

# **Berlin Central School District**

## **DISTRICT-WIDE SAFETY PLAN**

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**Berlin Central School District**  
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# **DISTRICT WIDE SAFETY PLAN**

## **INTRODUCTION**

Emergencies and violent incidents in school districts are critical issues that must be addressed in an expeditious and effective manner. School districts are required to develop a School Safety Plan designed to prevent or minimize the effects of serious violent incidents and emergencies and to facilitate the coordination of the district with local and county resources in the event of such incidents or emergencies. The Berlin Central School District's School's Safety Plan is responsive to the needs of the school and is consistent with the more detailed School Safety Plan required at the school building level. School 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. This component of Project SAVE is a comprehensive planning effort that addresses risk reduction/prevention, response, and recovery with respect to a variety of emergencies in the school.

The Berlin Central School District supports the SAVE Legislation and intends to engage in a planning process. The School's Superintendent encourages and advocates on-going cooperation and support of Project SAVE.

## **GOALS**

To promote and foster a safe school learning environment, the Berlin Central School District plans:

1. To provide a planning guide and framework for action to ensure a safe learning environment, including the physical safety of the schools, and promoting best practices to ensure the medical, emotional, social and physical safety of students.
2. To continue to use the District-wide Safety Committee to monitor and annually evaluate the district's District-Wide Safety Plan and Building Level Emergency Response Plans.
3. The established Building Emergency Response Teams within each building will assess specific building safety issues and report back to the District-wide Safety Committee.

## **PLAN IMPLEMENTATION**

1. The Chief Emergency Officer for the Berlin Central School District is the Superintendent of Schools. The Chief Emergency Officer is responsible for

ensuring that the District-Wide Safety Plan and Building Level Emergency Response Plans are reviewed and updated annually, if necessary. The Chief Emergency Officer is responsible for ensuring that faculty and staff receive required training and that all required emergency drills are completed annually.

2. The Superintendent of the Berlin Central School District has formed a District-wide Safety Committee whose membership will be comprised of representatives from; parents, community, school administrators, teachers, counselors, support staff, transportation, maintenance and others to be determined by the Superintendent or designee.
3. The Superintendent and the District-wide Safety Committee has charged all building principals to form Building Emergency Response Teams within their school buildings consisting of at least the principal, secretary, buildings and grounds staff, teachers, and the school nurse.
4. It is the responsibility of each Building Emergency Response Team to use the Building Level Emergency Response Plan to develop Emergency Procedures to effectively maintain a safe building. Each year the Building Emergency Response Teams will need to assemble the information needed to assess the components of Emergency Procedures for their building.
5. The Building Principal must approve any modifications of each school's Building Level Safety Plan and submit it to the Superintendent of Schools. It is the Principal's responsibility to see that the Emergency Procedures are implemented through appropriate designation of tasks to School Safety Team members as well as others.
6. Each Building Emergency Response Team should plan to meet to monitor and adjust their Building Level Emergency Response Plans if necessary, throughout the school year; a minimum of three meetings is advisable.
7. It is the responsibility of the District-wide Safety Committee to continually re-evaluate District-Wide Safety Plan, to make necessary adjustments and to report annually to the Superintendent and/or the Board of Education.
8. Each year the District-Wide Safety Plan must be reviewed, updated if necessary, and adopted on or before July 1 of each year by the Board of Education upon the recommendations of the Superintendent as the Chief Emergency Officer.
9. The approved District District-Wide Safety Plan must be provided to the Building Principals by August 31 for individual building planning purposes. Copies will also be provided to local emergency first responders.
10. It shall be the responsibility of the Superintendent of Schools to maintain a progressive record of the District District-Wide Safety Plan and new or updated

Building Emergency Response Team Emergency Procedures for each year. Updated Building Level Emergency Response Plans must be submitted to the New York State Education Department by October 1, annually.

11. A copy of the plan is available in the school's office and is published on the District website. While linked to the District Safety Plan, the building level school safety plan shall be confidential and shall not be subject to disclosure under Article 6 of the Public Officers Law and any other provision of law in accordance with Education Law 2801-9.

## **RISK MANAGEMENT**

The District is committed to minimizing risks that impact the interior and exterior physical environment of the schools. This commitment is evidenced by the maintenance of its buildings and grounds to maximize safe conditions. To ensure the best possible safe environment, our Superintendent of Buildings and Grounds conducts safety audits on a regular basis and compliance plans are developed and implemented if needed. Playground safety is a major area of responsibility; safety concerns are addressed immediately. Staff participates in the Right to Know, Bloodborne Pathogens, AED, and CPR training, District-Wide Safety Plan and Emergency Procedures as well as harassment prevention. The district continuously evaluates and updates its Emergency Procedures and has adopted the National Incident Management System.

### **Violence Prevention Initiatives**

The Berlin Central School District continues to develop and investigate various strategies regarding security, violence prevention and intervention. Many school-wide prevention programs and interventions are in place within the district.

Examples include but are not limited to the following:

- Mental Health Clinic
- Cameras to monitor hallways, entrances, parking areas and playgrounds
- Monitored single entrance of each building
- Visitor sign in and sign out with the Raptor visitor management system
- Code of Conduct
- Internet safety instruction
- Counseling groups
- Student support teams
- Character education
- Student assistance counselors
- Referrals to outside agencies
- Student advisory programs
- Student-led leadership training

- Peer mediation
- Strengthening families program
- Elementary morning program
- DASA Initiatives

### **Training Drills & Exercises**

The district will review and conduct drills and other exercises to test components of Building Level Emergency Response Plans, including the use of tabletop exercises, in coordination with local and county emergency responders and preparedness officials.

The district:

- Has held and attended tabletop exercises on and off-site sponsored by Questar and involving local law enforcement officials.
- State police and local first responders have participation in “walk-throughs” of district schools for familiarization purposes.

### **Procedures for annual multi-hazard training for staff and students**

Each school within the district shall:

- Conduct a minimum of four lockdown and eight fire drills per school year. A combination of eight drills are to be completed by December 31 with the remaining four drills to be completed by summer recess each year.
- Provide all staff with lockdown and emergency training delivered by law enforcement.
- Provide the required staff with playground safety training.
- Targeted staff will participate in blood borne pathogens training.
- Targeted staff is trained in policies/procedures pertaining to anti-harassment/bullying/violence.
- Students are instructed on lockdown procedures prior to the required lockdown drills each year.
- Students are instructed on emergency evacuation procedures prior to the required fire drills each year.
- Staff attends Rensselaer County Safe Schools meetings and other safety related training as they become available.

- Provide in-service on de-escalation and violence prevention.

## **School Security**

Berlin Central School District is committed to providing a safe working and learning environment. To help ensure the personal safety of staff and students the following has been adopted.

Screening of potential new employees which includes:

- Providing a resume and three references
- Submitting to a criminal history background check that includes fingerprinting.

## **Security Personnel – Hall Monitors**

Berlin Central School District utilizes existing staff to maintain a presence in the hallways during passing times, maintains a presence in school bus loading and unloading zones at the beginning and end of school days, and maintains a presence at any other strategically advantageous points to observe traffic flow. Staff training for these responsibilities is covered in annual violence prevention and multi-hazard training.

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

Berlin Central 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.
- Disseminate information provided by the school Code of Conduct.

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. Student support teams within each building meet regularly to monitor warning signs that may signal a student that may need help. Teachers and parents may make referrals on specific students through the building principal. Some signs may include:

- Social withdrawal
- Excessive feeling of isolation
- Excessive feeling of rejection
- Being the victim of violence
- Feeling of being picked on
- Low school interest and poor academic performance

- Expression of violence in writing and drawings
- 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

### **Sites of Potential Emergencies**

The Berlin Central School District has established procedures in the Building Level Emergency Response Plan for the identification of potential internal and/or external hazards that may be present in them. These procedures have been developed in coordination with local emergency management office personnel, fire department, and law enforcement agencies.

## **RESPONSE**

Berlin Central School District recognizes that appropriate response to emergencies, such as bomb threats, intrusions, hostage takings and kidnappings, varies greatly depending on the situation. Building Level Emergency Response Plans detail the appropriate response to such emergencies utilizing the following protocols:

- Identification of the decision makers
- Determination of threat level
- Plans to safeguard students and staff
- Procedures to notify and direct students and staff
- Procedures to provide transportation, if necessary
- Procedures to notify parents
- Procedures to notify media
- Debriefing procedures

Law enforcement officials will be contacted by the Incident Commander in line with the Building Level Emergency Response Plan and will be requested based upon the “closest response agency” concept to ensure that the response to the incident is as rapid as possible. The school will notify any appropriate educational agencies within its boundaries as well as adjacent to its boundaries in the case of a disaster that would affect any of these agencies.

### **Notification and Activation**

- The following systems can be included as forms of communications:
  - Cell phone/telephone
  - Two-way radios
  - School Messenger system
  - Social media
  - School website
  - Intercom Emergency Alert System
  - Fax/E-mail/NOM Weather Radio
  - Local Media
  
- Upon being notified of an emergency, the Building Principal or Designee will contact law or emergency personnel in accordance with stated response protocol.
  
- In an event of an emergency, the Principal or Designee will notify all building occupants to take the appropriate protective action.

## **ACTION PLANS**

### **Multi-Hazard Responses**

The Berlin Central School District's multi-hazard response plans for taking actions in the following emergencies are included in the Building Level Emergency Response Plan. These include, but are not limited to, the following:

<p><b>Acts of Violence</b></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Bomb Threat</li> <li>• Hostage taking/kidnapping</li> <li>• Intrusion</li> </ul>	<p><b>Systems Failure</b></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Building Structure Failure</li> <li>• Maintenance Emergency</li> <li>• Transportation Fleet Loss</li> </ul>
<p><b>Natural Hazards</b></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Earthquake</li> <li>• Flood</li> <li>• Hurricane/tropical storm</li> <li>• Severe thunderstorm/tornado</li> <li>• Winter storm</li> </ul>	<p><b>Technological Hazards</b></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Energy Supply Loss</li> <li>• Gas Leak</li> <li>• Hazardous Material Spill</li> <li>• Radiological Incident</li> <li>• Water Emergency</li> </ul>
<p><b>Medical Emergencies</b></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• School Bus Accident</li> <li>• Procedural Guidelines for Medical Emergencies</li> <li>• COVID-19</li> <li>• Pandemic Flu</li> </ul>	<p><b>Explosion and Fire</b></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Explosion/Fire Emergency</li> </ul>

**PANDEMIC PLANNING FOR PUBLIC HEALTH EMERGENCIES INVOLVING A COMMUNICABLE DISEASE**

On September 7, 2020, Governor Cuomo signed into law Chapter 168 of the Laws of 2020 that requires public employers, including public school districts, to adopt a continuation of operations plan in the event that the governor declares a public health emergency involving communicable disease. The legislation (S.8617-B/ A.10832) amended subdivision 2 of section 2801-a of New York Education Law to require that District Safety Plans include protocols for responding to a declared public health emergency involving a communicable disease that are “substantially consistent” with the provisions of section 27-c of the Labor Law.

In the case of a public health emergency involving a communicable disease, the district will activate its Public Health Emergency – Continuation of Operations Plan, which is located in the Staff Resources section of the district website.

## EVACUATION PROCEDURES

The following procedures have been developed for the safe evacuation of students, teachers, other school personnel and visitors to the school in the event of a serious incident.

### 1. Early Dismissal – Go Home Plan

Communication of the plan shall be primarily the responsibility of the school superintendent through cooperation with county and local community agencies, radio and television stations, and School Messenger emergency notification system.

### 2. Evacuation Plan

If there is a disaster within Rensselaer County, the Berlin Central School District Superintendent will implement an evacuation plan in cooperation with the Rensselaer County Emergency Services.

If the evacuation of the school building is deemed necessary, teachers will be responsible for all persons under their control. They will take class attendance, visitor logs and other important records with them to pre-designated safety areas.

Administrative personnel will take official visitor logs, along with 'essential' records, to the evacuation site.

### 3. Sheltering Plan

If it is necessary for a school building to be utilized to house students, all teachers and building administrators will stay with the students to oversee and to supervise such operations.

### 4. Emergency Evacuation Procedures/Sites

The following procedures will be used by school personnel in the event that the school building must be evacuated as a result of emergency circumstances:

#### **If an evacuation is necessary before the start of the school day:**

No students will enter building. All staff will vacate to nearest designated site.

#### **If an evacuation is necessary during school hours:**

All students within the building or waiting to enter will be evacuated to appropriate shelter site.

### 5. Student Release and Reunification

All students who have been evacuated to a pre-designated safety area will remain under the supervision of teachers and administrative personnel until the incident has been resolved. The incident commander will determine the plan for reunification with families.

## **6. Evacuation of Persons with Disabilities**

It is the responsibility of the Principal and the District-wide Safety Committee along with the School Nurse to develop and implement an emergency evacuation plan for persons with medical issues and physical limitations. Plans will be included in each schools Building Level Emergency Response Plan.

## **RECOVERY**

After a critical incident has occurred, the school is committed to a thorough and comprehensive recovery for students, staff and families. To achieve this goal, the Post-Incident Response Team should consider the following steps:

Step 1: Consult with Leadership Team and others to:

- Determine nature and advisability of team involvement
- If team is needed, acquire release from currently assigned responsibility

Step 2: Acquire facts and circumstances as to the nature of the trauma/loss

Step 3: Determine groups and/or individuals most affected by the trauma (target population)

Step 4: Assist Director in the following:

- Arrange for staff meeting and formulate staff meeting agenda
- Disseminate information to staff, parents, students, media, etc. (ex. letters, etc.)
- Determine logistical needs (ex. work space, crisis center, counseling rooms, class schedules, etc.)

Step 5: Assignment of team members and other staff to individual tasks

Step 6: Provide Crisis Team Services

- Conduct faculty meeting with all building staff and plan follow up meetings
- Conduct classroom meetings in seriously affected classes
- Assess needs and arrange for follow-up meetings with individuals and small groups
- Crisis Team “debriefing” at the end of the day
- Provide substitutes and aides as back-up staff for teachers
- Crisis workers in offices to aid office staff to deal with parents’ telephone calls and questions

Remind staff about “Teachable Moments”

- Death and grief education
- Personal safety, sorting rumor from fact
- Anatomy of the injury (ex. what type, extent, what it means)

Step 7: Assist in creating a committee that can coordinate and plan for memorial contributions, expressions of sympathy, scholarship funds, etc. This committee should be composed of staff, students and parents.

Step 8: Follow-up plans for ending Crisis Team involvement

- Staff meeting to go over staff questions and needs
- Provide feedback to teachers regarding individual student needs referral of literature
- Refer students and others to appropriate building personnel or other helping resources in the community
- Arrange for meeting with Crisis Response Team to determine effectiveness of the Crisis Response Plan in addressing the needs for the incident

### **Follow-through**

Berlin Central School District will work closely with local mental health services to:

- Provide services to children and families that are appropriate for the type of emergency/disaster
- Assess conditions and immediate needs of children and families including food, shelter, clothing and medical treatment
- Follow-up on referrals
- Decrease the internal and external stressors which affect the children and families
- Provide opportunities for children and families to verbalize their feelings and emotional support to aid recovery
- Guide the families through the emergency/disaster and provide tools and techniques for the families to help them recover