

HARLEM VILLAGE ACADEMIES

DISTRICT-WIDE SCHOOL SAFETY PLAN

Providing students with a safe, stable and welcoming environment that enables learning at the highest levels is a key component of the mission of Harlem Village Academies (“HVA”). HVA maintains the highest standards to guarantee the continuity of a safe environment at all times. HVA has made preparation for unforeseen emergencies that could compromise the continuity of school safety among its highest priorities.

Implied or Direct Threats of Violence

HVA has established policies and procedures for responding to implied or direct threats of violence by students, teachers, other school personnel as well as visitors to the school, including threats by students against themselves, which include suicide.

All threats of violence are taken seriously at HVA. Threats of violence from children will be reported to the parent, police and/or the NYC Administration for Children’s Services (“ACS”) based on the situation and appropriateness as determined by the Principal or their designees. The Principal will take appropriate follow up actions. Threats of violence from adults will be reported to the police. In addition, the Principal, Director of Operations or the Private Security Guard will notify security and the School Leadership team at nearby HVA locations.

All threats of suicide are considered serious. In emergency situations, all staff have been instructed to call 911. A member of the School Leadership Team and the School Social Worker will gather details on the situation. A member of the School Leadership Team will notify the parents or guardians of the student. School staff will encourage parents to call 911 (if the school has not already called 911) or to take the student to a health care facility for risk assessment. School staff will provide parents with mental health resources including referrals and mental health contact numbers.

Acts of Violence

HVA has established policies and procedures for responding to acts of violence by students, teachers, other school personnel as well as visitors to the school. When a student engages in behavior that poses a substantial risk of serious injury to the student or others, schools must determine the appropriate way to manage the behavior and consider whether the situation can be safely de-escalated by school staff as set forth below. In such situations, the following procedures must be followed:

1. The Principal/designee must be notified of the situation and must attempt to reach the parent.
2. Every effort will be made by responding school staff to safely de-escalate the behavior where possible using strategies and interventions for addressing behavioral crises.
3. If the classroom teacher or the responding staff member is unable to de-escalate the behavior, the teacher/staff member should seek assistance from the Principal and other members of the School Leadership Team.

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4. Where a student's behavior poses an imminent and substantial risk of serious injury to himself or others and the situation cannot be safely addressed by school staff, the Principal or their designee will call 911. In such situations where it is not practicable to contact the Principal or their designee, the responding staff member, School Safety Agent or Private Security Guard will call 911 and immediately thereafter notify the Principal.

Prevention and Intervention Strategies

HVA has established appropriate prevention and intervention strategies. The administration of HVA and the school's assigned School Safety Agents and Private Security Guards have a good working relationship with NYPD's local precinct. The school also has good working relationships with local emergency response agencies and medical personnel. School staff including emergency teams and safety officers, receive training, including de-escalation training, fire safety training, use of emergency technology and communication tools, training regarding exits/potential emergency spaces/location of first-aid tools, and AED/CPR training for designated personnel.

Accomplishing HVA's mission requires maintaining a safe and positive learning environment for staff and students. Teachers are trained in school safety and conflict mediation through professional development programs. HVA teachers model appropriate behavior and teach character and values as part of daily instruction. The school ensures that any incidents that may endanger school safety are dealt with effectively and expediently. This includes any threat, implied or direct.

Contacting Appropriate Law Enforcement Officials

HVA has established policies and procedures for contacting appropriate law enforcement officials in the event of a violent incident. In the event of a safety issue which requires a response from the police, staff will contact the local precinct. School staff may also reach out to Youth Officers.

Contacting Parents and Guardians

HVA has established policies and procedures for contacting parents or guardians in the event of a violent incident and policies and procedures for contacting parents and guardians in the event of an implied or direct threat of violence by such student against themselves, including suicide.

When a student engages in behavior that poses a substantial risk of serious injury to the student or others, the Principal or their designee will be notified of the situation and will attempt to reach the parent. In the event of a violent incident or any other emergency-related early dismissal, the Principal or their designee will contact parent or guardians. Parents may be contacted via recorded phone messages, mass text messages, or mass e-mail.

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School Building Security

HVA has established policies and procedures relating to school building security, including the use of NYPD School Safety Agents in DOE buildings and Private Security Guards in non-DOE buildings, the duties of hall monitors and, the training required of all personnel acting in a school security capacity, and the hiring and screening process for all personnel acting in a school security capacity.

All security personnel must be registered with New York State as security officers. As a Security Guard (or a School Safety Agent), each guard must complete an initial eight hour and a sixteen-hour security officer's course plus an annual 8 hour training session. The DOE or the Security Guard contractor ensures that such training requirements have been met. The Security Guards and other staff who cover the front entrance have received training in maintenance of sign-in and sign-out logs and in requiring all visitors to show ID and to sign in and sign out. Procedures are in place and practiced for notifying administration and staff of visitors and for not permitting visitors to pass the security desk. If there is a situation where an adult cannot be secured at the security desk, 911 will be called. All facilities have video surveillance and HVA's private facility entrances are locked 24/7 and require a Private Security Guard to observe potential visitors via a video camera before allowing entrance to the security desk area. Visitors are then required to sign the security log. A call is made to the staff member, who must come and pick up visitors at the Security Desk. Additional security and staff personnel are present at building entrances at busy times such as arrival and dismissal.

Dissemination of Informative Materials

HVA staff are trained to detect potentially violent behaviors during regular staff professional development days. Clear expectations and information are provided to all students throughout the school year.

Annual School Safety Training

HVA has established policies and procedures for annual school safety training for staff and students. This training includes annual training on the emergency response plan, including components on violence prevention and mental health. Further, new employees hired after the start of the school year shall receive training within thirty days of such hire or as part of HVA's existing new hire training program, whichever is sooner.

Bomb Threats

HVA has established the following protocols for responding to bomb threat. If a suspicious package is observed or a bomb threat is received by telephone or other means, the following steps should be taken:

1. Do not touch any package as it may be a bomb.

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2. Notify the Principal, Operations Director, Network Crisis Management team, Security Guard and NYPD, as appropriate.
3. Notify Principal and Operations Director at nearby HVA facilities.
4. Staff is alerted by PA system and reminded not to use cell phones or radios as they may potentially trigger an explosive device. A land line should be used for communication. Staff should also avoid the use of light switches.
5. The Operations Director will begin a building evacuation.
6. If the building cannot be re-entered, the Principal or his/her designee will consider the possibility of relocation of students to a safe location in nearby HVA facilities.
7. The Principal or Operations Director will contact parents/guardians via recorded call, mass text message, and/or mass e-mail to arrange for early pick-up times for students.

Intruders

HVA has an established protocols for visitors as noted in the School Building Security section. If an intruder is discovered in the building, the following steps will be taken immediately:

1. The Security Desk should be notified immediately, and, if necessary, NYPD and 911.
2. The Principal, Operations Director, Network Crisis Management team and Private Security Guard, as appropriate, should be notified.
3. The Operations Director will determine if the situation warrants a building lockdown.
4. If a lockdown is necessary, the Operations Director or Principal will initiate a lockdown via the intercom and follow standard lockdown procedures.

Hostage Situation

HVA has established the following protocols for responding to a hostage situation:

1. Notify the Principal, Operations Director, Network Crisis Management team, Private Security Guard and NYPD, as appropriate.
2. Notify Principal and Operations Director at nearby HVA facilities
3. After consultation with NYPD, the Operations Director will begin a building evacuation.
4. If the building cannot be re-entered, the Principal or his/her designee will consider the possibility of relocation of students to a safe location in nearby HVA facilities.
5. The Principal or Operations Director will contact parents/guardians via recorded call, mass text message, and/or mass e-mail to arrange for early pick-up times for students.

Kidnapping

HVA has established the following protocols for responding to kidnapping:

1. Check Emergency Contact information to ensure that only the legal guardian is taking the student out of the building.
2. Check attendance information for the student who is reported kidnapped.

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3. Notify Principal or his/her designee and NYPD.
4. Make parental/guardian contact to ensure that the student is not with relatives or friends.
5. Follow the "Intruder Procedure" as outlined in the School Safety Plan.
6. Notify Network Crisis Management Team.

Strategies for Improving Communications

HVA has established strategies for improving communication among students and between students and staff and reporting of potentially violent incidents. Every morning, teachers begin the day with morning meetings, during which students are given an opportunity to express their thoughts and concerns. The school ensures that any incidents that may endanger school safety are dealt with effectively and expediently. Teachers are trained to establish a positive school and classroom culture and address even minor incidents of disrespect. Teachers supervise bullying "hot spots" (lunch, recess, bathrooms). HVA encourages students and parents to immediately report potentially violent incidents, bullying, or harassment to teachers, leaders or any other adult.

Designation of District Chief Emergency Officer

HVA designates the Director of Operations of each school as the District Chief Emergency Officer responsible for coordinating communication between school staff, law enforcement, first responders, and ensuring staff understanding of the district-level safety plan. The District Chief Emergency Officer shall also be responsible for ensuring the completion and yearly update of building-level emergency response plans.

The District Chief Emergency Officer will be responsible for:

1. Maintenance of the Building Security plan and coordination of the communication between school staff, law enforcement, and other first responders;
2. Coordination of the Building Security Plan with the District-Wide School Safety Plan.
3. Education of staff on how Building Security Plan fits into district-wide school safety plan;
4. Annual update of building-level emergency response plan;
5. Participation in the selection of security related technology and development of procedures for the use of such technology;
6. Coordinating appropriate safety, security, and emergency training for district and school staff, including required training in the emergency response plan;
7. Ensuring the conduct of required evacuation and lock-down drills in all district buildings as required by Education Law section 807;

Conduct of Drills

HVA has established procedures for review and the conduct of drills and other exercises to test components of the emergency response plan, including the use of simulated "tabletop exercises," in coordination with HVA's private security company.

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Fire Drills: The purpose of fire drills is to instruct and train students and staff in emergency evacuation procedures so that they might leave the school building in the shortest time possible and without panic in the event of an actual emergency. On hearing the fire signal, pupils under the leadership of teachers and other staff must exit to the street without delay.

Lockdown Drills: The purpose of lockdown drills is to instruct and train students and staff in the emergency procedures so that if an intruder enters the building, they will know what actions to take without panicking in the event of an actual emergency. On hearing the lockdown announcement, students under the leadership of staff, must get away from windows and doors. Students and staff will maintain quiet and turn off all cell phones. Staff must bring any student outside their classroom into the room. They will also close and lock their doors and cover door windows.

Sheltering-in Place Drills: The purpose of sheltering-in place drills is to instruct and train students and staff in emergency procedures so that if they are prevented from leaving the room for an extended period of time, they will know what actions to take without panicking in the event of an actual emergency. Sheltering-in place drills will be practiced in the classrooms with students and staff moving away from the windows. In the case of real emergency, local law enforcement/public safety officials will make the determination that staff and students should remain inside during the disaster.

Review of Drills: Following all drills, the Director of Operations or his/her designee will discuss the execution of the drill with the School Leadership team,. The group will also create recommendations, as necessary, to improve the execution of future drills or evacuations.