

# **Whitehall Central School District District-Wide School Safety Plan**

**2025 - 2026**

**Revised:** May 2025

**Address:** 87 Buckley Rd, Whitehall, NY 12887

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## **Whitehall Central School District District-Wide School Safety Plan**

### **I. 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 District-Wide School Safety Plan designed to prevent or minimize the effects of serious, violent incidents and emergencies and to facilitate the coordination of schools with local and county resources in the event of such incidents or emergencies.

The District-Wide Plan is responsive to the needs of all schools within the District and is consistent with the more detailed emergency response plans required at the school building level. Schools are at risk of a wide variety of acts of violence and 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 District and its schools.

The Whitehall Central School District supports the SAVE Legislation and intends to facilitate the planning process. The Superintendent of Schools of Whitehall Central School District encourages and advocates on-going cooperation and support of Project SAVE.

#### **A. Designation of the Chief Emergency Officer**

§ 155.17(c)(1)(xix) the designation of the superintendent, or superintendent's designee, as the district chief emergency officer whose duties shall include, but not be limited to:

- a) coordination of the communication between school staff, law enforcement, and other first responders;
- b) lead the efforts of the district-wide school safety team in the completion and yearly update of the district-wide school safety plan and the coordination of the district-wide plan with the building-level emergency response plans;
- c) ensure staff understanding of the district-wide school safety plan;
- d) ensure the completion and yearly update of building-level emergency response plans for each school building;
- e) assist in the selection of security related technology and development of procedures for the use of such technology;
- f) coordinate appropriate safety, security, and emergency training for district and school staff, including required training in the districtwide school safety plan and building-level emergency response plan(s);
- g) ensure the conduct of required evacuation and lock-down drills in a trauma-informed, developmentally, and age-appropriate manner that does not include props, actors, simulations,

or other tactics intended to mimic a school shooting or other act of violence or emergency in all district buildings as required by section 807 of the Education Law; and

- h) ensure the completion and yearly update of building-level emergency response plans by the dates designated by the commissioner.

The Whitehall Central District Chief Emergency Officer:

Name	Patrick Dee
Title	Superintendent
Telephone Number	518-499-1772

### **B. Appointment of the District Wide School Safety Team**

Upon adoption of the District Wide School Safety Plan, the following appointments are made to the District Wide School Safety Team:

Board of Education	Mr. Christopher Dudley
District Administrator	Patrick Dee, Superintendent
Representative of Teacher Organization	Mrs. Megan Reynolds, President
Representative of Administrator Organizations	Ethan Burgess, Jr./Sr. High School Principal Adriana Strong, Elementary Principal Ona Lindberg, Vice Principal
Representative of Parent Organization	Mrs. Heather Gordon, President
School Safety Personnel	Officer Daniel Styczynski
Bus Driver and Monitor	Mr. David Fitzpatrick, Head Bus Driver
Student (optional)*	None
Other	Lori Langevin, Business Manager Shane Armstrong, Director of Facilities Needham Risk Management

The District Wide School Safety Team will meet regularly throughout the year to:

- Assess and review the District-wide Safety Plan annually and make updates, as needed throughout the school year.
- Make any necessary recommendations regarding emergency operations, planning, procedures, and/or protocols.
- Conduct training sessions as necessary.
- Support the Building-level Emergency Response Planning Teams at each school as necessary.
- Meet with local emergency responders to develop procedures for emergency situations that exceed the expertise and/or resources of the district.
- Prepare the updated District-wide School Safety Plan for the required public comment period, public meeting and adoption by the Board of Education by the required deadline of September 1 each school year.
- Additional tasks as requested by the Superintendent.

\*Per the regulations, the student representative will not be present for discussions about confidential building-level response plans or portions of the district-wide emergency response strategies that are confidential, and no portion of a confidential building-level emergency response plan will be shared with the student representative(s).

### **C. District Information**

The Whitehall Central School District serves a student population of approximately 655. Within the district there are 160 employees. The District is comprised of the following buildings:

#### **Whitehall CSD District Office**

87 Buckley Road, Whitehall, NY 12887

518-499-1772

Patrick Dee, Superintendent of Schools

#### **Whitehall Elementary School**

99 Buckley Road, Whitehall, NY 12887

518-499-0330

Adriana Strong, Elementary School Principal

#### **Whitehall Junior/Senior High School**

87 Buckley Road, Whitehall, NY 12887

518-499-1770

Ethan Burgess, Jr/Sr. High School Principal

<https://www.railroaders.net>

### **D. District Wide School Safety Plan Review and Public Comment**

To comply with New York State Education Law §2801-a and Commissioner's Regulation 155.17(c)(3)(i), The District must adopt and submit its District-Wide School Safety Plan to the New York State Education Department (NYSED).

**Annual Review and Update:** The District-Wide School Safety Planning Team conducts meetings to review the Plan and throughout the school year, stakeholder feedback is gathered from various sources.

**Public Comment Period:** To ensure that the plan is in place and board approved by the September 1 deadline, the updated draft plan will be posted on the District's website. A 30-day public comment period is initiated, during which stakeholders can provide feedback.

**Public Hearing and Board Adoption:** A public hearing allows participation from school personnel, parents, students, and other interested parties. Following the hearing, the Board of Education adopts

the final plan by September 1st, ensuring compliance with the requirement for at least one public hearing prior to adoption.

**Submission to NYSED:** Within 30 days of adoption, and no later than October 1st, the approved plan will be posted on the district website, and the superintendent will submit the plan URL and an attestation regarding staff training to the NYSED via the SED Monitoring application, providing contact information for the Chief Emergency Officer and details of the public comment period and adoption date.

**Confidentiality of Building-Level Emergency Response Plans:** In accordance with Education Law §2801-a, all school building-level emergency response plans remain confidential and are not subject to public disclosure. These plans are updated annually by September 1st and submitted to local law enforcement and the State Police by October 1st.

### **E. District Policy Manual**

The policy statements formulated by the Board of Education of the Whitehall Central School District are available on the district website (<https://go.boarddocs.com/ny/whcsd/Board.nsf/Public>). The policies related to school safety include but are not limited to:

- 3410 Code of Conduct on School Property
- 3411 Prohibition of Weapons on School Grounds
- 3412 Threats of Violence in School
- 3420 Non-Discrimination and Anti-Harassment in the School District
- 3510 Emergency School Closings
- 5680 Safety and Security
- 5681 School Safety Plans
- 5683 Fire Drills, Bomb Threats, and Bus Emergency Drills
- 5730 School Bus Safety Program
- 7320 Alcohol, Tobacco, Drugs, and Other Substances (Students)
- 7330 Searches and Interrogations of Students
- 7340 Bus Rules and Regulations
- 7360 Weapons in School and the Gun-Free Schools Act
- 7550 Dignity for All Students
- 7551 Sexual Harassment of Students
- 7553 Hazing of Students

### **F. Concept of Operations**

The Emergency Response Plan is directly linked to the individual Building-Level Emergency Response Plans as a matter of protocol. The activation of a Building-Level Emergency Response Plan triggers the notification of the chain of command and the assessment of the activation of the District-Wide School Safety Plan and District-Wide Response Team.

The Emergency Response Plan was developed through extensive analysis of the local environment, emergency potential, and available resources. Through training and workshops that included school employees, administration and local emergency services, the plan has been developed to address the specific needs of the Whitehall Central School District and the community.

In the event of an emergency or violent incident, the initial response to all emergencies at an individual school will be by the School Emergency Response Team. The Building Principal is responsible for notifying the Superintendent of Schools or the highest-ranking person in the chain of command of any necessary building-level plan activation. This notification shall be accomplished through the use of the telephone or other communication method.

Upon the activation of the School Emergency Response Team, the Superintendent of Schools or their designee, shall be notified and where appropriate, local emergency officials shall also be notified.

Whenever the Building-Level Emergency Response Plan is activated and results in the closing of a school building within the District, the Superintendent of Schools or their designee shall notify the commissioner as soon as possible and shall provide such information as the commissioner may require in a manner prescribed by the commissioner. In addition, the District's Superintendent of Schools or their designee shall provide timely notification to the BOCES District Superintendent. In the situation of routine snow emergency days, such information will not be provided to the commissioner.

County and state resources supplement the District's emergency action planning in a number of ways:

- State and local law enforcement provide building reviews and employee training.
- Local law enforcement and emergency services participate in planning and training exercises and develop strategies for managing Building-Level emergencies.
- A protocol exists for the District to use certain facilities for sheltering during times of emergencies.
- A protocol exists for the use of county mental health resources during post incident responses.

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

### **A. Prevention/Intervention Strategies**

#### **Program Initiatives**

The Whitehall Central School District has developed a number of programs and activities to aid in risk reduction. These initiatives are run at different age groups within the District. Examples of the topics covered:

- Collaborative efforts with state and local law enforcement officials designed to ensure that personnel are adequately trained including being trained to de-escalate potentially violent situations.
- Non-violent conflict resolution training programs.

- Peer mediation programs.
- Extended day school programs.
- Community-wide Character Counts program.
- District-Wide Programs:
  - Character Counts Program.
  - “Commitment to Excellence” Whitehall’s long-range plan for quality education which includes the “Profile of a Whitehall Graduate”.
  - District School Calendar containing the Code of Conduct is mailed to all students.
  - Each school has a student/parent handbook that outlines the expectations of students.
- Whitehall High School (7-12):
  - No Place For Hate
  - Middle School Rights and Expectations; provided in written form in the Student Agenda.
  - Counseling Center; all Middle School students are assigned a school counselor who works with the students and parents during their time at the Middle School. Counselors discuss study/organizational skills, goal setting, interim/report card grades, strategies for improving grades/attitudes, learning styles, getting along with others and related topics that concern a student and/or parents.
  - Child Study Team; Members (Principal, Assistant Principal, Psychologist, Intervention Counselor, School Counselors and School Nurse) meet weekly to discuss students who are referred by members of the committee or teachers. Specific interventions are developed and staff are assigned to monitor progress.
  - Extracurricular Activities; There are extensive opportunities for students to become involved in productive, fun activities before and after school.
  - Student Agenda; the ‘What is Character’ section of the student’s agenda is provided for student reading and teacher use in school to help students learn the skills of making responsible choices and being proactive in facing Teachers and parents use the Student Agenda as a communication tool between home and school. Teachers use the Student Agenda as a way of helping students learn how to manage time and work, and to be responsible for learning.
  - Progressive Discipline Process; Teachers discuss behavior with students, communication with parents and use classroom behavior consequences. Teachers write referrals to document behavior that continues after teacher intervention. The student meets with the Assistant Principal or Principal to discuss the behavior and its consequences. This is communicated to parents by phone and in writing. Intervention may be sought through referral to STARRS or in-school counselors and the Child Study Team where possibility of Diversion or PINS may be discussed. Students may be assigned in school suspension, which is supervised by monitors, where students do schoolwork and may receive help from their teachers. Out of school suspension (up to 5 days) may be assigned by the Principal.
  - Other Communication Strategies; Mentor Program with the High School, Respect Week, Student Assemblies (e.g. PTA Arts in Education, Safety Programs with NYS Police, Nancy Sharples Assemblies, Living Voices (Anne Frank) Assembly, Craft Project, Bowling and Rights & Expectation Assemblies).Assembly, Craft Project, Bowling and Rights & Expectation Assemblies).



- Elementary Schools (K-6) (various programs are offered at the elementary level):
  - Mind Up Curriculum: to Promote Non-Violence; cooperation, communication, tolerance, positive emotional expression, personal responsibility, creative problem solving.
  - Character Education Assemblies
  - Conflict Resolution
  - Social Skill Training
  - Red Ribbon Week
  - SEL Curriculum
    - Bullying Prevention: Second Step Program (Grade 5-6)
  - K-5 classroom lessons with counselor and psychologist.
  - Reporting system to report serious offense school violence.
  - Feelings: Counselor works with all students on the four basic feelings; happy, sad, mad, and scared
  - Conflict Escalator/Anger Thermometer.
  - Problem Solving Strategies and “Stop and Think”
  - Kelso’s Choice
  - Pumsy in Pursuit of Excellence.
  - Council for Prevention: Too Good for Drugs
  - Warren/Washington County Care Center
    - Child Abuse Prevention “Good Touch, Bad Touch”.

### **Security Procedures**

The District has attempted to enhance the security of its facilities through a number of security procedures, including the following:

- Visitor sign-in and badge procedures.
- Employee badges.
- The New York State Police, Washington County Sheriff’s Department or other law enforcement agencies may also conduct random locker searches. If a crime occurs in or on school property, the district has procedures and will follow the NY State Police ‘Crime Scene Management’ brochure which is in the confidential Building Level Emergency Response Plan.
- To further enhance school security and student, faculty and staff safety, the district has the following policies in place: Child Safety and Conditional or Emergency Appointments (Policy 9128 and 9128-R), Suspected Child Abuse by District Personnel (Policy 9130) and the Drug-Free Workplace Act (Policy 9125). The District Code of Conduct also supports school safety and security.
- Digital video surveillance systems are installed in district facilities. Video surveillance capabilities will be reviewed and expanded as needed.

### **Consideration of Silent Panic Alarm Systems**

Governor Hochul signed Alyssa’s Law, Chapter 227 of the Laws of 2022 (Chapter 227) which amends Education Law §2801-a to require that district-wide school safety teams consider the usefulness of silent panic alarm systems when reviewing and amending district-wide safety plans. District-wide school safety

teams shall consider, as part of their review of the comprehensive district-wide safety plan, the installation of a panic alarm system.

Section 155.17(b) of the Regulations of the Commissioner of Education defines silent panic alarm systems as, "Panic alarm system means a silent security system signal generated by the manual activation of a device intended to signal a life-threatening or emergency situation requiring a response from local law enforcement or, in the case of a school building located in a municipality in which there is no municipal police department, a location designated by the superintendent of state police and may include one or more of the following: wired panic button or buttons, wireless panic button or buttons or a mobile or computer application."

The District Wide School Safety team will evaluate and consider silent panic alarms on an annual basis.

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

### **Trauma Informed Drills**

The district will perform emergency drills in a trauma informed manner. This means the district will avoid using tactics in training and drills that may introduce or activate trauma, such as the use of props, actors, simulations, or other tactics intended to mimic a school shooting, incident of violence, or other emergency, or inclusion of developmentally or age-inappropriate content. These drills may inadvertently prompt a negative emotional or psychological response in staff or students because of previous exposure(s) to trauma.

### **Drill Procedures**

The District shall practice emergency response procedures under its District-Wide School Safety Plan and each of its Building-Level Emergency Response Plans, where possible, in cooperation with local law enforcement, emergency preparedness plan officials, and other first responders as follows:

- Evacuation and Lockdown drills shall be conducted with students at least twelve times in each school year, eight of which required drills shall be held between September first and December thirty-first of each such year.
- Eight of all such drills shall be evacuation drills, four of which shall be through use of the fire escapes on buildings where fire escapes are provided or through the use of identified secondary means of egress, such as through different corridors, hallways, stairways and exit doors. Six evacuation drills will be conducted by December thirty-first.
- Four of all such required drills shall be Lockdown drills. Two Lockdown drills will be conducted by December thirty-first.
- The District buildings may use temporary visual barriers to create a safe space during lockdown situations.
- Drills shall be conducted at different times of the school day.
- Students shall be instructed in the procedure to be followed in the event that a fire occurs during the lunch period or assembly, provided however, that such additional instruction may be waived where a drill is held during the regular school lunch period or assembly.

- Four additional drills shall be held in each school year during the hours after sunset and before sunrise in school buildings in which students are provided with sleeping accommodations.
- At least two additional drills shall be held during summer school in buildings where summer school is conducted, and one of such drills shall be held during the first week of summer school.
- One Emergency Dismissal drill shall be conducted to test emergency response procedures that require early dismissal, at a time not to occur more than 15 minutes earlier than the normal dismissal time.
- Parents or persons in parental relation shall be notified at least one week prior to the drill.
- Such drills shall test the usefulness of the communications and transportation system during emergencies.
- Drills conducted during the school day with students present shall be conducted in a trauma-informed, developmentally, and age-appropriate manner and shall not include props, actors, or simulations or other tactics intended to mimic a school shooting or other act of violence or emergency.
- With the exception of Evacuation Drills, at the time that drills are conducted, students and staff shall be informed that the activities being conducted are a drill.
- The District may choose to conduct tabletop exercises as a training resource and may include a discussion-based activity for staff in an informal classroom or meeting type setting to discuss their roles during an emergency and their responses to a sample emergency situation.

If the district chooses to opt to participate in full-scale exercises in conjunction with local and county emergency responders and preparedness officials that include props, actors, or simulations or other tactics intended to mimic a school shooting or other act of violence or emergency, such exercises ***shall not be conducted on a regular school day or when school activities such as athletics are occurring on school grounds***. Such exercises shall not include students without written consent from parents or persons in parental relation.

#### **Drill Notification for Persons in Parental Relation**

Each building within the District shall be required to develop a schedule and process to notify parents and persons in parental relation of scheduled drills which will include students. Notification of all drills will be made to parents and persons in parental relation within one week through email and Parent Square.

Drills held at the District or building level will be followed by a debriefing with participant stake holders to identify areas of success and opportunities for improvement. Building representatives will provide a report to the District-Wide Safety Team on drill status during regularly scheduled district-wide safety meetings.

#### **Training**

The District has established policies and procedures for annual multi-hazard school safety training for employees and students. Training includes:

- An annual review of the building-level emergency response guides and general employee awareness training for building employees conducted by each principal or their designee.
- The annual early go home drill to test evacuation and sheltering procedures.
- Each school building conducts fire drills throughout the course of the year in compliance with the SED schedule for the purpose of familiarizing employees and students with emergency procedures.

Topics for training will include general security and safety measures, intervention strategies with difficult or challenging students, building security awareness, violence prevention, mental health, and reporting requirements and procedures.

Training for school staff, including bus drivers and monitors, includes awareness of behaviors that may signal emotional distress or violent tendencies, as well as protocols for reporting concerns. Staff also receive annual instruction on the District Code of Conduct and participate in professional development related to threat assessment and trauma-informed practices. For example, training may cover de-escalation techniques, recognizing early signs of behavioral escalation, and strategies for supporting at-risk students. These sessions are conducted or coordinated by the Superintendent and are available through staff development days, on-demand modules, and in-person workshops.

## **Assignment of Responsibilities**

### **Faculty and Staff**

Faculty, aides and monitors shall have responsibility for:

- Monitoring halls, lavatories, locker rooms, locker bays and similar areas, assuring orderly passage of students and pre-emptive intervention in potentially disruptive situations.
- Observation of the general property, including the immediate outside area/perimeter of the building(s), with an obligation to report suspicious activity to district or building administration.
- Overseeing study halls, cafeterias, or other areas of student assemblage with the goal of assisting to maintain an orderly, safe environment.

### **School Safety Personnel**

School safety personnel have a critical role in violence prevention. The following represents a description of the responsibilities of school safety personnel in schools:

- Oversight of school building security procedures.
- Oversight and/or advisement on school security technology.
- Participation in the District Wide School Safety Team and Building Level Emergency Response Team.
- Development of relationships with students and staff.

The memorandum of understanding outlining the role and responsibilities of school safety personnel can be found in Appendix A.

### **Building Administrators**

The Building Principal or their designee shall serve as the School Safety Representative for the school building. The responsibilities of the School Safety Representative are as follows:

- Monitor hallways, entryways, exits and outside grounds during school hours for unusual occurrences or unauthorized visitors.
- Act as building liaison in communicating building-level safety issues or concerns.
  - Represent the building on the District-Wide Health and Safety Committee.
  - Serve on Building-Level School Building Response Team.
  - Attend school safety meetings and be a resource on school safety and security issues for building employees.
  - Develop plans and strategies for building security, crime and violence prevention, safety planning and employee training.
  - Participate in school incident investigations.
  - Respond to all school emergencies as part of the building's Emergency Response Plan.
  - Coordinate annual school safety multi-hazard training for students and employees. Multi-hazard training shall include crisis intervention, emergency response and management.
  - Employees and students shall receive annual training and drill practice on protocols for bomb threats, evacuation, sheltering, lockdown, relocate to hallway, fire emergency, bus drills and appropriate violence prevention strategies.
  - Designate procedure for informing substitute teaching and non-teaching employees of school safety protocols.
- Comply and encourage compliance with all school safety and security policies and procedures established by the Board of Education.
- Attend professional development activities on school safety and violence prevention.
- All school safety personnel shall be provided with training on violence prevention and school safety. All training courses shall receive prior approval from the Superintendent of Schools or their designee.

### **Hiring and Screening of School Personnel**

The following hiring and screening practices are followed for the hiring of all personnel:

#### **Fingerprinting and Criminal Background Checks**

For all employees hired by schools, the District completes a fingerprinting and criminal background check prior to appointment. No employee works in the District until fingerprint clearance is received. Employees include: any person receiving compensation for work from schools; any employee of a contracted service provider involved in direct student contact; any worker assigned to a school under a public assistance employment program (includes part-time employees and substitutes).

#### **Reference Checks**

References are thoroughly checked prior to extending an employment offer.

- Reference check forms are used for instructional, non-instructional and transportation personnel.
- Reference checks are completed and reviewed by the administrative team along with the application.

- Prior to making a job offer to a prospective employee, the following mandatory questions are asked during reference checks with immediate and/or past supervisors:
  - Do you have knowledge of any violations of safety or security by (prospective employee) related to students, employees or others?
  - Why did (prospective employee) leave your employment? Or, do you know why (prospective employee) is leaving your employment?
  - Would you rehire (prospective employee)? If no, why not?

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

The District has implemented policies and procedures related to the early detection of potentially violent behaviors. Each Building Principal is responsible for the dissemination of informative materials regarding the early detection of potentially violent behaviors, including but not limited to the identification of family, community, and environmental factors to teachers, administrators, school personnel, including school bus drivers and monitors, parents and other persons in parental relation to students of the school district, students and other persons deemed appropriate to receive such information. In addition, employees shall receive training on the District's Code-of-Conduct and awareness training on violent behaviors, to be conducted or coordinated by the Superintendent of Schools.

### **Behavioral Assessment Team**

The Whitehall Central School District utilizes a multi-disciplinary safety (behavioral) assessment team at the building-level which assess whether certain exhibited behaviors or actions need intervention or other support. All district staff are trained annually on the purpose and procedures of these teams. These teams meet periodically throughout the school year to discuss behavioral intervention techniques, suicide ideation, and any other topics deemed necessary.

The membership of the Safety Assessment Team is multi-disciplinary and provides an array of opinions and perspectives when evaluating a student. While an initial assessment may occur with just a mental health professional and a school administrator, follow-up steps (if necessary) should include personnel who are specific to the student. For example, if a student is involved with sports, you could include a coach, or you may bring in teachers who are familiar with the student. Ideally, teams will include representatives who provide differing perspectives (e.g. mental health and administration) and professionals who are familiar with the at-risk student (e.g. teachers and coaches). An example team membership includes:

- Building administrators
- School-based mental health professional (Guidance counselor/school psychologist/school social worker)
- Teacher/coach (Who is familiar with the student)
- School resource officer
- Behavior specialist
- Others who may know the student.

This team can expand or contract as necessary, but functions best when it has multiple perspectives and experiences. Further information on the process is included in Appendix B.

### **C. Hazard Identification**

The District-Wide School Safety Plan requires the identification of potential hazards and emergency response protocols. Each Building-level Emergency Response Team has identified both internal and external hazards that may warrant protective actions.

The District-Wide School Safety Team in conjunction with Washington County Emergency Management Office, New York State Police, and the Washington County Sheriff have contributed information that has identified areas outside of school property that may impact a district facility during an emergency. Factors that were considered include population, presence of hazardous materials, potential for emergency based on geographical potential and/or national trends and proximity to district property, such as airports, bridges, dams, and major intersections, primary routes of hazardous cartage and SARA Title III locations of hazardous materials. The detailed list is included in the confidential Building-Level Safety Plans and is reviewed on a regular basis.

The district team has recognized that there are many factors that could cause an emergency in our schools and facilities within the district. There are also factors that need to be considered when responding to an emergency. The detailed list of potential internal and external hazards or emergency situations is included in the confidential Building-Level Safety Plan.

## **III. RESPONSE**

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

In cases of a serious violent incident, the District would use the procedure listed below to meet the requirements for notification and activation. A serious violent incident is an incident of violent criminal conduct that is, or appears to be, life threatening and warrants the evacuation of students and employees because of an imminent threat to their safety or health. This includes, but is not limited to, the use or threatened use of a firearm, explosive, bomb, incendiary device, chemical, or biological weapons, knives or other dangerous instrument capable of causing death or serious injury, riots, hostage-taking, or kidnapping.

Communications systems are:

#### **Internal**

Teachers and building employees	Public address system, email, text message, other electronic communications
Students	Public address system, verbally from supervising teachers, other electronic communications
Superintendent of Schools	Phone, email, radio, verbal communication, text message, other electronic communications
Buildings and Grounds	Phone, radio, other electronic communications
Board of Education	Phone, E-mail, other electronic communications

#### **External**

New York State Police	911 / (518) 783-3211
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Washington County Sheriff's Office	911 / (518) 747-4623
Washington County Fire Department	911 / (518) 746-2100
Parents	District Website: <a href="https://www.railroaders.net">https://www.railroaders.net</a>  ParentSquare  Transportation Garage: (518) 499-0808  Radio Stations/Television Stations <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Local media/television stations.</li> </ul>

The Superintendent of Schools or designee would be responsible for conveying emergency information to educational facilities within the district. The Superintendent of Schools or designee would take appropriate steps to secure the following information about each educational agency within the District: Number of students, number of employees, transportation requirements associated with the evacuation of each facility and the business and home telephone numbers of key officials of each agency. Such information would be updated at least annually. Each such agency would report material changes to such data, in writing, within seven days of such change.

Information will be provided to parents, guardians or persons in parental relation to the students in the event of a violent incident or an early dismissal through the use of telephone by employees at the building-level using the student/parent directory and/or local and regional radio and TV stations. These are the same stations that are used to announce official delays or closings. This information is provided to parents through the website and building handbooks. Additionally, if an event occurs at the campus where students cannot be released immediately, a parent/community public information center may be established at another campus building.

In the event that this public information center is established, parents and community members are encouraged not to report to the main campus where a building may be in crisis, but rather gather at a designated meeting place where regular public information statements will be made by the Superintendent of Schools or designee.

## **B. Emergency Response Protocols**

The Whitehall Central School District has a comprehensive multi-hazard Building Level Emergency Response Plan. Such plan is updated annually. The school district provides annual training to all staff and faculty on the school district's emergency response actions, posts the Emergency Response Card in each classroom, includes this information in each classroom's emergency folder, and discusses it regularly throughout the year during drills, tabletop exercises, and faculty meetings.

The district uses a standardized emergency response protocol framework which includes the following actions:



**Shelter/Shelter-in-Place:** Used to shelter students and staff inside the building because it is safer inside the building than outside.

**Hold-in-Place:** Used to restrict movement inside the building while dealing with a short-term incident, such as a medical emergency.

**Evacuate:** Used when students and staff must leave the building.

**Secure Lockout:** Used when students and staff must remain inside **locked school buildings** during incidents that pose an imminent concern outside of the school.

**Lockdown:** Used to secure students and staff inside **locked classrooms** during incidents that pose an immediate threat of violence in or around the school.

### Chain of Command

Staff have been identified at each building to assume roles in the Incident Command Structure in the event of an emergency. Assignments, roles and procedures are adjusted based on the incident. The District-level Chain of Command is:

Patrick Dee	Superintendent of Schools
Ethan Burgess	Building Principal (Jr./Sr. High School)
Adriana Strong	Building Principal (Elementary)
Lori Langevin	Business Manager
Ona Lindberg	Assistant Principal
Shane Armstrong	Director of Facilities

### Responses to Implied or Direct Threats

In the event of an implied or direct threat, the district shall follow the following protocol:

- Follow the classroom emergency procedures as directed by the Building Principal.
- Use of employees trained in de-escalation or other strategies to diffuse the situation.
- Inform Building Principal and School Resource Officer of implied or direct threat.
- Determine level of threat with Superintendent of Schools/Designee.
- Contact appropriate law enforcement agency, if necessary.
- Monitor situation, adjust response as appropriate, and include the possible use of the Emergency Response Team.

### Acts of Violence

In the event of serious acts of violence, district personnel shall follow the following protocol:

- Follow the classroom emergency procedures as directed by the Building Principal and the procedures included in the Building-Level Emergency Response Plan.
- Determine level of threat with Superintendent of Schools/Designee.

- If the situation warrants, isolate the immediate area and evacuate if appropriate.
- If necessary or threat is imminent, initiate lockdown procedures and contact appropriate law enforcement agency.
- Monitor situation; adjust response as appropriate; if necessary, initiate early dismissal, sheltering, or evacuation procedures.

Each school's Building-Level Emergency Response Plan lists building specific response actions to criminal acts, bomb threats, civil disturbance, intrusion, hostage taking, kidnapping, as well as technological and natural disasters.

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

The administration shall use the following process in making arrangements for obtaining assistance during emergencies from emergency service organizations and local government agencies:

- Superintendent of Schools/Designee in an emergency contacts dispatch point or 911 center for fire or EMS response.
- Superintendent of Schools/Designee contacts highest-ranking local government official for notification and/or assistance.

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

The Administration shall use the following protocol for obtaining advice and assistance from local government officials including the county or city officials responsible for implementation of Article 2-B of the Executive Law:

- Superintendent of Schools/Designee in an emergency will contact emergency management coordinator and/or the highest-ranking local government official for obtaining advice and assistance.
- The District has identified resources for an emergency from the following agencies: Red Cross, fire department, police, private industry, private individuals, religious organizations and others.

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

The District maintains an inventory of resources available during an emergency, including fuel sources, communications, food service capability, maintenance vehicle lists, and medical supplies and AED, CPR and First Aid trained staff.

#### **Procedures to Coordinate the Use of School District Resources and Person-power during Emergencies**

The District shall use the following procedure to coordinate the use of school resources and person-power during emergencies:

- The Building Principal of the affected facility shall contact the Superintendent of Schools or their designee and request the necessary person-power or resources.

- The Superintendent of Schools or the highest-ranking person in the chain of command shall assess the request and allocate personnel and resources as necessary.

### **Protective Action Options**

The District shall follow the following protocols in assessing the appropriate protective action option. The decision to cancel school, to dismiss early, shelter in place, or evacuate shall be made in cooperation with state and local emergency responders, as appropriate.

- **School Cancellation**
  - Monitor any situation that may warrant a school cancellation – Superintendent of Schools/Safety Team.
  - Make determination – Superintendent of Schools.
  - Contact local media – Superintendent of Schools or Director of Communications & Governmental Relations.
- **School Delay**
  - Monitor any situation that may warrant school delay – Building Administrators/ Superintendent of Schools/Safety Team.
  - If conditions warrant, delay opening of school.
  - Contact Head Bus Driver to coordinate transportation issues.
  - Contact local media to inform parents of delayed opening.
  - Set up information center so that parents may make inquiries as to situation.
  - Provide for safety and security of employees and students who do come to school.
- **Early Dismissal**
  - Monitor situation – Superintendent of Schools/Safety Team.
  - If conditions warrant, close school – Superintendent of Schools.
  - Contact Head Bus Driver to arrange transportation.
  - Contact local media to inform parents of early dismissal.
  - Set up an information center so that parents may make inquiries as to the situation.
  - Retain appropriate personnel until all students have been returned home.
- **Evacuation (before, during and after school hours, including security during evacuation and evacuation routes)**
  - Determine the level of threat – Superintendent of Schools or Designee.
  - Contact Head Bus Driver to arrange transportation – Superintendent of Schools or Designee.
  - Clear all evacuation routes and sites prior to evacuation.
  - Evacuate all employees and students to pre-arranged evacuation sites.
  - Account for all student and employee population. Report any missing employees or students to Building Principal.
  - Make determination regarding early dismissal – Superintendent of Schools or Designee.
  - If determination was made to dismiss early, contact local media to inform parents of early dismissal.
  - Ensure adult supervision or continued school supervision/security.

- Set up an information center so that parents may make inquiries as to the situation.
- Retain appropriate personnel until all students have been returned home.
- Sheltering Sites (internal and external)
  - Determine the level of threat – Superintendent of Schools/Incident Commander /Designee.
  - Determine location of sheltering depending on nature of incident.
  - Account for all students and employees. Report any missing employees or students to designee.
  - Determine other occupants in the building.
  - Make appropriate arrangements for human needs.
  - Take appropriate safety precautions.
  - Establish a Director of Communications to provide information and current status of the situation to parents and other inquiring parties.
  - Retain appropriate personnel until all students have been returned home.

### **Remote Instruction Plan**

The Whitehall Central School District has created a remote instruction plan and intends to enact the plan in the case of an emergency school closure where appropriate. Please find the district's remote instruction plan in Appendix C.

### **Continuation of Operations Plan**

In accordance with the amended New York State Labor Law section 27-c and New York State Education Law paragraph m of subdivision 2 of section 2801-a the District has adopted a plan for operations in the event of a declared public health emergency involving a communicable disease. The plan includes the identification of essential positions, facilitation of remote work for non-essential positions, provision of personal protective equipment, and protocols for supporting contact tracing and can be found in Appendix D.

### **Closure of a School Building**

In accordance with Section 155.17(f) of the Commissioner's Regulations, the District has established a protocol for reporting to the New York State Education Department (NYSED) and the BOCES district superintendent whenever a building-level emergency response plan is activated and results in the closure of a school building.

### **Reporting to NYSED**

In the event of an emergency that requires the activation of the District-Wide School Safety Plan or a Building-Level Emergency Response Plan, and that results in the closure of a school building for in-person instruction, the superintendent or building principal will contact the BOCES district superintendent via telephone or email, and notify the Commissioner of Education via the NYSED "Report of School Closure" portal as soon as is practicable following the decision to close the building.

Even in cases where remote instruction continues during the emergency, a Report of School Closure must still be submitted. This includes closures where instruction is temporarily relocated to another facility or conducted through virtual platforms.

### **Required Follow-Up Reporting**

Once it is deemed safe to re-open the building and resume in-person instruction, the Superintendent or building principal will complete a corresponding “Report of School Re-Opening” using the NYSED portal. This report must include:

- The actual duration of the closure;
- The instructional location and modality during the closure (e.g., remote, hybrid, alternate site);
- Any additional details that were not available at the time of initial closure.

**Scope and Applicability:** Closures that require this reporting include, but are not limited to:

- Natural disasters (e.g., hurricanes, floods, earthquakes);
- Infrastructure failures (e.g., extended power outages, water supply issues);
- Public health emergencies (e.g., infectious disease outbreaks);
- Threats to safety (e.g., bomb threats, active shooter incidents);
- Extraordinary adverse weather events, excluding routine snow days.

Routine weather-related closures due to snow do not require submission of a Report of School Closure or notification to the BOCES district superintendent.

By following this reporting protocol, the District ensures transparency, accountability, and compliance with state requirements while supporting the safety and continuity of learning for all students.

### **IV. RECOVERY**

Recovery addresses the help needed for all involved to heal and to restore the school community to “normal” operations. The District Plan supports the Building Level Emergency Response plan by deploying district resources that support the school’s building-level emergency response team and the post-incident response team.

A debriefing by the Building Level Post-Incident Response Team is an essential part of the recovery phase following an emergency incident. The debriefing will be used in part to evaluate the district’s plan for possible revisions. Follow-up actions and debrief of the violent incident should include:

1. Investigation of the incident by Building Principal and law enforcement, as necessary.
2. Preparation of written accounts of the incident by all involved.
3. Review of written accounts by the Building Principal for any disparities.
4. Appropriate disciplinary action according to the code of conduct.
5. Review of the entire incident by administration for future planning.
  - a. What happened?
  - b. Where did it happen?
  - c. When did it happen?
  - d. Why did it happen?
  - e. How did it happen?

- f. How many individuals were involved?
  - g. Are the individuals associated with a group?
  - h. How could the incident have been prevented?
  - i. What warning signs were missed?
  - j. What can we do to prevent a future incident?
6. Counseling or other needed support for the victim(s), other students and staff involved in the incident.
  7. Necessary reporting and parental notification.

### **Central Administration Support for Buildings**

The Building-Level Emergency Response Plan provides resources for supporting the Emergency Response Team and Post-Incident Response Team. The District's Incident Command System Plan identifies alternates to relieve team members, and interfaces with the Crisis Response Plan to provide team members the opportunity to debrief and rehab in a controlled environment. Additionally, members of the Post-Incident Response Team will be provided with sufficient staffing to allow the rotation of personnel, and the opportunity to debrief and rehab in a controlled environment.

If/when a School Building Level Emergency Response Team or Post-Incident Response Team is faced with threats of violence or actual violent incidents, the District-Wide School Safety Team will assist as follows:

- Acting as a sounding board for the building principal/supervisor of implied or direct threats and/or violent acts.
- Assisting in determining the level of threat and appropriate responses.
- Sending a District-Wide Team member to support the Building-Level Emergency Response Team.
- Monitoring the situation and adjusting the district's response as appropriate.
- Assisting with parent/guardian, faculty/staff, and media communication.
- Assisting with coordinating building and grounds security.
- Assisting with offering a "backup" Post-Incident Response Team (another school team and/or an outside group) if the affected team needs assistance.
- At monthly administrator's meetings, all implied or direct threats and/or violent acts are shared and discussed. A consensus is reached on how to best handle each incident in a manner that meets district and building approval. All administrators have this ongoing resource available.

### **Disaster Mental Health Services**

The district understands that some emergencies may be too much for an individual Post-Incident Response Team to manage on their own. If/when a Post-Incident Response Team is faced with threats of violence or actual violent incidents, the District-Wide Emergency Response Team and District-Wide Post-Incident Response Team will assist as follows:

- Sending a District-Wide School Safety Team member to each affected school building as a liaison between the school building and the District Office.
- Activating the Post-Incident Response Team. The team may consist of the school physicians, school nurse coordinator and school psychologists and district office administrative staff as needed. The team may also activate local resources such as the Washington County Department

of Health, Washington County Mental Health, and Washington County Emergency Management Office.

- Continued feedback from those directly impacted is sought. Building and district support is offered during the incident with projected plans to assist if needed during heightened stressful times such as a re-occurrence of a similar event and anniversaries of the original incident.
- Assisting with parent/guardian, student, faculty/staff debriefing and/or post-incident crisis intervention. If needed, assisting in contacting additional outside mental health resources such as: the National Organization for Victim Assistance (1-800-try-nova) ([www.try-nova.org](http://www.try-nova.org)).
- Assisting with written guidance and resources. This includes letters to respective parents/guardians after incidents such as a physical altercations, bomb threats, suicide, etc., to help offer assistance, list warning signs so they can watch their child for any signs of stress/concern and to help dispel rumors. Each Post-Incident Response Team had district level support and guidance.
- Assisting the schools with written statements going out to faculty/staff, parents/guardians, press releases and media requests through the district's Public Information Officer and Communications Office. The district has a large resource of letters, press releases and media procedures that take the burden off of the individual school building team. Since such incidents may impact the entire district, either literally or psychologically, such communication needs to be processed and directed at the district level.

The District will work with the School Psychologist, Guidance Director, and School Nurse to coordinate disaster mental health resources through the County Mental Health Department, community resources, neighboring school districts, and other disaster mental health resources to fully support members of the crisis response team.

If necessary, the District will coordinate with the statewide plan for disaster mental health services to assure that the school has access to federal, state and local mental health resources in the event of a violent incident.

Short-term actions for recovery include:

- Mental health counseling (students and staff)
- Building security
- Facility restoration
- Post-incident response critique
- Other

Long-term actions for recovery include:

- Mental health counseling (monitor for post-traumatic stress behavior)
- Building security
- Mitigation (to reduce the likelihood of occurrence and impact if it does occur again)
- Other

In conclusion, the Whitehall Central School District's safety-related programs and procedures are under the oversight of the Chief Emergency Officer and will be revised as necessary to effectively respond to evolving circumstances.



## Appendix A: Special Patrol Officer Contract

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5. **The Duties of the SPO.** The SPO shall perform the following duties under this Agreement, as directed by the District and Sheriff's Office, to the extent permitted by law including Section 209-v:
- 5.1 The SPO shall undertake appropriate efforts to ensure the safety and security of District property and persons on such property. The SPO will patrol school buildings and grounds and respond to emergency situations on the District's property.
  - 5.2 The SPO shall act as a school resource officer and provide a positive role model for students.
  - 5.3 The SPO shall act as an instructor for specialized, short-term, programs at the District, when invited to do so by the principal or a member of the faculty (ie. Internet safety, conflict resolution, violence prevention etc.). All such presentations will be approved by both the District and Sheriff's Office.
  - 5.4 The SPO shall make presentations to the District faculty and students on law- related topics. Such subjects shall include a basic presentation on laws, the role of police officers, and the police mission. All such presentations will be approved by both the District and Sheriff's Office.
  - 5.5 The SPO shall coordinate his or her activities with the Superintendent of Schools and staff members as identified by the Superintendent, and will seek permission, advice and guidance prior to undertaking any program in the District.
  - 5.6 The SPO shall promote a trusting relationship by developing lines of communication with students and staff and promote positive behavior and interaction between students.
  - 5.7 The SPO shall make themselves available for conferences with students, parents and faculty members in order to assist them with law enforcement or crime prevention matters.
  - 5.8 The SPO shall refer students who may be experiencing a variety of school, family or social problems to the District for appropriate action.
  - 5.9 The SPO shall become familiar with all community agencies that offer assistance to youths and their families, such as mental health clinics, drug treatment centers, etc. but any referrals thereto will be made by the District.
  - 5.10 The SPO shall assist the District in developing plans and strategies to prevent and/or minimize dangerous situations which may occur in school or during school sponsored events. The SPO shall assist in increasing staff awareness about policies and procedures for preventing/responding to incidents of violence and other threats to school safety.
  - 5.11 The SPO shall take law enforcement action as immediately required to the extent that a special patrol officer may do so under the authority of law. As soon as practicable, the SPO shall make the Superintendent of Schools (or his designee) aware of such action. At the

Superintendent's (or his designee's) request, the SPO shall take appropriate law enforcement action against intruders and unwanted guests who may appear at the school and related school functions, to the extent that the SPO may do so under the authority of the law.

5.11(a) Once the SPO has taken whatever immediate action was necessary to resolve the situation the SPO shall notify and turn the case and investigation over to a Deputy Sheriff or appropriate Police Officer for any further action.

- 5.12 The SPO will assist other police officers and law enforcement representatives in matters regarding this Agreement, whenever necessary.
- 5.13 The SPO shall maintain detailed and accurate records of the operation of the SPO Program, and shall make them available to the Superintendent of Schools as required by law, or upon request.
- 5.14 The SPO shall not act as a school disciplinarian. However, if the Superintendent believes an incident involves a violation of the law, then the Superintendent may contact the SPO and the SPO shall then determine whether law enforcement action is appropriate and notify a Deputy or Police Officer for any further action. The SPO is not to be used as a substitute for regularly assigned lunchroom duties, hall monitoring, bus duties or other monitoring duties, but will maintain a highly visible presence through the school day in hallways, lobby, cafeteria, restrooms, and parking lot to protect persons and property, to maintain order, and to assure compliance with safety and security rules and protocol.

## **Appendix B: Enhancing School Safety Using A Threat Assessment Model An Operational Guide for Preventing Targeted School Violence**

This guide was prepared by the staff of the U.S. Secret Service National Threat Assessment Center (NTAC) (2018)

### **INTRODUCTION**

When incidents of school violence occur, they leave a profound and lasting impact on the school, the community, and our nation as a whole. Ensuring safe environments for elementary and secondary school students, educators, administrators, and others is essential. This operational guide was developed to provide fundamental direction on how to prevent incidents of targeted school violence, that is, when a student specifically selects a school or a member of the school community for harm. The content in this guide is based on information developed by the U.S. Secret Service, Protective Intelligence and Assessment Division, National Threat Assessment Center (NTAC)

When establishing threat assessment capabilities within K-12 schools, keep in mind that there is no profile of a student attacker. There have been male and female attackers, high-achieving students with good grades as well as poor performers. These acts of violence were committed by students who were loners and socially isolated, and those who were well-liked and popular. Rather than focusing solely on a student's personality traits or school performance, we can learn much more about a student's risk for violence by working through the threat assessment process, which is designed to gather the most relevant information about the student's communications and behaviors, the negative or stressful events the student has experienced, and the resources the student possesses to overcome those setbacks and challenges.

### **CREATING A COMPREHENSIVE TARGETED VIOLENCE PREVENTION PLAN**

Ensuring the safety of our schools involves multiple components, including physical security, emergency management, and violence prevention efforts in the form of a threat assessment process. This process begins with establishing a comprehensive targeted violence prevention plan. The plan includes forming a multidisciplinary threat assessment team, establishing central reporting mechanisms, identifying behaviors of concern, defining the threshold for law enforcement intervention, identifying risk management strategies, promoting safe school climates, and providing training to stakeholders. It can also help schools mitigate threats from a variety of individuals, including students, employees, or parents. This guide provides basic instructions for schools on creating a targeted violence prevention plan, the focus of which is to decrease the risk of students engaging in harm to themselves or the school community. These recommendations serve as the starting point on a path to implementation that will need to be customized to the specific needs of your school, your student body, and your community. When creating these plans, schools should consult with legal representatives to ensure that they comply with any applicable state and federal laws or regulations.

### **STEP 1. ESTABLISH A MULTIDISCIPLINARY THREAT ASSESSMENT TEAM**

The first step in developing a comprehensive targeted violence prevention plan is to establish a multidisciplinary threat assessment team (hereafter referred to as the "Team") of individuals who will direct, manage, and document the threat assessment process. The Team will receive reports about concerning students and situations, gather additional information, assess the risk posed to the school community, and develop intervention and management strategies to mitigate any risk of harm. Some considerations for establishing a Team include:

Some schools may pool their resources and have a single Team that serves an entire district or county, while other districts may choose to have a separate Team for each school.

Teams should include personnel from a **variety of disciplines** within the school community, including teachers, guidance counselors, coaches, school resource officers, mental health professionals, and school administrators. The multidisciplinary nature of the Team ensures that varying points of view will be represented and that access to information and resources will be broad.

The Team needs to have a **specifically designated leader**. This position is usually occupied by a senior administrator within the school.

Teams should establish **protocols and procedures** that are followed for each assessment, including who will interview the student of concern; who will talk to classmates, teachers, or parents; and who will be responsible for documenting the Team's efforts. Established protocols allow for a smoother assessment process as Team members will be aware of their own roles and responsibilities, as well as those of their colleagues.

Team members should meet whenever a concerning student or situation has been brought to their attention, but they should also **meet on a regular basis** to engage in discussions, role-playing scenarios, and other teambuilding and learning activities. This will provide members of the Team with opportunities to work together and learn their individual responsibilities so that when a crisis does arise, the Team will be able to operate more easily as a cohesive unit.

## **STEP 2. DEFINE PROHIBITED AND CONCERNING BEHAVIORS**

Schools need to establish policies defining prohibited behaviors that are unacceptable and therefore warrant immediate intervention. These include threatening or engaging in violence, bringing a weapon to school, bullying or harassing others, and other concerning or criminal behaviors. Keep in mind that **concerning behaviors occur along a continuum**. School policies should also identify behaviors that may not necessarily be indicative of violence, but also warrant some type of intervention. These include a marked decline in performance; increased absenteeism; withdrawal or isolation; sudden or dramatic changes in behavior or appearance; drug or alcohol use; and erratic, depressive, and other emotional or mental health symptoms.

If these behaviors are observed or reported to the Team, schools can offer resources and supports in the form of mentoring and counseling, mental health care, tutoring, or social and family services.

**The threshold for intervention** should be relatively low so that Teams can identify students in distress before their behavior escalates to the point that classmates, teachers, or parents are concerned about their safety or the safety of others. It is much easier to intervene when the concern is related to a student's struggle to overcome personal setbacks, such as a romantic breakup, than when there are concerns about threats posed to others.

During the assessment process, Teams may identify other **concerning statements and actions** made by the student that may not already be addressed in their policies. Gathering information about these behaviors will help the Team assess whether the student is at risk for attacking the school or its students and identify strategies to mitigate that risk.

## **STEP 3. CREATE A CENTRAL REPORTING MECHANISM**

Students may elicit concern from those around them in a variety of ways. They may make threatening or concerning statements in person, online, or in text messages; they may engage in observable risky behavior; or they may turn in assignments with statements or content that is unusual or bizarre. When this occurs, those around the student need a method of reporting their concerns to the Team.

Schools can **establish one or more reporting mechanisms**, such as an online form posted on the school website, a dedicated email address or phone number, smart phone application platforms, or another mechanism that is accessible for a particular school community.

Students, teachers, staff, school resource officers, and parents **should be provided training and guidance on recognizing behaviors of concern, their roles and responsibilities in reporting the behavior, and how to report the information.**

Teams need to be sure that a team member proactively monitors all incoming reports and can **respond immediately** when someone's safety is concerned.

Regardless of what method schools choose to receive these reports, there should be an **option for passing information anonymously**, as students are more likely to report concerning or threatening information when they can do so without fear of retribution for coming forward.

The school community should feel confident that team members will be responsive to their concerns, and that **reports will be acted upon, kept confidential, and handled appropriately.**

#### **STEP 4. DETERMINE THE THRESHOLD FOR LAW ENFORCEMENT INTERVENTION**

The vast majority of incidents or concerns that are likely to be reported can be handled by school personnel using school or community resources. For example, the most common types of reports submitted to Safe2Tell Colorado during the 2016- 2017 school year were related to suicide, bullying, drugs, cutting (self-harm), and depression. Some of these common reports may not require the involvement of law enforcement. Those that do warrant law enforcement intervention include threats of violence and planned school attacks, which constituted Safe2Tell's sixth and seventh most common types of reports, respectively.

Reports regarding student **behaviors involving weapons, threats of violence, physical violence, or concerns about an individual's safety** should immediately be reported to local law enforcement. This is one reason **why including a school resource officer or local law enforcement officer** on the Team is beneficial.

If a school resource officer is not available to serve on the Team, schools should set a clear threshold for times and situations **when law enforcement will be asked to support or take over an assessment.** For example, it might be necessary to have law enforcement speak with a student's parent or guardian, search a student's person or possessions, or collect additional information about the student or situation outside the school community during the assessment.

#### **STEP 5. ESTABLISH ASSESSMENT PROCEDURES**

Teams need to establish clearly defined processes and procedures to guide their assessments. Note that any safety concerns should be immediately addressed before the procedures described below take place. When followed, the procedures should allow the Team to form an accurate picture of the student's thinking, behavior, and circumstances to inform the Team's assessment and identify appropriate interventions.

**Maintain documentation** to keep track of when reports come in; the information that is gathered; when, where, and how it was obtained; who was interviewed; the behaviors and circumstances of the student of concern; and the intervention strategies taken. Documentation requirements, such as forms and templates, should be included in the plan to ensure standardization across cases.

**Use a community systems approach.** An effective approach for gathering information to assess a student of concern is **to identify the sources that may have information on the student's actions and circumstances.** This involves identifying the persons with whom the student has a relationship or frequently interacts and the organizations or platforms that may be familiar with the student's behaviors. Students exist in more than one system and they come in contact with people beyond their classmates and teachers at school. Gathering information from multiple sources ensures that Teams are identifying concerning behaviors, accurately assessing the student's risks and needs, and providing the appropriate interventions, supports, and resources.

**Examine online social media pages, conduct interviews, review class assignments, and consider searching the student's locker or desk.** Team members should also review **academic, disciplinary, law enforcement, and other formal records** that may be related to the student. When reviewing school records, be sure to determine whether the student has been the subject of previous reports to school officials, especially if the student has a history of engaging in other concerning or threatening behaviors. Also determine if the student received any intervention or supports and whether those were beneficial or successful. The Team may be able to draw on information from previous incidents and interventions to address the current situation for the student. This factor further emphasizes the importance of the Team's documentation to ensure the accuracy and availability of information regarding prior contacts the student of concern may have had with the Team.

**Build rapport that can facilitate information-gathering efforts.** By demonstrating that their goal is to support individuals who may be struggling, while ensuring that the student and the school are safe, Teams may be better able to build a positive relationship with a student of concern and the student's parents or guardians. When Teams have established this rapport, parents or guardians may be more likely to share their own concerns, and the student may be more forthcoming about frustrations, needs, goals, or plans.

**Evaluate the student's concerning behaviors and communications in the context of their age and social and emotional development.** Some students' behaviors might seem unusual or maladaptive, but may be normal for adolescent behavior or in the context of a mental or developmental disorder. To ensure that these students are being accurately assessed, collect information from diverse sources, including the reporting party, the student of concern, classmates, teammates, teachers, and friends. Consider whether those outside of their immediate circle, such as neighbors or community groups, may be in a position to share information regarding observed behaviors.

### **Investigative themes**

Teams should organize their information gathering around several themes or areas pertaining to the student's actions, circumstances, and any other relevant threat assessment factors. Addressing each theme is necessary for a complete assessment and may uncover other avenues of inquiry to help determine whether the student is at risk for engaging in violence. Using the themes to identify where the student might be struggling will help the Team identify the most appropriate resources. Keep in mind, there is no need to wait until the Team has completed all interviews or addressed every theme before taking action. As soon as an area for intervention is identified, suitable management strategies should be enacted.

### **Motives**

Students may have a variety of motives that place them at risk for engaging in harmful behavior, whether to themselves or others. If you can discover the student's motivation for engaging in the concerning behavior that brought him/her to the attention of the Team, then you can understand more about the student's goals. The Team should also assess how far the student may be willing to go to achieve these goals, and what or who may be a potential target. Understanding motive further allows the Team to develop management strategies that can direct the student away from violent choices.

## Communications

Look for concerning, unusual, bizarre, threatening, or violent communications the student made. The student's communications may reveal grievances held about certain issues or a possible intended target. They may allude to violent intentions or warn others to stay away from school at a certain time. They may reveal information relevant to the other investigative themes by making reference to feelings of hopelessness or suicide, a fascination with violence, interest in weapons, or other inappropriate interests. These statements might be made in person to classmates, teammates, or friends; in writing on assignments or tests; and/or via social media, text messages, or photo or video-sharing sites. Earlier NTAC research that examined attacks on schools found that not every student directly threatened their target prior to attack, but in a majority of incidents (81%), another person was aware of what the student was thinking or planning. It is important for Teams to remember that a student who has not made threatening statements may still be at risk for engaging in violence. Whether or not the student made a direct threat should not be the lone indicator of concern.

## Inappropriate interests

Gather information about whether the student has shown **an inappropriate or heightened interest in concerning topics such as school attacks or attackers, mass attacks, or other types of violence**. These interests might appear in the student's communications, the books the student reads, the movies the student watches, or the activities the student enjoys. The context of the student's interests is an important factor to consider. For example, a student's interest in weapons may not be concerning if the student is a hunter or is on the school's rifle team, with no evidence of an inappropriate or unhealthy fixation on weapons. In other situations, the context surrounding a student's interest in weapons could be of concern. For example, if a student is fixated on past school shooters or discusses what firearm would be best to use in a mass attack.

## Weapons access

In addition to determining whether the student has any inappropriate interests or fascination with weapons, the Team should assess whether the student **has access to weapons**. Because many school attackers used firearms acquired from their homes, consider whether the family keeps weapons at home or if there is a relative or friend who has weapons. Sometimes parents who keep weapons at home incorrectly assume that their children are unaware of where they are stored or how to access them. If there are weapons at home, the Team should determine if they are stored appropriately and if the student knows how to use them or has done so in the past. The Team should also remember that firearms are not the only weapons to be concerned about. Even though many school attackers have used firearms in carrying out their attacks, explosives, incendiary devices, bladed weapons, or combinations of these weapons have been used in past attacks.

## Stressors

All students face stressors such as **setbacks, losses, and other challenges** as part of their lives. While many students are resilient and can overcome these situations, for some, these stressors may become overwhelming and ultimately influence their decision to carry out an attack at school. Gather information on stressors the student is experiencing, how the student is coping with them, and whether there are supportive friends or family who can help the student overcome them. Assess whether the student experienced stressors in the past that are still having an effect, such as a move to a new school, and whether there might be additional setbacks or losses in the near future, like a relationship that might be ending. **Stressors can occur in all areas of a student's life**, including at school with coursework, friendships, romantic relationships, or teammates, or outside of school with parents, siblings, or at jobs. Many students can experience bullying, a stressor which can take place in person at school or online at home. Teams should intervene and prevent bullying and cyberbullying of a student who has been brought

to their attention. More broadly, administrators should work to address any concerns regarding bullying school-wide and ensure their school has a safe climate for all students.

### **Emotional and developmental issues**

Anxiety, depression, thoughts of suicide, and other mental health issues are important factors to consider when conducting an assessment. Keep in mind that students with emotional issues or developmental disorders might behave in a way that is maladaptive but might not be concerning or threatening because the behavior is a product of their diagnosis. **Behaviors exhibited by a student with a diagnosed disorder need to be evaluated in the context of that diagnosis and the student's known baseline of behavior.** If the student is experiencing feelings related to a diagnosable mental illness, such as depression, then the Team needs to consider the effect of these feelings on their behaviors when assessing the student's risk of engaging in harm to self or others.

### **Desperation or despair**

Assess whether the student feels **hopeless, desperate, or out of options**. Determine if the student has had thoughts about or engaged in behaviors that would indicate the student's desperation. The Team should determine whether the student has felt this way before, how the student managed those feelings then, and whether those same resources for coping are available to the student now. Consider whether the student has tried addressing the problems in a positive way, but was unable to resolve them, thereby leading to a sense of hopelessness about their situation.

### **Violence as an option**

Some students, who are feeling hopeless and out of options, **may think violence is the only way to solve a problem or settle a grievance**. The Team should look to see whether the student thinks violence is acceptable or necessary, if the student has used violence in the past to address problems, and whether the student has thought of alternative ways to address the grievances. The Team should also assess whether peers, or others, support and encourage the student to use violence as a means to an end. If possible, connect the student with more positive, prosocial role models who discourage violence and identify more acceptable ways to solve problems.

### **Concerned others**

In previous incidents, many students made statements or engaged in behaviors prior to their attacks that elicited concern from others in their lives. Assess whether parents, friends, classmates, teachers, or others who know the student are worried about the student and whether they have taken any actions in response to their concerns. Gather information on the specific behaviors that caused worry or fear. These could **include behaviors that may have elicited concerns about the safety of the student or others**, such as unusual, bizarre or threatening statements; intimidating or aggressive acts; indications of planning for an attack; suicidal ideations or gestures; or a fixation on a specific target. **Other behaviors that elicit concern may not necessarily be indicative of violence**, but do require that the Team assess the behavior and provide appropriate supports. Examples of these behaviors include alcohol or drug use; behavior changes related to academic performance, social habits, mood, or physical appearance; conflicts with others; and withdrawal or isolation.

### **Capacity to carry out an attack**

Determine whether the student's thinking and behavior is organized enough to plan and execute an attack and whether the student has the resources to carry it out. **Planning does not need to be elaborate** and could be as simple as taking a weapon from home and inflicting harm on classmates at school. Other student attackers may develop more complex and lengthier plans. At the very least, carrying out an attack requires that the student has access to a weapon and the ability to get that weapon to school undetected.



## Planning

Targeted attacks at school are **rarely sudden or impulsive** acts of violence. The Team should assess whether the student has made specific plans to harm the school. The student might create lists of individuals or groups targeted for violence, or research tactics and materials needed to carry out the attack. The student may conduct surveillance, draw maps of the planned location, and test security responses at school. He/she may write out detailed steps and rehearse some aspects of a plan, such as getting to the school, the timing of the attack, or whether to attempt escape, be captured, or commit suicide. The student may also acquire, manufacture, or practice with a weapon.

## Consistency

The Team should **corroborate the student's statements** to determine that they are consistent with the student's actions and behaviors and with what other people say about the student. When inconsistencies are identified, the Team should then try to determine why that is the case. For example, the student might say that he/she is handling a romantic break-up well, but posts on social media indicate the student is struggling to move on, and friends report that the student is more upset or angry about the break-up than reported. Determine whether the inconsistency is because the student is deliberately hiding something or if the inconsistency stems from another underlying issue. For example, a depressed student may claim that they are isolated, even if they regularly go out with a large group of students. If the inconsistency is deliberate, it is important to determine why the student feels the need to conceal their actions. The concealment may be as simple as a fear of facing punishment for some other inappropriate behavior, or it may be related to hidden plans for a violent act.

## Protective factors

A thorough threat assessment requires understanding the full picture of a student's behaviors and environment, which also includes accounting for the positive and prosocial influences on the student's life. The Team should identify factors that may restore hope to a student who feels defeated, desperate, or in a situation that is impossible to overcome. This includes determining whether the student has a **positive, trusting relationship with an adult at school**. This could be a teacher, coach, guidance counselor, administrator, nurse, resource officer, or janitor. A trusted adult at school in whom the student can confide and who will listen without judgment can help direct a student toward resources, supports, and options to overcome setbacks. Learn who the student's friends are at school and if the student feels emotionally connected to other students. A student may need help developing friendships that they can rely on for support. Positive situational or personal factors might help to deter a student from engaging in negative or harmful behaviors. Changes in a student's life, such as having a new romantic relationship or becoming a member of a team or club, might discourage any plan to engage in violence. The Team could also use activities or groups the student wants to take part in as motivation for the student to engage in positive and constructive behaviors, such as attending class, completing assignments, and adhering to a conduct or behavior code.

## STEP 6. DEVELOP RISK MANAGEMENT OPTIONS

Once the Team has completed a thorough assessment of the student, it can **evaluate whether the student is at risk for self-harm or harming someone else** at school. Concern may be heightened if the student is struggling emotionally, having trouble overcoming setbacks or losses, feeling hopeless, preoccupied with others who engaged in violence to solve problems, or has access to weapons. Remember, the Team is not attempting to predict with certainty if violence will happen. Instead, evaluate the presence of factors that indicate violence might be a possibility. Teams can then **develop risk management strategies that reduce the student's risk for engaging in violence** and make positive outcomes for the student more likely.

Each student who comes to the Team's attention will require an **individualized management plan**. The resources and supports the student needs will differ depending on the information gathered during the assessment.

Often, the Team will determine that the student is not currently at risk for engaging in violence, but **requires monitoring or is in need of guidance** to cope with losses, develop resiliency to overcome setbacks, or learn more appropriate strategies to manage emotions.

**Resources to assist the student** could take the form of peer support programs or therapeutic counseling to enhance social learning or emotional competency, life skills classes, tutoring in specific academic subjects, or mental health care. Most programs and supports will be available within the school, but the Team may need to also access community resources to assist with managing the student.

Sometimes management involves suspension or expulsion from school. When this is necessary, Teams and school administrators should consider how it might affect their ability to monitor the student. **Removing a student from school does not eliminate the risk to the school community**. Several school attacks have been carried out by former students who had been removed from the school or aged out of their former school. A suspended or expelled student might become isolated from positive peer interactions or supportive adult relationships at school. Teams should develop strategies to stay connected to the suspended or expelled student to determine whether the student's situation is deteriorating, or the behaviors of concern are escalating so that they can respond appropriately. Management plans should remain in place until the Team is no longer concerned about the student or the risk for violence. This is accomplished by addressing the following basic elements that can reduce the likelihood a student will engage in violence and provide support and resources for those in need.

**Notify law enforcement immediately if a student is thinking about or planning to engage in violence**, so that they may assist in managing the situation.

**Make efforts to address the safety of any potential targets** by altering or improving security procedures for schools or individuals and providing guidance on how to avoid the student of concern.

**Create a situation that is less prone to violence** by asking the family or law enforcement to block the student's access to weapons, while also connecting the student to positive, prosocial models of behavior. Another option may involve removing the student from campus for a period of time, while maintaining a relationship with the student and the student's family.

**Remove or redirect the student's motive**. Every student's motive will be different, and motives can be redirected in a variety of ways. These strategies may include bullying prevention efforts or offering counseling for a student experiencing a personal setback.

**Reduce the effect of stressors** by providing resources and supports that help the student manage and overcome negative events, setbacks, and challenges.

## **STEP 7. CREATE AND PROMOTE SAFE SCHOOL CLIMATES**

A crucial component of preventing targeted violence at schools relies on developing positive school climates **built on a culture of safety, respect, trust, and social and emotional support**.

Teachers and staff in safe school environments support diversity, encourage communication between faculty and students, intervene in conflicts, and work to prevent teasing and bullying. Students in safe school climates feel empowered to **share concerns with adults**, without feeling ashamed or facing the

stigma of being labeled a “snitch.” Administrators can take action to develop and sustain safe school climates.

Help students feel connected to the school, their classmates, and teachers. This is an important first step to creating school climates that are supportive, respectful, and safe. **Encourage teachers and staff to build positive, trusting relationships with students** by actively listening to students and taking an interest in what they say.

**Break down “codes of silence”** and help students feel empowered to come forward and share concerns and problems with a trusted adult. At one school, administrators used a faculty meeting to identify students who lacked a solid connection with an adult at school. They provided faculty with a roster of enrolled students and asked them to place a mark next to students with whom they had a warm relationship. For students without a mark next to their name, popular, well-liked teachers and staff were asked to reach out and develop positive connections with them.

Help students feel more **connected to their classmates and the school**. One teacher asked her elementary students to write down names of classmates they wanted to sit next to. If a student’s name did not appear on anyone’s list, the teacher placed that student’s desk next to a friendly or outgoing classmate in an effort to help the student develop friendships. This effort could be easily adapted with middle or high school-aged students by asking students to identify one or two classmates they would like to be partnered with for a project and assigning any student not named on a list to be partnered with a friendly or outgoing classmate.

Adults can also help students **identify clubs or teams at school** they can join or encourage them to start their own special interest group.

Schools can also support positive school climates by implementing school-wide Positive Behavioral Interventions and Supports (PBIS) programs. These programs actively teach students what appropriate behavior looks like in a variety of settings, including in the classroom, with their friends, or among adults. Teachers frequently praise prosocial behavior they observe and encourage students’ good behavior. PBIS can improve academic outcomes for schools and has been shown to reduce the rates of school bullying.

While teachers and staff can foster relationships and connectedness among the student body, **students themselves have a role to play** in sustaining safe school climates. They should be actively engaged in their schools, encouraged to reach out to classmates who might be lonely or isolated, and empowered to intervene safely when they witness gossiping, teasing, and bullying.

## **STEP 8. CONDUCT TRAINING FOR ALL STAKEHOLDERS**

The final component of a comprehensive targeted violence prevention plan is to identify training needs for all stakeholders, including faculty, staff, and administrators; students; parents; and school resource officers or local law enforcement. **School safety is everyone’s responsibility**. Anyone who could come forward with concerning information or who might be involved in the assessment process should be provided with training. Effective training addresses the goals and steps of an assessment, the type of information that should be brought forward, and how individuals can report their concerns. It might be beneficial for staff and students to hear presentations, see videos, and role-play scenarios so they have a thorough understanding of their responsibilities and the steps they can take to keep their school safe. Each audience will require a slightly different message, but some stakeholders may also benefit from attending training together, such as parents and students, or school faculty/staff and law enforcement personnel. When developing a training program, consider how frequently each stakeholder will receive training, and whether to vary the delivery method of trainings. Also, each audience may have unique needs.

### **Faculty, staff, and administrators**

Every adult at school needs training related to threat assessment and violence prevention, **including administrative, maintenance, custodial, and food service staff**. Training can include who should be notified when concerning or threatening information is discovered, what information should be brought forward, how school staff might learn about information, and the steps school staff can take to safely intervene with concerning or threatening situations. Providing training on other topics, such as suicide awareness and prevention, conflict resolution, mental health, and developmental disabilities, might also allow school faculty, staff, and administrators to foster positive school climates.

### **Students**

Students need training on the threat assessment process, where to report concerns, and what information they should bring forward. Students also need assurances that they can make a report to the Team or another trusted adult **anonymously**, that their information will be **followed up on**, and will be kept **confidential**. Training can also educate students about other actionable steps they can take to cultivate a safe school climate, including ways they can safely intervene with bullying, gossip, or name-calling. Messaging should demonstrate to students that there is a big **difference between “snitching,” “ratting,” or “tattling,” and seeking help**. While snitching is informing on someone for personal gain, here, students are encouraged to come forward when they are worried about a friend who is struggling, or when they are trying to keep someone from getting hurt. Remind students that if they are concerned about a classmate or friend, they need to keep speaking out until that person gets the help they need. Finally, maintaining a safe school climate includes providing students with training or lessons to acquire skills and abilities to manage emotions, resolve conflicts, cope with stress, seek help, and engage in positive social interactions.

### **Parents.**

Parents should also be trained on the threat assessment process at their child’s school and their role in that process. They should be clear on who to call, when, and what information they should be ready to provide. Parents can also benefit from training that helps them recognize when children and teenagers may be in emotional trouble or feeling socially isolated. Training can also reduce the stigma around mental, emotional, or developmental issues and provide information on available resources and when they should seek professional assistance.

### **Law enforcement and school resource officers.**

Not every school will have a school resource officer, but schools can still develop relationships with local law enforcement agencies and personnel. Schools can encourage local officers to co-teach classes at the school, serve as coaches or assistant coaches of sports teams, and work with parents and teachers at after-school events. In some communities without school resource officers, local law enforcement agencies have encouraged officers to “adopt a school,” stopping by the school to greet and become familiar with students and teachers, eating lunch on campus, or doing paperwork in an office at the school. Like parents and teachers, local law enforcement and school resource officers need to be aware of the school’s threat assessment process and their own responsibilities once a threat is identified. Training for law enforcement and school resource officers should also provide familiarity with emergency response procedures the school has in place and the layout of the campus. Officers and school staff might benefit from attending training together so that all parties are aware of the point at which local law enforcement should be involved in an investigation. This would also allow officers to get to know administrators, teachers, counselors, facilities and maintenance personnel, and other school staff. It is much easier to work through an emergency situation when schools and law enforcement are already familiar with each other and their procedures.

## **CONCLUSION**

Despite having a comprehensive targeted violence prevention plan in place, and despite a school and Team's best efforts at prevention, incidents of targeted school violence may still occur. It is critical to develop and implement emergency response plans and procedures and provide training on them to all stakeholders. The U.S. Department of Homeland Security recommends that emergency response plans be developed with input from local law enforcement and first responders.<sup>5</sup> For example, procedures should be developed for reporting emergencies, evacuation procedures and routes, use of emergency notification systems, and information regarding local hospitals or trauma centers. Law enforcement and first responders should be apprised of these plans and procedures and know how to implement them. Everyone has a role in preventing school violence and creating safe school climates. The threat assessment procedures detailed in this guide are an important component of school safety and security efforts and have been determined to be the best-practice in the prevention of targeted school violence. The model highlights that students can engage in a continuum of concerning behaviors and communications, the vast majority of which may not be threatening or violent. Nevertheless, it encourages schools to set a low threshold when identifying students who might be engaging in unusual behavior, or experiencing distress, so that early interventions can be applied to reduce the risk of violence or other negative outcomes.

## **Appendix C: Remote Instruction Plan**

### **Whitehall Central School District Emergency Remote Instruction Information**

#### **Availability of Devices and Internet Access**

In order to facilitate the educational process in the event of an emergency situation that would require remote instruction for students, the school district completes the annual Student Digital Resources collection process to better inform how this plan can serve the school community. The purpose of this survey is so that the school district can understand the level of access to technology that students within the school district have, primarily in regard to their access to the internet and computers.

To support remote learning, the district maintains 1:1 Chromebook access for their student population and will make hotspot devices available to the greatest extent possible. When this is not possible, the school district shall work with community partners to help ensure that public access wi-fi points are available for students and families throughout the community to allow for them to participate in remote learning.

The school district's technology department shall be responsible for assisting students with internet access, including, but not limited to, the use of hotspot devices, and may also be tasked with servicing devices that may not be working properly. This group may also be responsible for providing on-site instructional support for technology integration and for providing learning opportunities through tutorial videos and other virtual means.

Should the school district determine in advance that emergency conditions may require the school district to provide remote instruction during the following day(s), students and staff shall be informed of this possibility via their existing internal and external communication channels with as much advance notice as possible. The school district may communicate this information via the public address system, verbal communication, letters sent home, social media posts, phone calls, and via text messages.

Inevitably, there may be students in the school community for whom remote learning is not appropriate or possible. In these situations, the school district shall assess that individual's unique needs and try to accommodate them with in-person learning, to the extent that is possible. Students without internet connectivity that cannot access connectivity through alternate means would have schoolwork delivered to them for short term closures. 3-5 days. For closure that would be longer term, the district would, to the extent practicable, provide transportation for those students without connectivity and without transportation to a location with connectivity and supervision to complete their school work. Hot spots and other related devices are ineffective in much of our region.

#### **Provision of Special Education and Related Services**

Should remote learning become necessary, the school district shall ensure that special education services are provided to students who need them, in accordance with their individualized education programs (IEPs) and to ensure that they receive a free appropriate public education (FAPE). In order to facilitate the provision of special education and related services the school district shall ensure that:

- Consultant teachers are available to provide on-going support and to deliver IEP services.
- Special education classrooms shall collaborate regularly with co-teachers to provide differentiated virtual learning experiences for students on their caseload.
- Students are provided with prioritized standards-based lessons via Google Meet
- Students are directly provided with modifications and accommodations as per their IEP
- All differentiated assignments shall be compliant with NYS guidelines and the student's IEP

- Accommodations shall be provided through the student's 504 plans
- Special Education teachers shall attend professional learning communities, grade level meetings, and department meetings to discuss continuity of instruction, struggling students, and learning activities
- Students are provided with daily synchronous instruction via Google Meet

### **Expectations for Time Spent in Modalities and Foundation Aid**

In the event that the school district was required to go to emergency remote instruction, the school district has developed the following chart to outline the amount of time spent in K-5 classes per subject:

<b>Subject</b>	<b>Approx. Synchronous</b>	<b>Approx. Asynchronous</b>
Reading	60 Minutes *May be broken up into whole group and small group times throughout the day	30 Minutes
Writing		
Phonics/Word Study		
Math	30 Minutes	30 Minutes
Science/Social Studies	2x/week 30 Minutes	15 minutes
Special Areas	20 Minutes	10 Minutes
Total Daily	110-140 Minutes/day	85 Minutes

In the event of a closure at the secondary level, the remote class schedule shall mirror what the in-person schedule for that day would have been.

For state aid purposes, the school district estimates that they will spend up to six hours of time in remote instruction due to emergency conditions.

**Appendix D: Continuation of Operations During Public Health Emergencies**

# **Public Employer Health Emergency Plan for the Whitehall Central School District**

This plan has been developed in accordance with NYS legislation S8617B/A10832.



## Promulgation

This plan has been developed in accordance with the amended New York State Labor Law section 27-c and New York State Education Law paragraphs k and l of subdivision 2 of section 2801-a (as amended by section 1 of part B of chapter 56 of the laws of 2016), as applicable.

This plan has been developed with the input of Whitehall Teachers Association and the CSEA Union as required by the amended New York State Labor Law.

No content of this plan is intended to impede, infringe, diminish, or impair the rights of us or our valued employees under any law, rule, regulation, or collectively negotiated agreement, or the rights and benefits which accrue to employees through collective bargaining agreements, or otherwise diminish the integrity of the existing collective bargaining relationship.

This plan has been approved in accordance with requirements applicable to the agency, jurisdiction, authority, or district, as represented by the signature of the authorized individual below.

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As the authorized official of the Whitehall Central School District, I hereby attest that this plan has been developed, approved, and placed in full effect in accordance with S8617B/A10832 which amends New York State Labor Law section 27-c and New York State Education Law paragraphs k and l of subdivision 2 of section 2801-a (as amended by section 1 of part B of chapter 56 of the laws of 2016), as applicable, to address public health emergency planning requirements.

By: Patrick M. Dee

Signature:

Title: Superintendent of Schools

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## Purpose, Scope, Situation Overview, and Assumptions

### Purpose

This plan has been developed in accordance with the amended New York State Labor Law section 27-c and New York State Education Law paragraphs k and l of subdivision 2 of section 2801-a (as amended by section 1 of part B of chapter 56 of the laws of 2016), as applicable. These laws were amended by the passing of legislation S8617B/A10832 signed by the Governor of New York State on September 7, 2020, requires public employers to adopt a plan for operations in the event of a declared public health emergency involving a communicable disease. The plan includes the identification of essential positions, facilitation of remote work for non-essential positions, provision of personal protective equipment, and protocols for supporting contact tracing.

### Scope

This plan was developed exclusively for and is applicable to the Whitehall Central School District. This plan is pertinent to a declared public health emergency in the State of New York which may impact our operations; and it is in the interest of the safety of our employees and contractors, and the continuity of our operations that we have promulgated this plan.

### Situation Overview

On March 11, 2020 the World Health Organization declared a pandemic for the novel coronavirus which causes the COVID-19 severe acute respiratory syndrome. This plan has been developed in accordance with amended laws to support continued resilience for a continuation of the spread of this disease or for other infectious diseases which may emerge and cause a declaration of a public health emergency.

The health and safety of our employees and contractors is crucial to maintaining our mission essential operations. We encourage all employees and contractors to use [CDC Guidance for Keeping Workplaces, Schools, Homes, and Commercial Establishments Safe](#). The fundamentals of reducing the spread of infection include:

- Using hand sanitizer and washing hands with soap and water frequently, including:
  - After using the restroom
  - After returning from a public outing
  - After touching/disposing of garbage
  - After using public computers, touching public tables, and countertops, etc.
- Practice social distancing when possible
- If you are feeling ill or have a fever, notify your supervisor immediately and go home
- If you start to experience coughing or sneezing, step away from people and food, cough or sneeze into the crook of your arm or a tissue, the latter of which should be disposed of immediately
- Clean and disinfect workstations at the beginning, middle, and end of each shift
- Other guidance which may be published by the CDC, the State Department of Health, or County health officials.

## Planning Assumptions

This plan was developed based on information, best practices, and guidance available as of the date of publication. The plan was developed to largely reflect the circumstances of the current Coronavirus pandemic but may also be applicable to other infectious disease outbreaks.

The following assumptions have been made in the development of this plan:

- The health and safety of our employees and contractors, and their families, is of utmost importance
- The circumstances of a public health emergency may directly impact our own operations.
- Impacts of a public health emergency will take time for us to respond to, with appropriate safety measures put into place and adjustments made to operations to maximize safety
- The public and our constituency expects us to maintain a level of mission essential operations
- Resource support from other jurisdictions may be limited based upon the level of impact the public health emergency has upon them
- Supply chains, particularly those for personal protective equipment (PPE) and cleaning supplies, may be heavily impacted, resulting in considerable delays in procurement
- The operations of other entities, including the private sector (vendors, contractors, etc.), non-profit organizations, and other governmental agencies and services may also be impacted due to the public health emergency, causing delays or other disruptions in their services
- Emergency measures and operational changes may need to be adjusted based upon the specific circumstances and impacts of the public health emergency, as well as guidance and direction from public health officials and the governor
- Per S8617B/A10832, ‘essential employee’ is defined as a public employee or contractor that is required to be physically present at a work site to perform their job
- Per S8617B/A10832, ‘non-essential employee’ is defined as a public employee or contractor that is not required to be physically present at a work site to perform their job

## Concept of Operations

The Superintendent of Schools of the Whitehall Central School District, their designee, or their successor holds the authority to execute and direct the implementation of this plan. Implementation, monitoring of operations, and adjustments to plan implementation may be supported by additional personnel, at the discretion of the Superintendent of Schools.

Upon the determination of implementing this plan, all employees and contractors of the Whitehall Central School District may be notified by phone, email, or any other means determined to be necessary, with details provided as possible and necessary, with additional information and updates provided on a regular basis. Parents, students, and other community members will be notified of pertinent operational changes by way of email notifications, social media messaging, and local news outlets, amongst others. Other interested parties, such as vendors, will be notified by phone and/or email as necessary. The WSWHE BOCES Communication Specialist will support the Superintendent of Schools to maintain communications with the public and constituents as needed throughout the implementation of this plan.

The Superintendent of Schools of the Whitehall Central School District, their designee, or their successor will maintain awareness of information, direction, and guidance from public health officials

and the Governor’s office, directing the implementation of changes as necessary. Updates of this plan will be published on the District Website and posted conspicuously in all school buildings.

Upon resolution of the public health emergency, the Superintendent of Schools of the Whitehall Central School District, their designee, or their successor will direct the resumption of normal operations or operations with modifications as necessary.

### Mission Essential Functions

When confronting events that disrupt normal operations, the Whitehall Central School District is committed to ensuring that essential functions will be continued even under the most challenging circumstances.

Essential functions are those functions that enable an organization to:

1. Maintain the safety of employees, contractors, and our constituency
2. Provide vital services
3. Provide services required by law
4. Sustain quality operations
5. Uphold the core values of the Whitehall Central School District

The Whitehall Central School District has identified as critical only those priority functions that are required or are necessary to provide vital services. During activation of this plan, all other activities may be suspended to enable the organization to concentrate on providing the critical functions and building the internal capabilities necessary to increase and eventually restore operations. Appropriate communications with employees, contractors, our constituents, and other stakeholders will be an ongoing priority.

Essential functions are prioritized according to:

- The time criticality of each essential function
- Interdependency of a one function to others
- The recovery sequence of essential functions and their vital processes

The mission essential functions for the Whitehall Central School District have been identified as:

Essential Function	Description
Information Technology/Continuity of Operations and Instruction	Provides hardware and software for staff and students to facilitate continued education in remote learning environments necessary for continuity of instruction and education. Also responsible for troubleshooting technical issues that may arise during the distance learning process, the offering of best practices in communication to ensure that students are able to access curricular materials, and for helping staff members disseminate information related to both academic and social-emotional education.
Buildings and Grounds	Continues to upkeep the campus during remote work and learning and ensures that all buildings and grounds are properly maintained, regularly

	cleaned, and disinfected as necessary to ensure the safety of school community members.
District Office	Oversight and management of the functions performed by employees in the superintendent's office and the business office, to ensure that regular business operations and services continue as necessary and/or mandated.
Health Office	Upon consultation with the district physician and the County Department of Health, school nurses may be responsible for assessing ill staff and students, providing consultation to the district office, following up with healthcare providers, and providing assistance with contact tracing efforts as necessary.
School Building Main Office Staff	Oversight of mail, phones, sign-in procedures, and building utilization and operations.
Food Service	Ensure that food can be provided to students
Transportation	To ensure that meals/instructional packets may be delivered to students
Building Administrators	To maintain instructional operations of the District Pre-K -12 whether in-person or remote.

### Essential Positions

Each essential function identified above requires certain positions on-site to effectively operate. The table below identifies the positions or titles that are essential to be staffed on-site for the continued operation of each essential function. Note that while some functions and associated personnel may be essential, some of these can be conducted remotely and do not need to be identified in this section. Assists building and district administrators by communicating with the local health department for guidance, may act as the liaison to the school physician, and is responsible for assisting other nurses in assessing ill students and staff

Essential Function	Essential Positions/Titles	Justification for Each
Information Technology/Continuity of Operations and Instruction	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>IT Department Coordinator of Network and Technology services</li> </ul>	Responsible for overseeing the local area network and the subsequent ongoing maintenance of this network for the district. Oversees the district's internet access, phone systems, and district cell phone plans
	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>IT microcomputer Repair Technician</li> </ul>	Responsible for providing support to teachers and students in regards to computer hardware and software. Will respond to "help desk" and troubleshooting concerns.
Buildings and Grounds	Director of Facilities 1	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Responsible for overseeing and providing direction to the B&amp;G department and employees to ensure a safe working environment.</li> </ul>
	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Custodians</li> <li>Cleaners</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Responsible for routine cleaning, disinfecting, and maintenance tasks.</li> </ul>

	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Maintenance Workers</li> <li>• Groundskeeper</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Responsible for performing a wide variety of tasks related to the maintenance and upkeep of campus grounds, parking lots, and fields.</li> </ul>
District Office	Superintendent of Schools	Responsible for making day-to-day decisions about educational programs, budget/spending, staff, and facilities. Responsible for helping the school district come in to and remain in compliance with all aspects of reopening plans, reopening activities, and guidance related to reopening. Responsible for helping the school district come in to and remain in compliance with all aspects of reopening plans, reopening activities, and guidance related to reopening.
	Business Administrator Account Clerk Payroll	Responsible for assisting the Superintendent in the administration of business affairs in such a way to provide the best services with the financial resources available. Ordering, receiving and deploying supplies and equipment, payments and payroll.
	School Nurse	Responsible for assessing ill students and staff and assisting in contact tracing efforts. May assist building and district administrators by communicating with the local health department for guidance, may act as the liaison to the school physician.
School Building Main Office Staff	School Secretaries	Responsible for answering phones, providing support to building administrators, responding to emails, greeting visitors, assisting in building sign-in procedures, accepting deliveries, and helping disseminate mail.
Food Service	Food Service Cook Manager	Responsible for overseeing the preparation of meals and coordinating with the Transportation Director to ensure that meals are disseminated.
	Food Service Employee	Responsible for the preparation of and making of meals for students.
Transportation	Head Bus Driver Drivers	Responsible for the safety and efficient operation and maintenance of the

		transportation department. Coordinates with the Food Service Manager on meal deliveries. Delivery of food and educational packets.
Building Administrators	Building Principals	Responsible for overseeing the day-to-day functioning of the school community and supporting the academic success of students, promoting a positive school climate, and assisting educators.

## Reducing Risk Through Remote Work and Staggered Shifts

Through assigning certain staff to work remotely and by staggering work shifts, we can decrease crowding and density at work sites and on public transportation

### Remote Work Protocols

Non-essential employees and contractors able to accomplish their functions remotely will be enabled to do so at the greatest extent possible. Working remotely requires:

1. Identification of staff who will/can work remotely without impacting staffing considerations or instructional practices
2. Approval and assignment of remote work
3. Equipping staff for remote work, which may include:
  - a. Internet capable laptop
  - b. Necessary peripherals
  - c. Access to VPN and/or secure network drives
  - d. Access to software and databases necessary to perform their duties
  - e. A solution for telephone communications

Individual Remote work protocols shall be developed as necessary and facilitated through coordination with district administrators, building administrators, and the IT department to ensure that all needs are met and that safety, security, and functionality are at the forefront of any and all discussions

### *Approval and Assignment of Remote Work*

The Superintendent or designee, in consultation with the Building Principals, Business Manager and other administrators and/or supervisors as needed, will review requests for remote work and corresponding work assignments to aid in the decision-making process. Final decisions will be communicated to the building/department administrators for dissemination to their respective staff. Superintendent of Schools and/or the School Business Manager will notify payroll of such decisions to ensure employee time and attendance is tracked accurately.

### *Equipping Staff and Students for Remote Learning*

The school district shall work with their IT Manager to support non-essential employees and students during an extended school closure. In order to support this, students K-12 and instructional faculty and staff have been provided with Chromebooks to ease the transition to remote learning/working. Non-instructional staff who work remotely may have access to Chromebooks/laptops based on their

individual needs for them to effectively perform their job duties remotely. In addition, the IT Department has established protocols for the repair of Chromebooks/laptops, as well as protocols for assisting in the procurement of internet access at an individual's home, if they do not have internet. The IT Department will also be responsible for assisting individuals in the procurement of VPN or other secure network drives as is deemed necessary and for providing access to software and databases that are deemed necessary for somebody to perform their duty.

### Staggered Shifts

Implementing staggered shifts may be possible for personnel performing duties which are necessary to be performed on-site but perhaps less sensitive to being accomplished only within core business hours. As possible, management will identify opportunities for staff to work outside core business hours as a strategy of limiting exposure. Regardless of changes in start and end times of shifts, Whitehall Central School District will ensure that employees are provided with their typical or contracted minimum work hours per week. Staggering shifts requires:

1. Identification of positions for which work hours will be staggered
2. Approval and assignment of changed work hours

For those "Essential Employees" the district may develop a staggered shift schedule to reduce the number of employees within the building at a given time. The supervisor for each labor title will develop a staggered schedule and submit to the Superintendent for review and approval.

### *Identification of Positions with Staggered Work Hours and Approval Process*

District buildings and grounds staff may be assigned to staggered shifts to ensure coverage before, during, and after core business hours. Nurses and other building positions may also be realigned to ensure greater coverage during the day and to line up with the needs of our population.

The approval and assignment of changed work hours must be reviewed by the district's Administrators. Factors such as staffing levels, the ability to provide physical distancing, and ways to improve efficiency and/or effectiveness will be considered in the decision-making process.

### Personal Protective Equipment

The use of personal protective equipment (PPE) to reduce the spread of infectious disease is important to supporting the health and safety of our employees and contractors. PPE which may be needed can include:

- Masks
- Face shields
- Gloves
- Disposable gowns and aprons

Note that while cleaning supplies are not PPE, there is a related need for cleaning supplies used to sanitize surfaces, as well as hand soap and hand sanitizer. The Coronavirus pandemic demonstrated that supply chains were not able to keep up with increased demand for these products early in the pandemic. As such, we are including these supplies in this section as they are pertinent to protecting the health and safety of our employees and contractors.



### *Identification of Personal Protective Equipment Based on Job Duties*

Each building shall be provided with a supply of disposable masks and hand sanitizer for use by students, employees, contractors, and/or visitors, as necessary. *The Buildings and Grounds Account Clerk* shall be responsible for monitoring and replenishing those supplies as necessary. Individuals with a medical necessity and an approved reasonable accommodation will be provided N-95 respirators as necessary.

Given the nature of their work, buildings and grounds staff and health office staff will be supplied daily access to disposable masks, disposable gloves, face shields, and gowns as necessary. Individuals who have a job position that requires the wearing of an N-95 respirator shall be entered into a respiratory protection program, fit tested, medically cleared, and provided N-95 respirators as required.

### *Procurement of Personal Protective Equipment*

*The Buildings and Grounds Account Clerk* shall track PPE inventory in their building in the form of an inventory report that will be submitted to the *Superintendent of Schools* for review each week. When inventory gets low (i.e., having less than two pieces of PPE for each essential employee for at least a six-month period), the *Buildings and Grounds Account Clerk* will notify the Business Manager who will contact one or more of the vendors on the District-approved supplier's list to procure the necessary PPE. The district maintains a supplier list with backup suppliers listed in an effort to mitigate any supply chain disruption. For unforeseen disruptions or shortages, the district shall work with the Washington County Department of Health for assistance. Personal protective equipment shall be stored within the buildings where they can be tracked and accessed in the event of an emergency, and maintained in a way that prevents degradation.

## Staff Exposures, Cleaning, and Disinfection

### Staff Exposures

Staff exposures are organized under several categories based upon the type of exposure and presence of symptoms. Following CDC guidelines, we have established the following protocols:

- A. If employees or contractors are exposed to a known case of communicable disease that is the subject of the public health emergency (defined as a 'close contact' with someone who is confirmed infected, which is a prolonged presence within six feet with that person):
  1. Potentially exposed employees or contractors who do not have symptoms should remain at home or in a comparable setting and practice social distancing for the lesser of 14 days or other current CDC/public health guidance for the communicable disease in question.
    - a. As possible, these employees will be permitted to work remotely during this period of time if they are not ill.
    - b. The Superintendent and Nurse are the designated individuals who must be notified and who are responsible for ensuring these protocols are followed
  2. CDC guidelines for COVID-19, or a similar communicable disease, provide that critical essential employees may be permitted to continue work following potential exposure, provided they remain symptom-free and additional precautions are taken to protect them, other employees and contractors, and our constituency/public.

- a. Additional precautions will include the requirement of the subject employee or contractor, as well as others working in their proximity, to wear appropriate PPE at all times to limit the potential of transmission.
- b. In-person interactions with the subject employee or contractor will be limited as much as possible.
- c. Work areas in which the subject employee or contractor are present will be disinfected according to current CDC/public health protocol at least every hour, as practical. See the section on Cleaning and Disinfection for additional information on that subject.
- d. If at any time they exhibit symptoms, refer to item B below.
- e. The Supervisor in each labor group, in consultation with the Superintendent and Nurse, is responsible for ensuring these protocols are followed

It's important to note that Item 2 above may not apply if the public employer is not considered critical infrastructure.

**B. If an employee or contractor exhibits symptoms of the communicable disease that is the subject of the public health emergency:**

1. Employees and contractors who exhibit symptoms in the workplace should be immediately separated from other employees, customers, and visitors. They should immediately be sent home with a recommendation to contact their physician.
2. Employees and contractors who exhibit symptoms outside of work should notify their supervisor and stay home, with a recommendation to contact their physician.
3. Employees should not return to work until they have met the criteria to discontinue home isolation per CDC/public health guidance and have consulted with a healthcare provider.
4. CDC criteria for COVID-19 provides that persons exhibiting symptoms may return to work if at least 24 hours have passed since the last instance of fever without the use of fever-reducing medications. If the disease in question is other than COVID-19, CDC and other public guidance shall be referenced.
5. The Superintendent and Nurse are the designated individuals who must be notified and who are responsible for ensuring these protocols are followed

**C. If an employee or contractor has tested positive for the communicable disease that is the subject of the public health emergency:**

1. Apply the steps identified in item B, above, as applicable.
2. Areas occupied for prolonged periods of time by the subject employee or contractor will be closed off until disinfected.
  - a. CDC guidance for COVID-19 will be followed before cleaning, disinfecting, and reoccupation of those spaces will take place. If this time period is not possible, a period of as long as possible will be given. CDC/public health guidance for the disease in question will be followed.
  - b. Any common areas entered, surfaces touched, or equipment used shall be cleaned and disinfected immediately.
  - c. See the section on Cleaning and Disinfection for additional information on that subject.
3. Identification of potential employee and contractor exposures will be conducted

- a. If an employee or contractor is confirmed to have the disease in question, the on-site Supervisor will be required to notify the Superintendent, or their designee, who will then inform all contacts of their possible exposure. Confidentiality shall be maintained as required by the Americans with Disabilities Act (ADA).
  - b. Apply the steps identified in item A, above, as applicable, for all potentially exposed personnel.
4. The Superintendent and Nurse are the designated individuals who must be notified and who are responsible for ensuring these protocols are followed

We recognize there may be nuances or complexities associated with potential exposures, close contacts, symptomatic persons, and those testing positive. We will follow CDC/public health recommendations and requirements and coordinate with our local public health office for additional guidance and support as needed.

### Cleaning and Disinfecting

CDC/public health guidelines will be followed for cleaning and disinfection of surfaces/areas. Present guidance for routine cleaning during a public health emergency includes:

1. As possible, employees and contractors will clean their own workspaces in the beginning, middle, and end of their shifts, at a minimum.
  - a. High traffic/high touch areas and areas which are accessible to the public/constituents will be disinfected at least hourly.
  - b. The district's cleaners are responsible for cleaning common areas
2. Staff tasked with cleaning and disinfecting areas will be issued and required to wear PPE appropriate to the task.
3. Soiled surfaces will be cleaned with soap and water before being disinfected.
4. Surfaces will be disinfected with products that meet EPA criteria for use against the virus in question and which are appropriate for that surface.
5. Staff will follow instructions of cleaning products to ensure safe and effective use of the products.

As information about the communicable disease becomes available,

### Employee and Contractor Leave

Public health emergencies are filled with extenuating and unanticipated circumstances in which the Whitehall Central School District is committed to reducing the burden on our employees, contractors, and families. The Whitehall Central School District is committed to working with its community to ensure that our leave policies meet all local, state, and federal requirements and that additional provisions may be enacted upon need and the guidance and requirements put in place by local, state, and federal employment laws, FMLA, executive orders, and other potential sources as deemed necessary.

Contractors, either independent or affiliated with a contracted firm, are not classified as employees of the Whitehall Central School District, and as such are not provided with paid leave time by the Whitehall Central School District, unless required by law.

## Documentation of Work Hours and Locations

In a public health emergency, it may be necessary to document work hours and locations of each employee and contractor to support contact tracing efforts. Identification of locations shall include on-site work, off-site visits. This information may be used by the Whitehall Central School District to support contact tracing within the organization and may be shared with local public health officials.

During a public health emergency, anyone who enters the building will be required to complete a daily attestation on their current health status. This process will be completed electronically through the “Raptor” screening process.

## Housing for Essential Employees

There are circumstances within a public health emergency when it may be prudent to have essential employees lodged in such a manner which will help prevent the spread of the subject communicable disease to protect these employees from potential exposures, thus helping to ensure their health and safety and the continuity of the Whitehall Central School District’s essential operations.

If such a need arises, hotel rooms are expected to be the most viable option. If hotel rooms are for some reason deemed not practical or ideal, or if there are no hotel rooms available, the Whitehall Central School District will coordinate with the Washington County Department of Health and the Washington County Office of Public Safety to help identify and arrange for these housing needs.