

NIAGARA FALLS CITY
SCHOOL DISTRICT
COMPREHENSIVE DISTRICT-WIDE

SCHOOL SAFETY
PLAN

Mark Laurrie
Superintendent of Schools

ADOPTED: JUNE 2001

**REVISED: JUNE 2002 –
JUNE 2018**

City School District of the City of Niagara Falls

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The City School District of the City of Niagara Falls is committed to providing a safe environment for all staff and student students. Traditional safety measures are not enough; the District reviews policies annually not only from a district level but also from a school level to ensure the unique needs of each building are being addressed. The most important message we share with staff members and students is if you ‘see something, say something’.

To further our current safety measures, hundreds of staff members have been trained in mental health first aid. This training teaches how to identify signs of possible mental health issues and how to be supportive and responsive until professional help is established. Teachers and counselors in collaboration with the New York State Department of Substance Abuse Services shared a Public Service Announcement for all students, letting them know that help is available for any problem they may have. In addition, the District created magnets containing the crisis service hotline for teachers in grades 7th-12th grade to display in their classroom.

Our collaborations with community partners address safety protocols district-wide. The District continuously consults with Niagara Falls Police Chief to evaluate current policies, procedures and discuss best practices with the Board of Education.

The Niagara Falls City School District pledge be vigilant and progressive in the arena of school safety, School Resource Officers, cameras and other safety measures are in place to ensure the a safe environment for all staff and students. Below please find links to a parent resource for your information.

Niagara Falls City School District Code of Conduct: <http://www.nfschools.net/Page/3335>

Niagara Falls City School District Comprehensive Safety Plan: <http://www.nfschools.net/Page/3335>

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Niagara Falls City School District

INTRODUCTION

The Board of Education is committed to providing every student in its schools the physical environment within which to study, learn and grow to the best of his/her ability and recognizes the right of every student and every member of the school staff to expect that he/she may go about his/her business any place on the school premises in an atmosphere that is orderly, safe and conducive to his/her putting forth best efforts.

The Board of Education is cognizant of increasing incidents of violence in public schools throughout the nation and will not tolerate violence of any nature on school property in school buildings or at school functions.

The Board of Education has determined that the tolerance level for misconduct of any nature that threatens the safe and orderly environment of the Niagara Falls City schools is zero. The Board expects that appropriate disciplinary action will be taken should such misconduct arise, to the extent that any person, found to be acting in a violent or threatening manner, to staff, students or visitors on or near school property, will be immediately subject to disciplinary action.

The authority of the Board of Education to authorize suspension and to make reasonable rules and regulations regarding discipline is granted under Section 3214 of the New York State Education Law and under Board Policy JDD. The Board of Education may involve such action as suspension after avenues of recourse to redress a problem have been tried and school personnel feel that a student's behavior is such that either the student population or the student himself/herself would be better served by the student's removal from school.

Students may be suspended if they engage in behavior that in any way endangers the health safety and/or welfare of others or if they engage in behavior which threatens to endanger the health, safety and or welfare of others. The length of the suspension will depend upon the gravity of the offense and the circumstances under which it took place.

Board of Education policies on school discipline have been developed and predicated on the belief that reasonable behavior should be the goal for each student. A student may be suspended from school for varying lengths of time for serious offenses which threaten and/or endanger the safety of others.

To address threats and minimize the effects of violent incidents and/or emergencies and to facilitate the coordination of the District with local and county resources in the event of such incidents and emergencies, the State of New York has enacted the Safe Schools Against Violence in Education (SAVE) Law. This Component of the Save Law (Section 2801-1 of the Education Law of the State of New York, Section 155.17) requires the Board of Education of every School District within the State, however created, to adopt and amend a comprehensive District-Wide School Safety Plan that addresses crisis intervention and prevention, emergency response and management.

This Plan was developed by a District-Wide School Safety Team established by the Board of Education in collaboration with students, parents, teachers, administrators, school safety personnel, central school administration, legal counsel, local law enforcement and emergency response agencies.

The Superintendent and Board of Education of the Niagara Falls City School District support the SAVE legislation and encourage and advocate on-going District-wide cooperation and support of Project SAVE.

SECTION I

GENERAL CONSIDERATIONS AND PLANNING GUIDELINES

Purpose and Statutory Authority

A. Statutory Authority

The District-Wide School Safety Plan was developed pursuant to Commissioner's Regulation 155.17, which became effective March 27, 2001. This Regulation requires each public school district and BOCES to develop a District-Wide school safety plan regarding crisis intervention and emergency response and management. The Commissioner's Regulation further requires school districts and BOCES to develop their plans in consultation with appropriate state and local emergency management agencies.

At the direction of the Niagara Falls City School District Board of Education, the Superintendent of the Niagara Falls City School District recommended for its approval a District-Wide Safety Team charged with the development and maintenance of the District-Wide School Safety Plan.

B. Identification of School Teams

The Niagara Falls City School District's District-Wide School Safety Team consists of the following members:

Derek Zimmerman	Administrator
Dorothy Brundidge	Administrator
Frank Coney	Teacher
Danielle Zona	Teacher
Trish Hennegan	Teacher
Dean Melson	Teacher
Marcus Latham	NFT 801 President
Jessica Hoy	Parent
Jacob Robertson	Student
Chen Qin	Student
Patrick Singelton	Student
Maria Massaro	Administrator for Human Resources
Stan Wojton	Teacher on Special Assignment
Ed Ventry	Teacher on Special Assignment

C. Concept of Operations

This Comprehensive District-Wide Safety Plan includes at a minimum:
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;

Policies and procedures for responding to acts of violence by students, teachers, other school personnel as well as visitors to the school, including consideration of zero-tolerance policies for school violence;

A description of the duties of hall monitors and any other school safety personnel, the training required of all personnel acting in a school security capacity, and the hiring and screening process for all personnel acting in a school security capacity.

This Comprehensive District-Wide Safety Plan is directly linked to the individual Building-Level Emergency Management Operations Plan for each of the school buildings. Protocols reflected in the District-Wide School Safety Plan will guide the development and implementation of the individual Building-Level Emergency Management Plans.

In the event of an emergency or violent incident, the initial response to all emergencies at an individual school will be by the school's emergency management team.

Upon activation of the School Emergency Management Team, the Superintendent of Schools or his/her designee will be notified and, where appropriate, local emergency officials will be notified.

Additional city, county and state resources could supplement the District efforts through existing protocols or emergency response actions, including post incident response.

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 formal adoption by the Board of Education.

The District-Wide Plan will be adopted by the Board of Education only after at least one public hearing that provides for the participation of school personnel, parents, students and any other interested parties.

Full copies of the District-Wide School Safety Plan will be posted on the District website within 30 days of adoption.

This plan shall be reviewed by the District-Wide School Safety Team on at least an annual basis and updated as needed. 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 in the District Clerk's Office at 630 66th Street, Niagara Falls, New York.

While linked to the District-Wide School Safety Plan, the 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.

SECTION II

RISK REDUCTION/PREVENTION AND INTERVENTION

A. PREVENTION AND INTERVENTION STRATEGIES

PROGRAM INITIATIVES: Prevention

Non-Violent Conflict Resolution Programs

The Niagara Falls City School District continues to develop a comprehensive Pre-K-12 non-violent conflict resolution program built on existing and evolving programs. The program will be designed for age appropriate integration and consist of the following:

- a. Elementary Level: Introduce students to problem solving, anti-bullying, character education, and respecting differences through a focus on positive behavior when appropriate. Information will be shared from guidance counselors and/or after school extended day clubs.
- b. Preparatory School Level: Development of an information program that focuses on problem solving and anger management techniques. Continue character education and the development of leadership skills that will build a caring non-violent environment. Information/programs shared in health classes, during Academic Study Period (A.S.P), from guidance counselors, and/or after school clubs will concentrate on building character, mutual respect, appreciation for diversity, and a focus on positive behavior.
- c. High School Level: Development of a program that teaches tolerance and anger management. Continue character education and the development of leadership skills that will build a caring non-violent environment. Information/programs shared in health classes, during freshman experience class, from guidance counselors and/or after school clubs will concentrate on building character, mutual respect, appreciation for diversity, and a focus on positive behavior. At the senior high level, leadership skills, community service, and mentoring programs will be the focus.

PROGRAM INITIATIVES: Intervention

Restorative Justice

Restorative justice is a philosophy based on a set of principles that guide the response to conflict and harm. The Niagara Falls City School District is will begin the process of the 'Restorative Justice' practices beginning in the 2017/2018 school year.

Restorative justice's three main goals are:

Accountability: Restorative justice strategies provide opportunities for wrongdoers to be accountable to those they have harmed, and enable them to repair the harm they caused to the extent possible

School Community Safety: Restorative justice recognizes the need to keep the school community safe through strategies that build relationships and empower the community to take responsibility for the well-being of its members.

Competency development: Restorative justice seeks to increase the pro-social skills of those who have harmed others, address underlying factors that lead youth to engage in delinquent behavior, and build on strengths in each young person

Youth Court:

Youth Court is a voluntary alternative to traditional school discipline as a result of an acknowledged violation of the Code of Conduct. The goal of Youth Court is to intervene in early anti-social, delinquent, and criminal behavior to reduce the incidence and prevent the escalation of such behavior. Youth Court strives to promote feelings of high self-esteem, a desire for self-improvement and to foster a healthy attitude toward rules and authority.

Peer Mediation Programs

Peer mediation programs will be developed as follows:

- a. Elementary Level: Under the direction of a faculty advisor, introduce students to peer mediation utilizing peer advocates from the middle school and high school levels.
- b. Preparatory School Level: Train peer mediators at each grade level to work with non-violent student problems. Under the direction of a faculty advisor, students participate in mediation sessions to de-escalate problems. Students may also act as peace advocates, discussing role-playing and distributing non-violent problem solving information to students throughout their home school.
- c. High School Level: Train and use student mediators to diffuse student conflicts. A faculty advisor may select students to be members of a consistent group that will diffuse non-violent student problems at the senior high level. A key role of this group will be to mentor middle school and elementary students in the use of peer mediation as a problem-solving tool.

Extended Day and Other School Safety Programs

The Niagara Falls City School District is committed to its extended day program to provide safe environments for after school learning and athletic activities. Some of the items include but are not limited to:

- a. After School Booster/Academic Progress - to provide extended time for learning skills, techniques, and strategies for targeted students.
- b. Intramural Sports and Modified Sport and Modified Sport Activities - provided in as many areas as possible.
- c. Clubs/Activities - expand existing club offerings that focus on positive character building.

Strategies for improving communication among students and between students and staff:

Students are encouraged to report school violence and any symptoms of potentially violent behavior to counselors, principals, student coordinators, psychologists and teachers or any other mentor without fear of retaliation.

Students are to report alleged cases of student harassment or discrimination by students or staff to an adult in the school such as an administrator, teacher, counselor, or psychologist. This is covered under the Dignity for All Students Act (DASA).

The Niagara Falls City School District has developed various strategies for the improvement of communication among students, and between students and staff. A teaching component for all grade levels, elementary, middle and secondary will be offered.

This teaching component will encompass the following subject areas: front line defense against bullying, harassment and gangs, anger management, peer mediation and involvement, developing social skills and citizenship, respect for life (character education).

Some programs currently in place include:

School Staff Assisted Peer Mediation – mediation between peers in conflict that is guided by trained staff members of the student's school.

School Resource Officers – Uniformed police officers in schools present to assist students.

School Safety Officers at every level.

The Niagara Falls City School District will continue to develop on-going strategies for improving communication between students and staff and the reporting of potentially violent incidents by the following:

- * Maintaining an electronic reporting system for reporting school incidents of school violence and inappropriate behaviors.
- * Establish student help centers with a Designated Care Consultant (DCC).
- * Maintaining a system for anonymous reporting for areas of concern.
- * School staff members are to be given annual training and staff development on the school safety plan and policies. Skills will be developed in the following areas: violence prevention and intervention, conflict resolution, recognition of early warning signs of potentially violent behavior, and procedures to assist victims of school violence. Information to be disseminated through handbook distribution and staff meetings.
- * Featured column in "Your Public Schools" highlighting programs throughout the District.
- * Student peer programs for the purpose of communicating the necessity and importance of student involvement.
- * The Niagara Falls City School District will also provide parents of our students and community members opportunities to understand the District's safety initiatives as well as opportunities to serve on committees, attend meetings on school safety and assist in school safety programs including the District-Wide Circle of Safety Task Force.

The Niagara Falls School District uses a pro-active approach to help build a healthy school environment using the strengths and experience of our staff and students.

Beginning at the elementary level through high school, we will continue to build and focus on the elements needed to ensure a safe school environment. Some of these elements include (but are not limited to):

Elementary (Guidance Counselor)

- * conflict resolution skill building (intro)
- * positive behavior
- * caring environment
- * character education
- * peer mediation (intro)
- * mentoring
- * peaceful problem solving
- * after school clubs
- * restorative justice
- * youth court

Preparatory School (Guidance Counselor)

- * conflict resolution skill building (continued)
- * leadership skills
- * caring environment
- * character education
- * positive behavior
- * community service
- * peer mediation
- * mentoring
- * after school clubs
- * restorative justice
- * youth court

High School

- * conflict resolution skill building
- * leadership skills
- * caring environment
- * character education
- * positive behavior
- * community service
- * mentoring
- * after school clubs
- * restorative justice
- * youth court

PROGRAM INITIATIVES: Post-Vention

Formal Debriefing Meetings, Liaisons with law enforcement agencies and judicial system, School Crisis Plan, Long-Range Intervention, Formal School Emergency Plans

TRAINING, EXERCISES AND DRILLS

1. Policies and Procedures for annual school safety training for staff and students

In accordance with Project SAVE requirements, the Niagara Falls City School District will conduct annual training programs for staff members in violence prevention and intervention. A cadre of staff members will be trained to develop skills for school violence prevention and intervention. This on-going training and staff development will include the District's safety plan and the District's policies on discipline and crimes committed on school grounds and/or against school staff.

Areas of Concentration

- a. School Violence Prevention Training
 - Recognition of early warning signs of potentially violent behavior
 - Crisis intervention
 - Conflict resolution

- b. School Violence Intervention Training
 - De-escalation techniques
 - Skills in managing disruptive individuals
 - Emergency response plans
 - Reporting of criminal incident
 - Building security

Members of the support staffs, safety staffs and crisis teams from each school building also receive training on the proper procedures for "Bomb Threats" and Violence Resistance.

In accordance with Project SAVE requirements, annual training in school safety for students will take place. Violence prevention and intervention strategies will be incorporated across the curriculum in all grade levels with concentrations of such teaching potentially being incorporated in health and physical education classes. Additionally, students will take part in annual crisis and early dismissal drills initiated and monitored by the District Safety Director in collaboration with law enforcement agencies.

2. Policies and Procedures for the review and conduct of lockdown, on-site shelter, evacuation, early dismissal drills and other exercises

Under the direction of the District-Wide Safety/Emergency Director, the Niagara Falls City School District conducts Mock School lockdown and/or on-site shelter drills in all of its buildings at various times throughout the school year. Schools are required to simulate an incident that would warrant a lockdown and/or on-site shelter and respond accordingly. Individual school plans and information are to be finalized through the building level safety committee. At the conclusion of the drill, school administrators are required to provide information concerning time, cooperation and effectiveness to the District-Wide Safety Director. Local Police and Fire Departments participate in these drills.

Every school building in the district also participates in safety evacuation and early dismissal drills. Schools are required to simulate an incident which would require evacuation of the school building to its "primary evacuation site," and respond accordingly. At the conclusion of the evacuation drill, school administrators are required to provide information concerning time, cooperation and effectiveness to the District-Wide Safety Director. Existing plans will be revised in response to post incident critiques of these drills.

The purpose of the lockdown, on-site shelter, evacuation and early dismissal drills is three fold:

- a. To provide a learning experience for staff and students in lockdown, seeking on-site safe areas and/or exiting a school facility in an orderly and safe manner.
- b. To develop an appreciation and understanding of the need for a safety prevention method to protect all parties involved in an emergency situation.
- c. To coordinate with local emergency services officials to improve the overall level of school emergency plans.

Additionally, the Superintendent of Schools and District-Wide Safety/Emergency Director are responsible for ensuring that fire drills are conducted in each school building at various times throughout the course of the school year.

See attached Operations Plan - page 3.

Other training can entail classroom activities, tabletop exercises, short briefings or presentations related to any aspect of the emergency management operations plan that shall increase the awareness and preparedness of staff and students.

3. Description of the duties, hiring and screening process and required training of school safety personnel

All employees of the Niagara Falls City School District including school safety personnel must successfully complete the application process and meet the minimum qualifications as described in the job specifications. This process includes a filing of an application with a recent resume, an interview, a physical examination including blood work and a screening for substance abuse using a hair sample and a local background check. In accordance with Project SAVE regulations, all potential candidates will also need to be fingerprinted and approved prior to being hired.

School Resource Officers

Certified police academy trained Niagara Falls Police Officers are assigned to Niagara Falls High School. Niagara Falls Police Officers are assigned seasonal to the Preparatory Schools. These officers are going through the Basic School Resource Officer Course - a forty-hour block of instruction designed for law enforcement officers. Three areas of instruction: functioning as a police officer in the school setting, working as a resource and problem solver, and the development of teaching skills. These officers, in conjunction with the District Safety Director, are establishing a rapport with school staff and students to promote a safe atmosphere of learning. Various workshops are presented during the school year by the safety department to include training on violence intervention techniques and procedures.

School Safety Officers

School Safety Officers perform customized work involving the responsibility for assistance in a safety program for school personnel, students and school property. The work is performed under the direct supervision of a school principal.

School Safety officers are School District trained personnel in the areas of school security, public relations, violence prevention, crises intervention techniques, education law, and violence intervention. Officers are responsible for assisting in maintaining a safe and orderly environment in all areas of a school and must assist in monitoring the safety and security of pupils, school personnel and school property during the school day and during special events on school property.

Each officer must have a high school diploma or a high school equivalency diploma and paid experience in monitoring, safety and or security related work with preference given to individuals performing these duties in a school building. Additionally, all individuals must pass a functional capacity test administered by the Board of Education prior to appointment.

The District Safety Director provides on-going training during the school year. Candidates are screened by the Human Resource office to ensure they meet the guidelines of the position. Recruitment is open-ended to include persons of both genders and any person without a criminal record.

Crisis Management Teams

Crisis Management Teams are trained yearly and placed at each building site in the Niagara Falls City School District. They are comprised of the school's staff including administrators, teachers, custodians, secretaries and support staff. Their responsibility is to respond to all emergencies that affect the school. They are to assist in providing for the protection and safety of the school's population.

In addition, the Niagara County Sex Offender Registry is available online at the District website through a link to the Niagara County Sheriff's Office. Information is also available to parents/guardian at the schools if it cannot be accessed from home.

4. CPR/AED Training

There are staff members in each school building who are trained and required to maintain certification in CPR/AED. They include physical education teachers, registered nurses, and health associates. Each building is equipped with AED machines located in prominent locations.

IMPLEMENTATION OF SCHOOL SECURITY

1. Policies and Procedures Relating to School Building Security and Routes to and from School:

The Niagara Falls City School District's policies and procedures for building security are formulated to address the potential for violence in our schools. The District's goal is to create and maintain a safe and secure learning environment for students, teachers and staff.

The placement of school security officers and resource officers is based on the areas of greatest need during school hours and after school activities. All buildings in the Niagara Falls School District are equipped with some level of security technology. These include video surveillance systems and electronic door openers.

The Board of Education has implemented a Metal Detector Policy and Canine Narcotics Search policy allowing random searches for weapons and/or drugs.

All policies and procedures are documented and approved by the school district administration and legal counsel.

Entrance to Buildings:

- a. Entry to the building is permitted from the main entrance only.
- b. Every door is accessible as an exit.
- c. All visitors to school buildings must report to an assigned area to be registered into the facility.
- d. All visitors must sign in and show identification upon reporting to reception area, they must also explain their purpose.

VITAL EDUCATIONAL AGENCY INFORMATION

Each Building-Level Emergency Management Operations Plan will include information regarding:

1. School population
2. Number of staff
3. Transportation needs
4. Business and home telephone numbers of key officials of each educational agency.

The Building-Level Emergency Response Teams will ensure that this information is updated routinely and is accurate.

See the EMERGENCY MANAGEMENT OPERATIONS PLAN

CHAIN OF COMMAND pages 1-2
BUILDING ADMINISTRATION pages 3-4

B. EARLY DETECTION OF POTENTIALLY VIOLENT BEHAVIORS

School psychologists work in conjunction with parents, administrators, teachers and guidance counselors in researching, identifying and disseminating information regarding potentially violent behaviors. Additionally, the schools work closely with counselors to assist students who have exhibited violent behaviors and their families. As mandated reporters, staff members have the authority to contact Child Protective Services (CPS) to hotline a student if further investigation is needed.

The Niagara Falls City School District will:

Facilitate training for staff and students on specific policies regarding reporting of threats and conflicts, weapons, appropriate clothing and the clearly defined roles and responsibilities of all persons involved in the school setting.

Announce and post the school's safety policies against violence in visible areas of the school.

There are early warning signs in most cases of violence to self and others. Certain emotional and behavioral signs that, when viewed in context, can signal a troubled student. Teachers should be given a checklist of these signs that can be used to signal a student that may need help. The more signs a student exhibits, the more likely he/she may need intervention.

The United States Department of Education's "Early Warning, Timely Response" document presents a checklist of early warning signs that may be used to signal that a student may need intervention. Such signs may include:

- Social withdrawal
- Excessive feelings of isolation
- Excessive feelings of rejection
- Being the victim of violence
- Feeling of being picked on
- Low school interest or poor academic performance
- Expression of violence in writing or drawing
- Uncontrolled anger
- Patterns of impulsive, chronic hitting and bullying
- History of discipline problems
- History of violent and aggressive behavior
- Intolerance for differences and prejudicial attitudes
- Alcohol and drug usage
- Affiliation with gangs
- Inappropriate access/use of firearms
- Serious threats of violence.

This information will be made available to teachers, counselors and parents.

If a teacher or administrator feels help for a student is warranted, it will be discussed with the appropriate school personnel to determine the next step.

Interpersonal violence prevention education will be taught as appropriate.

The District Superintendent will set specific time for the building principal(s) in conjunction with the Niagara Falls City School District Professional Development Plan to organize activities of particular concern.

C. HAZARD IDENTIFICATION

79th Street Elementary - Boiler Room, Cafeteria, Indoor Swimming Pool, Playground, Surrounding Streets.

Cataract Elementary School - Boiler Room, Cafeteria, Indoor Swimming Pool, Factories, Surrounding Streets including Niagara Falls Boulevard, proximity to Interstate Highway.

Gaskill Preparatory School - Boiler Room, Cafeteria, Indoor Swimming Pool, Surrounding Streets.

Geraldine J. Mann Elementary - Boiler Room, Cafeteria, Indoor Swimming Pool, Playground, Surrounding Streets.

Harry F. Abate Elementary - Boiler Room, Cafeteria, Indoor Swimming Pool, Playground, Surrounding Streets.

Hyde Park Elementary - Boiler Room, Cafeteria, Playground, Surrounding Streets.

Kalfas Magnet School - Boiler Room, Cafeteria, Indoor Swimming Pool, Playground, Factories, Surrounding Streets.

LaSalle Preparatory School - Boiler Room, Cafeteria, Indoor Swimming Pool, Proximity to Niagara River, Factories, Surrounding Streets.

Maple Avenue Elementary - Boiler Room, Cafeteria, Indoor Swimming Pool, Playground, Athletic Field, Surrounding Streets.

Niagara Falls High School - Boiler Room, cafeteria, Indoor Swimming Pool, Science rooms, Performing Arts Center, Athletic fields, Factories, Surrounding Streets.

Niagara Street Elementary - Boiler Room, Cafeteria, Indoor Swimming Pool, Playground, Surrounding Streets.

Community Education Center - Boiler Room, Indoor Swimming Pool, Cafeteria Equipment, Playground, Park, Factories, Surrounding Streets including Niagara Falls Boulevard, Proximity to Interstate Highway.

Administration Building - 66th Street - Boiler Room, Cafeteria, Playground, Park, Factories, Surrounding Streets including Niagara Falls Boulevard, proximity to Interstate Highway

See Emergency Management Operations Plan: School Building Information

SECTION III

RESPONSE

A. NOTIFICATION AND ACTIVATION (Internal and External Communications)

POLICIES AND PROCEDURES FOR CONTACTING LOCAL LAW ENFORCEMENT OFFICIALS IN THE EVENT OF A VIOLENT INCIDENT

1. Chain of Command - The Chain of command has been established by the Niagara Falls City School District, starting with the Superintendent and the Deputy Superintendent, and flows down the levels of authority and responsibility of the Central Office staff. At the school level the building principal or his/her designee shall initiate the appropriate response action when there is a violent incident.

2. Sequential Response Action - A sequential response action is activated in the event of any violent incident. After verification has been made by school staff, notification to local law or fire enforcement agencies is made. Notification is done by telephone by dialing 911 or through an alarm system connected directly to the police department. School personnel are trained by the Central Safety Committee on procedures to follow when contacting law enforcement agencies. This training is done annually by the Safety Director in all schools for Pre-Kindergarten through 12th grade.

3. Information System - In the event of an emergency or impending emergency, the Superintendent/designee will notify all principals/designees of buildings within the District via telephone, District Radio Systems, telefax or Email, to take the appropriate action. Additionally, in the event telephone lines are inoperable, the Superintendent/designee will communicate with the principals/designees of buildings through use of the School Messenger Program that includes text messaging, cellular phone calls and emails. Additionally, the Superintendent/designee shall contact the local media.

See Niagara Falls City School District Emergency Management Operations Plan:

Chain of Command - page 1
Building Administration - pages 2-3.
Emergency Response Actions - pages 1-7.
Emergency Resource Information - pages 1-2.
Sections I-VI - various pages.

POLICIES AND PROCEDURES FOR CONTACTING PARENTS, GUARDIANS OR PERSONS IN PARENTAL RELATION TO THE STUDENTS OF THE DISTRICT IN THE EVENT OF A VIOLENT INCIDENT

In all cases of violent incidents or other emergencies, the principal or his/her designee, must notify the parent or guardian by telephone or a personal contact before the students are sent home. In the event the parent or guardian cannot be reached, the

student shall be held at school or in an alternate staff supervised sheltering location until the end of the school day.

See Niagara Falls City School District Emergency Management Operations Plan:
Emergency Response Actions -
Parent Spouse Notification Plan – Appendix D

PUBLIC INFORMATION

In any situation where normal school activities are disrupted, it is crucial for the Niagara Falls City School District to recognize its obligation to inform the public of the problem and how the District is responding to it.

The Niagara Falls City School District utilizes public information on a regular basis during the winter months to announce school cancellations and dismissals due to inclement weather. The same rationale, with increased sense of importance applies to other less common types of hazards.

PUBLIC INFORMATION OFFICER

The Superintendent of the Niagara Falls City School District will serve as the primary emergency public information officer during most emergencies and the Business Manager will be the alternate when the Superintendent is not available. The overall functions of the public information officer will be:

1. To provide correct information to the public on what is occurring and what the School District is doing in response;
2. To prevent erroneous information from being disseminated;
3. To represent a positive image for the school district, and demonstrate that the District is responding to the situation in an organized and competent fashion;
4. To coordinate with other agencies that may be responding to the situation to ensure that the public is receiving a clear and consistent report of official information;
5. To act as a liaison between the media/public and School District Officials who are involved in decision-making and the operational response to the emergency;
6. To organize the District's response to parents as they inquire either via telephone or in person as to the health and safety of their children.

B. SITUATIONAL RESPONSES

MULTI-HAZARD RESPONSE PLANS FOR TAKING ACTIONS IN AN EMERGENCY

The Districts multi-hazard response plans for taking actions in emergencies are included in the appended sections of the Building-level Emergency Management operations plan

pertaining to Criminal Offenses, Natural Hazards, Technological Hazards, Explosion and Fire, Systems failure, Medical Emergencies.

Criminal Offenses

- Bomb Threat
- Civil Disturbance
- Hostage Taking/Kidnapping
- Intrusion
- Suspected Student with a Weapon on Campus
- Suicide

Natural Hazards

- Severe Thunderstorm/Tornado
- Winter Storm
- Hurricane/Tropical Storm
- Flood
- Earthquake

Technological Hazards

- Mail Handling Protocol
- Anthrax/Biological Threat On-Site
- Biological Threat Off-Site
- Air Pollution
- Aircraft Crash
- Energy Supply Loss
- Gas Leak
- Hazardous Material Incident-On-Site
- Hazardous Material Incident-Off-Site
- Radiological Incident
- Water Emergency

Explosion and Fire

- Explosion/Fire Emergency

Systems Failure

- Building Structure Failure
- Electrical System Failure
- Heating System Failure
- Transportation Fleet Loss
- Sewage System Failure

Medical Emergencies

- School Bus Accident (Off-Site)
- Procedural Guidelines for Medical Emergencies

Response Protocol Plans for Responding to Implied or Direct Threats of Violence and Acts of Violence by Students, Teachers, other School Personnel and Visitors

When faced with acts of violence and/or implied or direct threats of violence the staff member involved shall:

Assess the situation and make determination if emergency assistance is required.

If emergency assistance is required, the staff member involved shall immediately request emergency assistance from the office.

If emergency assistance is not required the staff member involved shall refer the student to the principal who shall immediately suspend the student for a short-term or long-term suspension. The procedure for which may be found in the District Wide Code of Conduct.

Illegal actions shall be reported to the police by the principal or designee.

In all cases of suspension, the principal or his/her designee must notify the parent or guardian by telephone or a personal contact before the student is sent home. In the event the parent or guardian cannot be reached, the student shall be held at school, but out of classes, until the end of the school day.

See also Niagara Falls City School District Emergency Management Operations Plan:

Sequential Actions for "Suspected Student with a Weapon on Campus"

Response Protocol Plan for Implied or Direct Threats of Domestic Violence

In conjunction with the Family Violence Intervention Project, a protocol has been developed for school officials to follow in response to suspected student domestic abuse/violence incidents that will ensure student safety through notification of appropriate law enforcement and community service providers.

See Niagara Falls City School District Emergency Management Operations Plan:

Emergency Response Protocol Plans for Other Than Implied or Direct Threats of Violence

The following are the steps to be taken in a crisis response. These are planned reactions to any unexpected event.

1. School Staff: After receiving any information that might compromise the health, safety and/or welfare of any member of the school community, an administrative team member should be contacted. All facts and information shall be provided to the administrative team member.
2. Administrative team: The team will make an honest and critical appraisal of the situation. All crucial players involved will be mobilized if needed. This will include: law enforcement, teachers, students, parents and guidance counselors.

3. A building safety audit may be performed: Checking lockers and classrooms, metal detectors or K-9 dogs, extra security personnel on campus.
4. All involved persons will be interviewed. The degree of the situation will be evaluated to determine if further action is necessary. The local newspaper, radio and television will be contacted and advised of the situation.

See Niagara Falls City School District Emergency Management Operations Plan:

Chain of Command – pages 1-2
Emergency Response Actions - pages 1-5
Emergency Resource Information – pages 1-2.

Arrangements for Obtaining Emergency Assistance From Local Government

In the event of an emergency, the Building Principal/Designee (which includes classroom teachers in the event of a classroom emergency) contacts the Main office or 911 for Fire or EMS Response. Additionally, the County Emergency Management Coordinator may be contacted at (716) 438-3471. The Incident Commander will authorize the request for assistance from other county agencies.

See Niagara Falls City School District Emergency Management Operations Plan:

Emergency Resource Information - pages 1-5.

Procedures for Obtaining Advice and Assistance from Local Government Officials

In the event of an emergency, the Building Principal/Designee serves as the Incident Commander. Should advice and/or assistance from local government officials be required, the Incident Commander will direct/authorize the request for assistance from other local officials/agencies. The Incident Commander will personally make inquiries and requests and/or designate another member of the safety team to do so.

Additionally, the Incident Commander may contact the County Emergency Management Coordinator at (716) 438-3471.

The District has identified and compiled resources for an emergency if the nature of the emergency necessitates advice and/or assistance from local government officials.

See Niagara Falls City School District Emergency Management Operations Plan:

Emergency Resource Information
Resources which may be available in an emergency include the following:

Red Cross, Fire Department, Police, NYS Dept. of Environmental Conservation, NYS Dept. of Transportation, NYS Department of Health, state emergency Management Office.

Procedures to Determine and Coordinate Direct School District Resources and Manpower Available For Use in an Emergency

To determine and coordinate appropriate use of direct School District Resources and manpower during emergencies, maintenance department staff members must be consulted by the Incident Commander/designee:

See Niagara Falls City School District Emergency Management Operations Plan:

Chain of Command
Maintenance Department Chain of Command
Custodian and Main Office Phone Numbers

See also:
Emergency Resource Information
Maintenance Department Equipment and Vehicles
Transportation Information
Individual School Building Resource Information

Protective Actions

School Cancellation:

See Niagara Falls Emergency Management Operations Plan
Chain of Command
Command Posts

Delayed Start:

Delayed start two hours from traditional start time
For example, elementary level 8:45 am/Delayed Start 10:45 am. Dismissal time remains the same.

Early Dismissal

See Niagara Falls Emergency Management Operations Plan
Emergency Response Actions

Evacuation

See Niagara Falls City School District Emergency Management Operations Plan
Emergency Response Actions
Appendix C; Critical Incident Media Notification Plan.
Appendix D; Parent/Guardian Notification Plan.

Sheltering

See Niagara Falls City School District Emergency Management Operations Plan
Emergency Response Actions
Appendix C; Critical Incident Media Notification Plan.
Appendix D' Parent/Guardian Notification Plan.

SECTION IV

RECOVERY

A. District Support for Buildings

Each Building has put a Post Incident Response Team into place which includes members of the faculty and staff as well as school nurses, psychologists, and guidance counselors. These individuals are to use their professional expertise and follow the District's post incident response guide in the period following an incident.

The Niagara Falls City School District will provide resources and support to the Emergency Management Teams and Crisis Intervention/Post Incident Response Teams in any of its schools which are affected by threatened or actual violent incidents or other emergencies as required.

Each Post Incident Response team should consider the following steps:

1. Consult with administrators to see if involvement is necessary
2. Acquire facts and circumstances regarding the incident
3. Determine the target population
4. Assist the building administrator with dissemination of information to staff, parents and students
5. Assign team members to individual tasks
6. Provide crises team services
7. Plan for ending involvement.

See Niagara Falls City School District Emergency Management Operations Plan Appendix E - Post Incident Response.

B. Mental Health Services

The Niagara Falls City School District through its Central Administrative Staff will insure that any of its schools which are affected by threatened or actual violent incidents or other emergencies have access to federal, state and local mental health resources. This guidance and assistance will be coordinate by a designee from the Superintendent's office assigned to the task.

Recognizing the importance of Mental Health, the Niagara Falls City School District offers a numbers of Mental Health Support Services for teachers, staff and students. Examples include but are not limited to;

- Mental Health First Aid Training for staff members
- EDGE Foundation Training
- B.E.S.T (Basic Emotional Skills Training)
- Sources of Strength

Any school affected by a threatened or actual violent incident or other emergency will be required to have its Emergency Management Team and Crisis Intervention/Post Incident Response Team meet with the District-Wide Safety Coordinator to evaluate the response and recovery efforts and provide suggestions for modifications and/or improvements. A report of this meeting will be required to be presented to the Board of Education at a designated time and all team members will be invited to attend.

APPENDIX I

Response Protocol Plan for Implied or Direct Threats of Domestic Violence

In conjunction with the Family Violence Intervention Project, the following protocol has been developed for school officials to follow in response to suspected student domestic abuse/violence incidents that will ensure student safety through notification of appropriate law enforcement and community service providers.

Definitions

A. "Family or household members" for the purpose of these protocols includes adults or minors who are:

1. Legally married to one another, separated (legally or otherwise) or divorced;
2. Related by blood, including parent and children;
3. Related by marriage (including in-laws);
4. Parents of the same child or children;
5. Living together;
6. Having, or formerly had, a significant dating relationship; or
7. Designated as such by law (foster family).

B. "Domestic Violence" occurs where a family or household member commits or attempts to commit one or more offenses against another member consisting of the following:

1. Bodily injury or fear of imminent bodily injury;
2. Sex offenses;
3. Aggravated criminal contempt or criminal contempt in the first or second degree relating to the violation of an Order of Protection or other valid court order;
4. Criminal trespass;
5. Aggravated harassment;
6. Kidnapping or unlawful imprisonment in the first or second degree;
7. Assault in the first, second or third degree, attempted assault, reckless endangerment in the first or second degree, menacing in the second or third degree, harassment in the first or second degree and disorderly conduct;
8. Endangering the welfare of a vulnerable elderly person in the first or second degree;
9. Coercion in the first or second degree; and
10. Endangering the welfare of a child.

Administrative Procedures

- A. Upon suspected or direct receipt of information from any source concerning domestic abuse/ violence as it relates to a student(s), the faculty or staff member receiving the information will immediately notify his/her building administrator. In the event the building administrator is unavailable, the faculty or staff member will inform the building administrator's designee.
- B. The Building administrator or his or her designee shall take action as noted in the following procedures upon receipt of information from faculty, staff or students:
 1. Notify law enforcement officials by calling 911 in the event of an imminent emergency or contacting the Domestic Violence Unit of the Niagara Falls Police department at 286-4570;
 2. Determine whether there is reasonable cause to believe that a child is an abused or maltreated child and if so, report such abuse to the New York State Child Abuse Hotline at 1-800-342-3720;
 3. Assess the need for medical attention and contact the school nurse;
 4. Contact parent/guardian or family member(s) where appropriate;
 5. Contact school counselor;
 6. Contact District-Wide Safety Director;
 7. Contact Central Office Superintendent or Designee

For information regarding child abuse and neglect in an educational setting, please refer to:

District Policy #7530 – Child Abuse and Neglect/Maltreatment.