

GENESEE VALLEY CENTRAL SCHOOL

A Comprehensive Guide

Responses and Strategies for Emergencies

For Public Dissemination

Revised September 2018
DISTRICT EMERGENCY OPERATIONS PLAN
To Fulfill NYSED Commissioner Regulation 8 NYCRR, Section 155.17

PUBLIC INFORMATION

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

Genesee Valley Central School District will use public information procedures on a regular basis to announce school emergencies, cancellations and dismissals. The Superintendent of Schools is designated as the public relations contact for the District who will be responsible for organizing information that is transmitted to the media and to parents during emergencies. The overall functions of the public information designee will be:

1. To provide correct information to the public, by telephone, media or letter as appropriate, as to what is occurring and what the School District is doing in response;
2. 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 the official information;
3. 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;
4. To organize the District's response to parents.

GENERAL GUIDELINES

Each teacher and non-instructional staff member must immediately notify the Building Administrator whenever a situation arises that threatens the safety of an individual. At no time should staff members place themselves at risk and attempt to deal with an emergency such as a fire or dangerous intruder. It is essential that no time is lost in communicating the existence of an emergency to the Building Administrator so that they can initiate the correct emergency response and summon outside help. It is imperative that the guidelines contained within this plan be followed in the event of an emergency.

The degree and type of the emergency and subsequent actions will be determined based upon information supplied by the Building Administrator, County Emergency Coordinator, Civil Defense Officials, and other authorities.

BUILDING SECURITY PROCEDURES

Building security procedures have been developed to minimize or provide early warning of problems with unwanted persons in the building. The following procedures are designed to improve security in the building.

- General access to the building is limited to the Main (front) entrance.
- All visitors are required to sign a guest book at the main entrance (guest book records shall be maintained for two years).
- All visitors are required to wear a visitor badge.
- If a visitor is observed without a badge, notify a principal, the visitor will be asked to report to the Main Entrance to sign in and the Welcome Desk will be notified (1221) of the visitors expected arrival at the main entrance.
- Upon observing a dangerous or armed person, the school staffs are not to engage that person but to CALL 911 from a school telephone if possible and report their presence to a Building Administrator immediately.
- All staff should be aware of the conditions in and around the building they normally observe and report anything unusual to the Building Administrator.
- Building staff should visually scan their areas before leaving at night and upon entering in the morning to check for any unusual packages or items. Anything suspicious should not be touched, and should be reported to their Building Administrator immediately.

PARENTS AND THE COMMUNITY IN THE EVENT OF DANGER

During any emergency there is a need for clearly defined roles and responsibilities. The chain of command must be very clear and followed.

Whenever an emergency as described within this plan arises, the Superintendent's office is to be notified as soon as practical. The Superintendent will take charge at the command post. All communication with the community, parents and the media will be directed through him/her.

It is very important to control the location of all students during these emergencies. Class lists, with locations, are to be sent to the command center. Each Building Principal will try to locate students who are unaccounted for at shelters. If not found, that list should go to the command post to be forwarded to the emergency personnel. At the command post, the determinations of how the building will be secured or how the problem will be dealt with will be directed.

The Building Principal is in charge of the student body and teaching staff. They are to maintain order and control of these groups. Once the Superintendent staffs the command post, their focus should be on the student's safety. The Superintendent should deal with the building, media and parents.

- ❖ Safety of the students and staff is number one.
- ❖ Assuring parents that everything is being done to ensure their children's safety and that they will be released as soon as possible.

Family Reunification Plan

In the event of an emergency requiring either the sheltering of students or the evacuation of students, the following will guide the reunification of families as soon as law enforcement and/or school officials deem it appropriate. *Reunification of families must be conducted in an orderly and organized manner so as to ensure that every GVCSD student has been properly reunited with a parent or designated guardian.*

Dispersal of Information to Families

Upon the notification from the Superintendent or his designee, the location of the information site for parents, guardians and families shall be communicated via Parent Broadcast. The location of the site selected for information dispersal shall also be posted to the district website and communicated to law enforcement officials so that they may direct families. The designated Information Team shall be in place at the information site and shall be provided with a radio and/or cell phone so as to remain in constant communication with the Superintendent or his designee. The Information Team shall be prepared to provide updates to waiting families and direct them to the reunification site when it is deemed appropriate.

Potential information Distribution Sites:

These sites need to be away from the school building and large enough to provide ample space for crowds as well as parking. Potential sites could include libraries, town halls and other public buildings. Needs would be phone/cell service and a table as well as a public bathroom.

Family Reunification Process

As soon as it is determined appropriate, the process to reunite students with families should begin.

Off-site Reunification

Location: This location must remain confidential until it is needed.

The location is communicated by the Superintendent or his designee to the Family Reunification Coordinator. The Family Reunification Coordinator will notify the Reunification Team that the process is to be put into action. Once the Reunification Team is notified, the Family Reunification Coordinator will notify the Information Team and law enforcement and the site location will be shared with waiting families. *It is imperative that the site location not be revealed until the Team is ready to allow for site set up to ensure the process occurs in an orderly manner.*

At the Site

(Please refer to the attached diagram)

Information Center: The purpose of this spot is to direct students and teachers to the Student Holding Center and Parents and Guardians to the Family Holding center. It also serves as a communication and information point for the Family Reunification Coordinator.

Student Center: The purpose of this spot is to have a central location where students are held and accounted for until they are released to a parent or guardian. *Manned by:* Homeroom and Advisement teachers.

Family Holding Center: This center allows for the slow, controlled release of students to the appropriate parent or guardian. Family of staff and employees will also be directed to this spot as all staff will be needed until students have been reunited. Principals will take names and send parents/guardians to the Parent Sign-Out Table in the order in which they have arrived. *Manned by* principals and teachers without advisement or homerooms.

Parent Sign-Out Table: Parents will be escorted/directed to the table by aides and TA's, who will then retrieve students from the Student Center. Parents and guardians will be asked to show identification and to sign the students out. Parents/guardians will then be directed to exit. *Manned by* building secretaries

Counseling Center: This center is set up away from the main sites to provide support for ANY child or adult who indicates a need for emotional support.

TRAINING EXERCISES AND DRILLS

- ❖ The Building Administrator shall review this plan and the particular building procedures with the staff at the beginning of each academic year or whenever procedural changes are made.
- ❖ Training shall be provided for school staff members who have been assigned specific roles and areas of responsibility on the School Safety Plan.
- ❖ The Building Administrator shall conduct at least one early dismissal drill annually which is required by the Commissioner of Education. The Superintendent of Schools will direct the drill or it may be coordinated through the Cattaraugus / Allegany BOCES. The planned early dismissal will begin no more than fifteen (15) minutes prior to the end of the regular school day. Parents shall be notified from the Building Administrator's Office at least one week prior to the early dismissal.

EARLY DISMISSAL

Similar to evacuation, early dismissal or "go home" is merely a procedure for getting students out of the building and united with their families or with those responsible surrogates designated by the parents to care for the child.

Due to the time it takes to coordinate an early dismissal, this action is normally coordinated at the District level and is typically used in response to inclement weather, loss of heat or other utilities in the building.

Procedures for early dismissal are outlined in the Building-Wide Emergency Response Plan.

An early dismissal is announced in the event of a system failure such as heating/plumbing/electrical that renders the building unsuitable for instructional purposes. Early dismissal may be a viable option for other emergency situations as decided by the Superintendent of Schools. The Director of Transportation or his/her designee will be notified as to when and where to send buses. Early dismissal will follow normal dismissal procedures unless the situation warrants otherwise. A Building Administrator or designee will select alternate dismissal procedures and/or loading areas, as the emergency dictates.

PLAN REVIEW

- Building-Level Emergency Management Operations Plan 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 Educational Law Section 2801-a.
- Copies of the Building-Level Emergency Response Plan were supplied to both local and State Police within 30 days of adoption.
- This plan is reviewed periodically during the year and is maintained by the Building-Level School Safety Team. The required annual review will be completed on or before September 15 of each year.

