending emergency and take the appropriate action.

Parents, guardians, or persons in parental relation to the students will be contacted in the event of a violent incident or an early dismissal by the communications team by:

- School Messenger
- Telephone
- Website
- Facebook
- Email
- Local Media

# SITUATIONAL RESPONSES

## **Multi-Hazard Response**

The district has multi-hazard response plans to take action in an emergency that may include the following hazards:

### Criminal:

- Threats of Violence
- Suspected weapon
- Hostage/Kidnapping
- Intruder
- Suicide
- Civil Disturbance

### Natural Hazards:

- Earthquake
- Hurricane/Tropical Storm
- Explosive/Bomb Threat/Fire
- Winter Storm
- Flood
- Electrical Storm/Tornado
- Natural/Weather Related

### Technological Hazards

- Hazardous Material Release
- Biological
- Radiological
- Air Pollution

### Explosion/Fire

- Fire
- Gas Leak

### Systems Failure

- Building Structure Failure
- Heating System Failure
- Sewage System Failure
- Electrical System Failure
- Transportation Fleet Loss
- Water system failure

### Medical Emergencies

- School Bus Accident
- Transportation Disaster
- Others as determined by the District-wide School Safety Team
- Mass Causality
- Epidemic/Pandemic

Due to security reasons, specifics are listed only in the building plan.

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

Our district's policies and procedures for responding to implied or direct threats of violence by students, teachers, other school personnel and visitors to the school include the following:

- Assume all threats are serious
- Immediately report threat to school administrator or designee
- Use of staff trained in de-escalation or other strategies to diffuse the situation
- Trained staff/administrator to conduct an assessment interview of the subject making threat



- Determine level of threat with Superintendent/Designee
- Contact appropriate law enforcement agency, if necessary, as well as parent/guardian
- Monitor situation, adjust response as appropriate, and include the possible use of the Emergency Response Team
- Appropriate collection of information and documentation for VADIR reports
- Maintain confidentiality of person reporting threat to the greatest extent possible

The training and professional development that is available to assist personnel with the above responses including, but not limited to:

- training in de-escalation or identification of early warning signs of potentially violent behavior
- threat analysis and is included in annual updates during conference days.

### ***Acts of Violence***

Our district’s policies and procedures for responding to acts of violence by students, teachers, other school personnel and visitors to the school, including the following:

- Determine level of threat with Superintendent/Designee
- If the situation warrants, isolate the immediate area and evacuate if appropriate
- Inform Building Principal/Superintendent
- If necessary, initiate lockdown procedure, and contact appropriate law enforcement agency
- Monitor situation; adjust response as appropriate; if necessary, initiate early dismissal, sheltering or evacuation procedures
- Discipline, legal action

### ***Response Protocols***

Appropriate responses to emergencies, including protocols for responding to bomb threats, hostage takings, intrusions and kidnappings have been identified. The following protocols are provided as examples:

- Activation of ERT
- Assemble Incident Command Team
- Plans to safeguard students and staff
- Procedures to provide transportation, if necessary
- Procedures to notify parents
- Procedures to notify media
- Procedures to unify parents with students
- Debriefing procedures

### ***Arrangements for Obtaining Emergency Assistance from Local Government***

The arrangements for obtaining assistance during emergencies from emergency services organizations and local government agencies include the following:

- Incident Command Team in an emergency contacts dispatch point or 911 center for fire or EMS response
- ERT is activated
- Communications team contacts highest-ranking local government official through 911 for notification and/or assistance.

### **Procedures for Obtaining Advice and Assistance from Local Government Officials**

In order to obtain advice and assistance from local government officials including the county or city officials responsible for implementation of Article 2-B of the Executive Law we shall do the following:

- Communications team in an emergency will contact emergency management coordinator and/or the highest-ranking local government official for obtaining advice and assistance by notifying 911 or the Emergency Coordinator directly.
- The district has identified resources for an emergency from the following agencies:
  - NY State Police
  - County Mental Health Department
  - Red Cross

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

During an emergency, the following district resources are available (need to list):

- Facilities for sheltering
- buses for transportation
- trucks for transporting materials
- machinery for moving items, supplying electricity, lighting
- emergency response equipment, lights, first aid supplies, barriers, emergency response kits, temporary shelter
- personnel with advanced training in emergency services, crisis management
- Food for temporary sheltering (3-day supply)
- Personal needs (blankets, medicine, toilet facilities)
- Walkie-talkies, cell phones, fax machines, computers

### **Procedures to Coordinate the Use of School District Resources and Manpower during Emergencies**

The Emergency Response Team is authorized to make decisions regarding the staff members assigned to provide assistance during emergencies. He/she shall also coordinate the use of school district resources and manpower during emergencies. Due to security reasons, specifics are listed only in each building plan.

### **Protective Action Options**

The following actions shall be taken in response to an emergency where appropriate, and initiate contact with local media and the parent notification system.

- **Early dismissal**-for situations that warrant sending students home safely prior to the end of regular school day. Arrange for transportation, contact local media and parent notification system. Establish an information center so that parents may make inquiries about the situation. Retain appropriate district personnel until all students have returned home.

- **Evacuation** (before, during and after school hours, including security during evacuation and evacuation routes)
  - Determine the level of threat – *IC team*.
  - Contact Logistics/Transportation Supervisor to arrange transportation – *Designee*.
  - Clear all evacuation routes and sites prior to evacuation.
  - Evacuate all staff and students to pre-arranged evacuation sites.
  - Account for all student and staff population. Report any missing staff or students to the Building Principals.
  - Incident report form
  
- **Sheltering/Lock Out (internal & external)**
  - Determine the level of threat – IC team.
  - Determine location of sheltering depending on nature of incident.
  - Account for all students and staff. Report any missing staff or students to designee.
  - Determine other occupants in the building.
  - Make appropriate arrangements for human needs.
  - Take appropriate safety precautions.
  - Establish a public information officer to provide information and current status of the situation to parents, spouses and other inquiring parties.
  - Retain appropriate district personnel until all students have returned home.
  
- **School cancellation**  
When situations warrant the safety of the students to remain at home.
  
- **Lock Down**  
During situations of hostile criminal act or where students/staff must be safely secured, provisions shall be in place to secure the building and occupants.
  
- **Security of a Crime Scene**  
Procedures are in place to protect any area from disturbance where a potential crime has been committed.
  
- **Weather Related**-The transportation supervisor shall investigate road conditions and shall contact the dispatcher town, county and state highway departments and the New York State Police for reports on road conditions and report conditions and recommendations to the Superintendent.
  - The Superintendent shall make the decision to close
  - The Superintendent or his/her designee shall contact the Transportation Supervisor and the Building Administrators to advise them of that decision and the time for dismissal
  - The Superintendent shall contact the Radio and television stations on the emergency list as soon as it is possible so that the announcements of school closings will be announced.
  - The Superintendent shall initiate the System for Parent Notification- (School Messenger Emergency Notification or other)

- **Cancellation/Postponement of Activities** – If the school remains closed or closes early because of hazardous road/weather conditions, there shall be NO activities sponsored by the school in any of the school facilities.
- **Questar III (BOCES). Private & Parochial Transportation** – If the district closed because of hazardous conditions of roads, students who live in the district will not be transported to Questar III or private/parochial school. If schools other than Germantown close because of hazardous road conditions in that district, students living in the district will not be transported to Questar III classes or to private/parochial schools in that district.

**Local Media:**

School Closings Network: see Building Plans for specific contact info.

## **RECOVERY**

### **Post Incident Response**

For initiating and establishing crisis intervention to affected employees/students and Critical Incident Stress De-Briefing to response personnel.

After an incident, the school teams shall meet and review the following:

- Document findings
- Tabulates costs
- Assesses any changes needed to the plan, added training or resources
- Reevaluate the current violence prevention and school safety activities and to determine if there are any further items needed
- Ensure appropriate de-briefing and counseling services have been put in place
- Determine if any additional resources are still needed post-incident
- Restock any supplies needed
- Meet with staff, students, families, public meeting and or other methods to communicate with affected persons-students, staff, families, other affected schools
- Coordinate substitutes as needed
- Prepare staff to handle phone calls –content and volume
- Update Board
- Provide for communal support, grief and/or memorial services
- Protocols for tributes and memorials
- Address cultural competence
- Develop lessons learned

### **District Support for Buildings & Mental Health Services**

Our district resources will support the Emergency Response Teams and the Post-Incident Response Teams by:

- Providing time & place for regular meetings
- Financial resources for supplies
- Training to fulfill duty needs
- Authority to lead in emergency situations

## **APPENDICES**

*(Not required to be filed with the Commissioner of Education)*

### ***Appendix 1:***

Listing of all school buildings covered by the District-wide School Safety Plan with addresses of buildings, and contact names and telephone numbers for building staff.

### ***Appendix 2:***

Copies of all Building-level Emergency Response Plans. Identification of local and state law enforcement agencies where building-level plans are filed.

### ***Appendix 3:***

Memoranda of Understanding or agreements relevant to implementation of the District- wide School Safety Plan and, where appropriate, Building-level Emergency Response Plans.