

**NISKAYUNA CENTRAL SCHOOL DISTRICT**

**DISTRICT-WIDE**

**SCHOOL SAFETY PLAN**

2016-2017

Developed August 2016

# NISKAYUNA CENTRAL SCHOOLS DISTRICT

## DISTRICT-WIDE

### SCHOOL SAFETY PLAN

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**Niskayuna Central School District**

**DISTRICT SAFETY TEAM**

**2016-2017**

**Co-Chairs**

Bill Anders  
Mark Treanor

**Representation**

Co-Chair  
Safety Officer

**Committee Member**

Mary Cloutier  
Ed Alston III  
Dan McManus  
Larry Gillooley  
David Koes/Nicki Foley

**Representation**

School Psychologist  
District Data Manager  
Niskayuna Police  
Director Health, Phys. Ed  
Board of Education  
Teacher  
Nurse  
Fire Chief District #1  
Transportation Director  
Acting Directors of Facilities  
Teacher  
Communications Specialist  
BOCES Safety Specialist  
Principal at Rosendale  
Principal at NHS

Carol Werblin  
Dale Lingenfelter  
Bill Garrison  
Shawn King/Dave Ormsbee  
Mary Eads  
Matt Leon  
Sherrie Strain  
Joseph DiCaprio  
John Rickert

**OUR VISION**

**Total Safety in Our Schools as Vital for Effective Learning.**

**To guide the Implementation and Operation of an  
Effective, Comprehensive, Integrated,  
Proactive Safe Schools Plan.**

**To prevent the Occurrence of  
Intolerance, Bullying, Harassment, Ridicule,  
Threatening and Violent Behavior in our Schools.**

**To promote Cooperation, Collaboration and Teamwork,  
To establish Effective School Safety Teams in each School Building.**

**To secure Safety in our Schools  
By developing our own Caring and Inclusive Community.**

**OUR MISSION**

**To Focus on improving the Safe School  
Environment of Students, Staff, Teachers and Parents;  
To secure a Healthy, Supportive, Tolerant and Safe Area.**

**To Have a Comprehensive  
Integrated Program with a Proactive Agenda,  
And a Positive Long-Term Commitment;  
To secure a Healthy, Supportive, Tolerant and Safe Area.**

**To Foster the Shared Accountability  
of Students, Staff, Teachers, Parents,  
Administration and the Entire Community;  
To secure a Healthy, Supportive, Tolerant and Safe Area.**

**OUR SHARED VALUES**

**To promote the Shared Values of  
Caring, Communication, Integrity, Quality, Tolerance,  
Encouragement and Mutual Respect for Each and Every One.**

# DISTRICT WIDE SCHOOL SAFETY PLAN

## Preface

*We, the District-Wide Safety Committee, believe it is imperative that the entire school community takes responsibility for ensuring a safe environment for learning. We must continue to build upon the excellent community connections already in existence to promote a safe and healthy school and community environment for our youth. Our approach is comprehensive and proactive, and requires a long-term commitment.*

## Introduction

This comprehensive District-Wide School Safety Plan is a guide for planning and a framework for action for the schools and community within the Niskayuna district. The plan is meant to be used by the Building-Level Emergency Response Teams and the District-Wide Safety Committee to be a resource for all staff, students, parents and the community. The plan is a synthesis of safe schools research, ideas from several area model plans, the school community's past experience and was developed to meet the specifications and requirements of the Safe Schools Against Violence in Education (Project SAVE) law.

While no plan can ensure against every contingency, the research does suggest that an integration of multiple characteristics does contribute to a safer environment within a school community. This plan identifies component areas that address these characteristics and proposes the establishment of a permanent District-Wide Safety Committee and the formation of individual Building-Level Emergency Response Teams as an integral part of the process to evaluate school safety. Together, the District Wide Safety Committee and the Building-Level Emergency Response Teams form the final component of the District-Wide School Safety Plan. The plan analyzes which safe schools characteristics Niskayuna currently practices, and makes recommendations for improvements within each component area.

The District is committed to an ongoing assessment of safety, the development of action plans and budgetary requests for improvement, and periodic evaluation and adjustment of the plan.

## **Goals**

To promote and nurture a Safe School environment, the District plans:

1. To provide a planning guide and framework for action to ensure a safe learning environment, including the physical safety of the schools, and promoting best practices to ensure the medical, emotional, social and physical safety of students.
2. To establish a District-Wide Safety Committee to monitor and annually evaluate the District-Wide School Safety Plan.
3. To require the establishment of Building-Level Emergency Response Teams within each building, who will assess specific building safety issues, develop yearly action plans, make budgetary requests, and make recommendations to the District-Wide Safety Committee during the yearly evaluation of the District-Wide School Safety Plan.

## **Objectives**

To implement the District-Wide School Safety Plan, the District will:

1. Continually identify research-based characteristics of safe schools within established component areas.
2. Evaluate Niskayuna's effectiveness for each of the component areas and make yearly recommendations for improvement.
3. Require each school building within the district to establish a Building-Level Emergency Response Team, who will make yearly recommendations to the Superintendent and submit projected budgetary needs, based on an assessment of building concerns.
4. Develop a process and establish a timeline for the implementation of the District-Wide School Safety Plan.
5. Require budgetary requests by Building-Level Emergency Response teams to be incorporated into the budgetary process.

# IMPLEMENTING THE PLAN

1. The Superintendent of the Niskayuna Central School District will form a District-Wide Safety Committee, whose membership may be comprised of representatives from: parents, community, school administrators, school board, teachers, counselors, support staff, transportation, maintenance, local fire department/ambulance emergency service, local law enforcement and others to be determined by the Superintendent.
2. To ensure continuity from year to year, the District-Wide Safety Committee members will serve for at least two years. Members will nominate and elect a Chair or Co-chairs and designate recording secretaries for each scheduled meeting. Meetings for the entire year should be scheduled at the first meeting of the Task Force.
3. The Superintendent will charge all building principals to form Building-Level Emergency Response Teams within their school buildings; an existing committee or team could become this team. Membership of the Building-Level Emergency Response Team must include a principal or an assistant principal from the building and other members from the school and community as determined by the principal and the Project SAVE law. It is recommended that these teams have six to ten persons.
4. To ensure continuity from year to year, the Building-Level Emergency Response Team members will serve for two years with one-half of the members rotating off each year. Members will nominate and elect a Chair or Co-chairs and designate recording secretaries for each scheduled meeting. Meetings for the entire year should be scheduled at the first meeting of each Building-Level Emergency Response Team.
5. It is the responsibility of each Building-Level Emergency Response Team to use the District Plan as a guide when developing their Emergency Response Plans. Each year the Teams will need to assemble the information needed to assess the component areas of the District-Wide School Safety Plan for their building. Information may be obtained by using one or more of the following: data collection, a school safety audit, surveys, meetings with parent and focus groups, past experiences, and other methods as determined by the group. An analysis and evaluation of the information collected will assist the team in identifying what is in place for each component area and where there are concerns.

6. The Building-Level Emergency Response Teams will then use their evaluation to develop a Building-Level Emergency Response Plan each year to address identified concerns. Ideally, the Building-Level Emergency Response Plan would be developed so that the target time for implementation would be the following fall. The focus of the Building-Level Emergency Response Plan each year may be on one area of concern or several; this is to be determined by team members and the school, in keeping with past district experience. Budgetary implications of Building-Level Emergency Response Plans must be submitted by the Principal of each building as part of the annual budget process.

7. Implementation of each school's Building-Level Emergency Response Plan must be approved by the Building Principal, who will keep the Superintendent informed and, when necessary, seek the Superintendent's approval. It is the Principal's responsibility to see that the approved Building-Level Emergency Response Plan is implemented through appropriate designation of tasks to Building-Level Emergency Response Team members as well as others.

8. Each School's Building-Level Emergency Response Team should plan to meet to monitor and adjust their action plans if necessary throughout the school year; a minimum of three meetings is advisable.

9. Each School's Building-Level Emergency Response Team should plan to submit a concise annual report to the Superintendent by May 1 of each year. The report will contain the following:

- a) A summary of safety incident reports from the past year;
- b) Experiences from using the plan during the past year;
- c) A summary of the Action Plan implemented, areas of noted improvement, and areas of concern;
- d) An outline of the direction of the school's Building Level Emergency Response Plan for the following year;
- e) Recommendations for amendments for the District Wide Safety Plan.

10. It is the responsibility of the District-Wide Safety Committee to evaluate the information from all of the school safety reports, to re-evaluate the District-Wide School Safety Plan and to make necessary adjustments.

11. Each year's new District-Wide School Safety Plan must be reviewed by the school attorney and be approved by the Board of Education upon the recommendation of the Superintendent.



12. The approved District-Wide School Safety Plan must be provided to the Building-Level Emergency Response Teams by July 5 for individual building planning purposes.

13. It shall be the responsibility of the Chief Emergency Officer to maintain a progressive record of the District-Wide School Safety Plan and the Building-Level Emergency Response Teams' Safety Action Plans for each year. The Chief Emergency Officer is designated as the Director of Student and Staff Support Services who performs this role in consultation with the Superintendent of Schools. All School staff should receive training by September 15<sup>th</sup> of each school year or within 30 days of their hire so that all staff can respond to an emergency if one should occur.

14. The publicity of the District Safety Plan shall be the responsibility of the Superintendent and in accordance with the requirements of the Project SAVE law. Individual Building-Level Emergency Response Plans are submitted on the mandatory template as required and are confidential. They shall not be disclosed except to authorized departments and law officers as deemed appropriate by the building Principals in consultation with the Superintendent.

**NISKAYUNA CENTRAL SCHOOL DISTRICT  
SAFE SCHOOLS PLAN**

**PREVIOUS TIMELINE FOR IMPLEMENTATION**

1999-2000

2000-2001

2001-2002

**1999**

April	Superintendent forms Safe Schools District Task Force.
April, May, June	Task Force Meetings.
July	Budgetary Considerations. Review by Attorney. Board of Education Review and Approval.
August	Charge by Superintendent to Building Principals to form School Safety Teams.
August-September	School Safety Teams Formed in Every Building.
September-October	Safety Assessments Conducted by School Safety Teams.
October-November	Building Action Plans Developed. Budget Requests Submitted. Building Principal Approves Action Plan Implementation.
November-December	Action Plan Implemented.

**1999-2000**

December-April	School Safety Teams Meet Individually to Monitor, Evaluate, Adjust Action Plans.
April	School Safety Teams Meet to Prepare Report for District Safe Schools Task Force.

(Timeline for Implementation, cont'd)

2000

May	Safe Schools Task Force Meets to Evaluate District Plan, Incorporating Information from School Safety Team Reports.
June	Revise District Safe Schools Plan submitted for review by School Attorney. Review and approval by Board of Education.
July	School Safety Teams Receive District Safe Schools Plan. Develop a draft Action Plan for 2000-2001.
September	Safety Assessment Conducted by School Safety Teams.
October-November	Finalization of School Safety Teams' Action Plans. Budget Requests Submitted. Building Principal Approves Plan Implementation. Plan Implemented.

Previous Timeline for Implementation of Project SAVE Law

**2000-2001**

<u>District</u>		<u>Building</u>
September-December	Update/Revise	Safety Team
Revise Plan	December - January 31	
January	Conduct Audits	
February-March	Review & Revise	Plan in accordance w/ district plan
By end of April	Submit plan to district	
Review by Board	May-June	Summary avail. to public
Board holds public session	June	
Approval by Board	June 18, 2001	
Submit plan to the State Education Department (SED)	July 18, 2001	Prepare and send info to parents
Submit plans to Law Enforce/emergency agencies	July 18, 2001	

**2001-2002**

July, 2001	Public Hearing
July, 2001	Board of Education Approval
July, 2001	Plan Filed with SED, Police and Fire Department
April, 2002	Plan Approved by SED

**2002-2003**

July, 2003	Updated & Prepared Various Plans, i.e. Bomb Threat Anthrax Lock Out Lock Down
July, 2003	Public Hearing
July, 2003	Board of Education Approval
July, 2003	Plan Filed with SED, Police and Fire Department

**2003-2004**

January, 2004	New District Safety Committee Created
January-March, 2004	Review and Update District-wide Plan
April, 2004	Review changes with Superintendent
May 17, 2004	Review changes with the Board of Education
June 7, 2004	Finalize changes

**2004-2005**

June 7, 2004	Public Hearing
July 12, 2004	Board of Education Approval
July 30, 2004	Plan Filed with SED, Police and Fire Department

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**2005-2006**

July 11, 2005	Board of Education Approval
March 1, 2006	District Safety Committee Meeting
March 30, 2006	District Safety Committee and Sub-Committee Meeting

April 26, 2006 District Safety Committee and Sub-Committee Meeting

June 15, 2006 District Safety Committee Meeting

**2006-2007**

July 10, 2006 Public Hearing

August 21, 2006 Board of Education Approval

August 22, 2006 Plan Filed with SED, Police and Fire Department

February 28, 2007 District Safety Committee Meeting (no major changes)

**2007-2008**

July 9, 2007 Board of Education Approval

February 27, 2008 District Safety Committee Meeting (no major changes)

**2008-2009**

July 14, 2008 Board of Education Approval

March 11, 2009 District Safety Committee Meeting (no major changes)

**2009-2010**

July 13, 2009 Board of Education Approval

March 24, 2010 District Safety Committee Meeting (no major changes)

**2010-2011**

July 12, 2010 Board of Education Approval

February 16, 2011 District Safety Committee Meeting (no major changes)

**2011-2012**

July 12, 2011 Board of Education Approval

February 15, 2012 District Safety Committee Meeting (no major changes)

**2012-2013**

July 10, 2012 Board of Education Approval

May 23, 2013 District Safety Committee Meeting (no major changes)

**2013-2014**

July 15, 2013 Board of Education Approval

**2014-2015**

April 30, 2015 District Safety Committee Meeting (reviewed/revised document)

**2015-2016**

August, 2015 Board of Education Approval

September 21, 2015 District Safety Committee Meeting (no major changes)

March 16, 2016 Table Top safety exercise with Leadership team and local law enforcement

**2016-2017**

August, 2016 District School Safety Committee Meeting (reviewed/revised document in light of required changes)

September 2016 Board approval

# **DISTRICT POLICIES**

The Niskayuna Central School District believes safety is a priority and, therefore, is committed to promoting the physical and emotional well being of students. This is reflected in district policies that address issues of safety. The cultural and educational goals of the community are reflected within these policies. The policies are evaluated and amended as necessary. Lists of district policies that pertain to safety are included in the Appendix.

## **A. Preventative/Responsive Policies**

The District supports strong actions, both preventative and responsive, to school violence, weapons possession, alcohol/drug possession and usage, harassment and sexual harassment offenses.

The District must continue to clearly and consistently enforce policies with respect to school violence, weapons possession, alcohol/drug possession and usage, harassment and sexual harassment offenses.

## **B. Discipline Policies**

The District Discipline policy provides a comprehensive framework for the development of individual building Codes of Conduct. The consequences for inappropriate behavior and procedures that may be implemented are stated, as are students' rights and responsibilities, in student handbooks and building Codes of Conduct documents. A procedure is outlined for student complaints and grievances.

## **C. Other Policies**

The Student Safety Policy recognizes the District's responsibility to provide for the safety of all students in school buildings, on school grounds, and during school activities. A commitment to student welfare through medical, psychological, social and other support services is a stated goal of the safety policy. Policies address confidentiality rights and the screening of incoming students. A variety of avenues exist for students to confidentially report situations or behaviors of concern. All staff are required to wear



identification badges. There is a specific visitor policy established in each building. A general procedure for the reporting of suspicious strangers exists.

The promotion of tolerance is evidenced through the anti-discrimination and anti-harassment policies. The development and evaluation of Building Emergency Response Plans and a person to oversee them is strongly supported to maximize safety preparedness and response.

Notes:

- The Board of Education reviews and updates all district policies. The District School Safety Team has also made a general recommendation to review/update all district policies listed in this document related to safety.

# RISK MANAGEMENT

The District is committed to minimizing risks to provide a safe, secure workplace and learning environment for our staff, students and visitors. This commitment is evidenced by the maintenance of its buildings and grounds to maximize safe conditions of the interior and exterior of all school buildings. To ensure the best possible safe environment for people the District designates a Chief Emergency Officer who is responsible for monitoring all of the safety regulations and compliance mandates from the Federal, State, and Local governments, and from the school district's insurance carrier.

## School Safety Audits

Safety audits are conducted on an annual basis by each Building-Level Emergency response team. The checklist includes a walk-through of both the interior and exterior of the building to observe items such as: bus loading and drop off zones, playground equipment, alarm systems, lighting, exit signs, and communication systems. The audit also reviews the enforcement of district policies, staff development, intervention and prevention plans, and the role of local law enforcement, parents, the community, and students on school safety.

## Safety Plans

The District continuously updates the District-Wide School Safety Plan and the Building-Level School Emergency Response Plans. These plans include, but are not limited to, the items below.

1. Criminal Offenses, including bomb and chemical threats, civil disturbances, hostage taking, intrusion, and kidnapping.
2. Natural hazards, including earthquakes, floods, hurricanes and tropical storms, thunderstorms, lightening storms, tornadoes, winter storms.
3. Technological hazards, including air pollution, airplane crash, energy supply loss, gas leak, offsite and onsite hazardous materials, radiological incident, and a water emergency.
4. Fire and explosion, and fire alarm system activation.

5. Systems failure, including building structural failure, electrical system failure, heating system failure, loss of building use, loss of transportation fleet, roof failure or leak, sewage system failure.
6. Medical emergency, including allergic reactions, toxic exposure and school bus accident.
7. Evacuation plans.
8. Shelter plan.
9. "Go Home" plan.

Each plan clearly and concisely states the contingency chain of command and the procedure to be followed. Safe areas both inside and outside have been identified, and some staff have been trained to clear areas for safety in the event students need to be evacuated within the building.

#### Staff Awareness and Training

The District continually evaluates the Emergency Management Plan, making adjustments as needed, reviewing with members of the school community for awareness as appropriate, and implementing training as needed.

#### SEE APPENDICIES:

- (1) School Safety Audit Checklist

# PREVENTION

The Niskayuna Central School District strongly supports prevention programs and strategies that address the physical safety of the school, promote the emotional well being of children, and provide meaningful staff development.

## A. Planning for Physical Safety:

The District will regularly identify safety issues through the collection and evaluation of data and through discussion with members of the school community. Plans for special situations have been developed and publicized. Training is organized and implemented in a timely manner.

All buildings within the District have developed Codes of Conduct that will continue to be fairly and consistently enforced. The Codes are evaluated annually.

In addition, schools provide a variety of prevention programs designed to ensure the safety and well being of our students. Examples include the following:

### Elementary

- Niskayuna Health Education Curriculum
- Traffic Safety Programs
- Fire Safety programs (local fire departments)
- Character education
- Bullying prevention
- Elementary Counseling programming in classrooms
- Banana Splits
- Family Life
- Bus Safety

### Middle School

- Access
- Drug Awareness Training
- Health classes
- Fifth to sixth grade transition
- Study circles
- Banana Splits
- Family Life/Health

## High School

- Natural Helper Program
- Health class, drug awareness training
- Assemblies/presentations
- Extracurricular clubs designed to promote healthy decisions
- Study Circles
- Drug Awareness Training
- NCAP grant to support drug/alcohol prevention
- Transition activities to facilitate movement from 8<sup>th</sup> to 9<sup>th</sup> grade

## B. Staff Training

The District must continue to support consistent training in intentional character development, anti-bullying strategies, anger management techniques, mediation and conflict resolution skills, decision-making skills, and strategies to help children appreciate diversity. The particular need for specific training programs must be determined by each building and reflected in each school's yearly Safe Schools Action Plan.

Areas should include:

- On-going training in the identification of the early warning signs of violence
- Strategies and techniques of de-escalating hostile situations.
- Helping children learn resiliency strategies
- Immediate response roles during a crisis situation and to recognize and intervene in potentially violent situations.
- Training in harassment recognition and response.
- Child abuse/neglect recognition and response.
- Training in recognizing threats by students against themselves and the need to notify parents if a student threatens self-inflicted violence.

In accordance with Project SAVE, staff development opportunities will include school violence prevention and character education training of all staff.

### **C. Emotional and Physical Well-Being**

The District is supportive of a K-12 Comprehensive Health Program that includes a variety of components addressing both the emotional and physical well being of students. Health and safety issues and training are integrated into various curriculums across the grade levels. The supervision of children in a variety of situations throughout the school day and at extracurricular events remains a priority.

The District's K-12 Counseling Program will continue to provide support to students through prevention information appropriate to each developmental level. Collaboration with outside agencies and the development of both student and staff programs to supplement these services will continue to be implemented. Each building organizes Student Support Teams to plan interventions for students and families.

### **D. Communication**

Consistently open, and consistently utilized, lines of communication are essential between all participants in the educational process, and are recognized as being an essential component of prevention. Awareness of the importance of communication must continue to be a priority between different groups within the school community.

All staff are continually updated on available community resources related to student and staff safety and well-being.

Additional training is provided to help the school community understand the differences that can result from a diversity of cultures, and how to develop culturally sensitive and developmentally appropriate materials and activities needs to be provided.

Staff development and training is ongoing; new staff has been trained to help children learn resiliency strategies. The programming for students with special needs strives to address each student's academic, social and emotional needs. Staff will be trained by September 15 of each school year so they are prepared to address an emergency situation.

# INTERVENTION

The District supports a broad array of intervention strategies and programs that positively impact children, and especially address the needs of at-risk children. Appropriate programs are implemented based upon assessments of existing problems and current research. Strategies and practices exist for specific contingencies. Emergency Response Plans and Building Level Response Teams exist within each building; the plan is evaluated annually and reviewed with staff. The school counselors, psychologists, social workers, administrators, and various building teams work to plan collaboratively, and to coordinate with appropriate community agencies to assist children and their families.

Building-Level Emergency Response Plans are designed to respond to emergency situations and coordinate continued actions and assistance. Coordinated response actions with the Niskayuna Police, the Niskayuna and Rexford Fire Departments, Saratoga County Sheriff's Department, and the New York State Police have been instituted. Proactive security measures continue to be implemented with respect to bus safety, school buildings and property, and school events and activities, i.e. the electronic communication devices in areas of the buildings and use of security cameras have been installed.

The District is proactive in staff/student training in a number of safety areas. Training in harassment recognition and response, child abuse/neglect recognition and response, Internet safety, reacting and responding to bomb threats and to other crisis situations is ongoing. The District is committed to staff modeling collaboration and cooperation, respect for individuals and teaching students not to tolerate intolerance and prejudice. In compliance with Project SAVE, staff violence prevention training will be held annually.

All staff is continually updated on available community resources related to student and staff safety and well-being.

Additional training is provided to help the school community understand the differences that can result from a diversity of cultures, and how to develop culturally sensitive and developmentally appropriate materials and activities needs to be provided.

Staff development and training is ongoing; new staff have been trained to help children learn resiliency strategies. The programming for students with special needs strives to address each student's academic, social and emotional needs.

## **Crisis Intervention and Response**

The District has developed clear and concise plans to respond during a variety of crises; the coordination and communication process during crises is continually reviewed with members of the school community.

Each building plan contains information regarding:

- Mandatory reporting of child abuse under the Project SAVE law
- Contacting law enforcement about incident
- Contacting parents about incident
- Disseminating of materials on violence prevention

## **Additional Strategies and Programs**

The District is committed to continued research and implementation of proactive strategies and programs that have been identified through research as effective interventions.



# CURRICULUM and INSTRUCTION

The Niskayuna School District believes that age and developmentally appropriate curriculum designed to promote safety within the schools and within the community is a critical part of its mission. Therefore, this curricula occurs in the classrooms, advocacy programs, extra-curricular and other programs.

## A. Existing Curriculum

The District will regularly review safety curriculum at all levels. The curriculum will promote age and developmentally appropriate strategies designed to keep students safe at school and in the community. The safety and violence prevention curriculum will be designed to include training in the recognition and appropriate response to the warning signs of violence. The District's curriculum will include but not be limited to instruction in:

- Anger management
- Bus safety
- Character Development (1)
- Child safety
- Child sexual abuse prevention
- Conflict resolution
- Emotional health and safety
- Fire safety
- Peer mediation
- Sexual harassment prevention
- Social Skills
- Suicide prevention

## B. Climate for Instruction

All curriculum and subsequent instruction shall encourage tolerance and respect for diversity, the use of good decision-making skills, and promote good emotional health practices. In addition, the District curriculum shall not discriminate on the basis of gender, race, ethnicity, religion, disability, nationality, sexual orientation, or socio-economic status.

(1) See Appendix "Character Education Plan"

### **C. Curriculum Review**

Safety education is a concern of all staff and students. Therefore, all curriculum must be reviewed to ensure that it is consistent with guidelines associated with this plan and with other school curriculum. All new curriculum provided in the district shall be reviewed prior to the beginning of instruction to ensure that its goals and practices are consistent with appropriate safety measures and is consistent with instructions in other areas of school life.

### **D. Instructional Strategies**

The District recognizes that establishing a climate of trust, respect, and cooperation is essential to providing a safe and supportive educational program to students. The District provides opportunities for staff to learn a variety of appropriate strategies for providing instruction to students, and for teaching students to manage anger within a school setting. The District Health Education staff now works cooperatively with the Niskayuna Fire Department to offer CPR instruction for students at the High School.

# STAFF DEVELOPMENT

The District recognizes the importance of staff development in contributing to a safe environment. The District supports ongoing staff development in a variety of areas that impact safety. Staff is trained to address physical as well as emotional safety issues. The District also believes that all adults in the learning environment must model compassion, respect, cooperation, collaboration and conflict resolution. These positive role models must exist within the classroom as well as within the school community. In accordance with the Project SAVE law, character education, violence prevention and intervention is part of annual staff development.

## **Staff Training for Physical Safety**

All staff is trained in the use of the district's Building-Level Emergency Response Plan. This includes the District's fire drill, lockdown, lockout, anthrax and bomb threat procedures. In addition, staff is provided opportunity for CPR/AED training. Administrators have been trained how to de-escalate hostile situations. All staff undergoes annual "Right to Know" training with respect to hazardous materials in the workplace. Periodic training is done to review with staff how to recognize the signs of abuse and neglect, mandated reporter requirements and the procedures for reporting suspected abuse or neglect. Staff also receives annual training on the prevention and reporting of harassment and DASA requirements. All staff is familiar with their building's Crisis Response Plan and know their roles and responsibilities when reacting to a crisis situation. The plan is evaluated each time it is used and adjusted in response to staff suggestions. The district encourages teachers to create classroom environments that invite learning, and to establish clear and concise classroom rules, and be consistent in their application. Staff is trained in playground safety to recognize potentially dangerous situations and to intervene and react appropriately.

The Building-Level Emergency Response Teams will continually review specific details within their Building-Level Emergency Response Plans for responding to a violent or catastrophic incident and rehearse their roles and responsibilities.

Ongoing emergency response training for all school personnel continues; drills for specific emergencies besides fire and bombs will be conducted.

# STUDENT EMPOWERMENT

The District supports a school environment where adults and students share goals and responsibilities. Through a wealth of opportunities, students are empowered to reach their full potential, to become mature, successful, responsible and accountable for their own actions. Additionally, a number of strategies target those students not reached by traditional methods to expand opportunities for participation, involvement and empowerment.

## **Student Leadership**

The District continuously seeks programs and activities that offer all students the opportunities to have pro-social and professional roles in the school and community. Students are involved in school district governance at each school level as appropriate. The student government organizations provide activities for students and are encouraged to deliberate and take action on issues.

## **B. Student Pride and Ownership of the Schools**

Developing student pride in the schools and a sense of ownership is a constant goal. Student Councils are visibly active and representatives are given opportunities to participate in discussions that focus on important issues. School newspapers, school web sites, TV stations and station access have been developed to facilitate better communications.

## **Assisting All Students to Become Empowered**

The District supports strategies that positively motivate the at-risk population. The District is committed to and actively supports a Youth Court within the community.

# SCHOOL CLIMATE

The District recognizes that a positive school climate contributes to safety in a learning environment.

## **Physical Climate**

The buildings and grounds within the district are well maintained and kept clean and attractive to reflect a sense of pride and ownership as well as community support.

## **Climate and School Spirit**

Student achievement is promoted as the primary focus of the school. The accomplishments and efforts of students are valued; each student is encouraged to reach their own potential. A theme within a building or for a particular class is often evidenced. School spirit is evidenced through a variety of avenues, including a number of traditions within each school and the district that are supported by the school community.

The District will continue to seek opportunities for new traditions to increase student involvement, especially activities that would positively impact the at-risk population.

## **Social Climate**

Good citizenship and character are inculcated at all levels through curriculum choices, modeling by staff and counseling techniques. The expectation for mutual respect between members of the school community is communicated and modeled. The staff strives to maintain lines of open communication with all participants in the educational process.

The District continues to support those programs that assist youth with emotional and social development.

## **Leadership Climate**

The visibility and involvement of school leaders, including student leaders, contributes to strong leadership within the district. Clear expectations are communicated frequently to students and staff. There are positive connections between many students, including some who are at-risk, and staff members.

# PARENTAL INVOLVEMENT

The entire school community in Niskayuna has benefited from the positive relationships formed between parents and the school district. The District believes that parents are an integral part of the school community as is evidenced by the high level of parental involvement throughout the District. Parents volunteer to assist in the schools and with school activities and to serve on school and district committees. The Parent Teacher Organizations (PTOs) throughout the district continue to provide parents and educators invaluable and creative connections to assist each other. Additionally, they also sponsor workshops and conferences to help parents become informed about educational issues and parenting skills. The District makes a concerted effort to help families become involved in the education of their children. Frequent positive contacts between staff and parents are encouraged. The District is committed to collaboration between the family, the community and the school, who together must accept the joint responsibility for the safety of the children within the community.

## **Increasing Parental Involvement**

The District continues to be responsive to the needs of parents and the community and will strive to make parents more aware of communication channels.

Parents need to be made very aware of the importance of their involvement at all building levels. The message that parental involvement is an expectation needs to be communicated clearly and frequently. Additionally, parents must model compassion, respect, cooperation, collaboration and conflict resolution for our children.

The District will obtain parental feedback on their perception of opportunities for involvement.

## **Support for Parents**

The District is committed to collaborative efforts to assist parents in the educational and social development of children.

# COMMUNITY LINKAGES

The District believes that the family, school and community must work together and accept joint responsibility for the safety of the children in the community.

## **Connections and Collaboration**

The District is committed to helping families become involved in the education of their children and strives to constantly inform the public of the many positives in the schools. The District works closely with the PTO's, Niskayuna Community Education, Niskayuna Community Action Program (N-CAP) and other community organizations to achieve this goal. The District supports community initiatives to increase the safety of the children in the neighborhoods. The District has established interagency collaboration to ensure that the personnel and resources of the schools and community-based health and human services agencies are combined to deliver meaningful support to students and their families. The District promotes connections between community businesses and organizations with the student population to provide opportunities for practical real world experiences and to teach responsibility.

The District continues its initiative to implement an intergenerational program to strengthen school community ties and to establish a connection which mutually assists young people and Senior citizens.

## **Cooperative Relationship with Law Enforcement**

Additionally, the district works closely with local law enforcement officers to develop strategies and procedures for various contingencies. Law enforcement officers provide a visible presence when appropriate during school hours and at certain school events.

# SAFETY TO AND FROM SCHOOL

The District believes the safety of students traveling to and from school is imperative. The District is committed to ensuring the safety of our children as they move to and from school. The District supports parental and community involvement with the transportation process, and encourages innovative strategies to address safety issues for all.

## A. Bus Transportation

The District believes in adhering strictly to all New York State Laws, requirements of the New York State Department of Transportation, the Department of Motor Vehicles, and the mandates of the State Education Department. This includes the maintenance of the buses, and mandatory emergency bus drills being conducted three times a year. Rules pertaining to student behavior on the bus are incorporated into the discipline policies of the schools. The transportation web site highlights major news, and includes the School Bus Safety rules, including a specific list of items that will not be allowed on the bus.

## B. Bus Drivers

Bus drivers are carefully screened during the hiring process, and receive all required training to keep current with Department of Transportation, Department of Motor Vehicle, and State Education Department regulations.

This includes some anti-violence and conflict resolution training. All bus drivers are an integral part of the school district staff and undergo a variety of training procedures. Bus drivers are evaluated biennially for defensive driving skills, physical health, driving skills, driving record, written test skills and physical performance testing. All bus drivers are finger printed and tested for drugs as required by law.

The District continues to provide bus drivers with training in alternative disciplinary strategies, including conflict resolution techniques.

## C. Non-Bus Riders

The school community must be watchful and aware of the safety issues that affect the non-bus riders, and continue to implement creative strategies to address them. Parents need to instruct their children on the safest route to and from school. Parents, and others who drive their children to school need to be aware of drop off and pick up points that have been established to eliminate congested areas. All who drive to school will be held accountable



for irresponsible driving that puts the safety of others as well as themselves at risk.

# APPENDIX

	<u>Page(s)</u>
• District Policies Related to School Safety	31-34
• School Safety Audit Checklist	Referenced
• Character Education Plan	Referenced
• Project SAVE law Appendices	Referenced
• NYS Safety Contact Information	Referenced
• Dignity for All Students Act	Referenced

## District Policies Relating to School Safety

<u>Policy</u>	<u>Title</u>
8211	Access to Buildings
8120	Accident Prevention & Safety Procedures
4328	Alternative Education Programs
5311	Bill of Student Rights and Responsibilities
8133	Bomb Threats
8110	Buildings & Grounds Inspections & Maintenance
8200	Buildings & Grounds Management.
8414.1	Bus Driver Qualifications & Training
8414	Bus Safety
5311.4	Care of School Property by Students (See 8212)
3410	Code of Conduct on School Property
8123.1	Contagious Diseases
4300	Curriculum
4200	Curriculum Development
4240	Curriculum Guides and Course Outlines
5312.2	Dangerous Weapons in School
5313	Disciplinary Consequences for Students
5471	Drug and Alcohol Testing for School Bus Drivers
9320	Drug-Free Workplace
8134	Emergency Closings

## District Policies Relating to School Safety (continued)

<u>Policy #</u>	<u>Title</u>
8130	Emergency Plans
8132	Fire Drills
8121	First Aid
4315	Health Education
8123	Hygiene Precautions and Procedures
8612	Mail and Delivery Services
5470	Missing Children
3420	Non-Discrimination and Anti-Harassment in the School District
5450.1	Notice of Releases of Sex Offenders
8115	Pesticides and Pest Management
1400	Public Complaints
1500	Public Use of School Facilities
8111	Reporting of Hazards
8100	Safety Program
5330	Searches and Interrogations
7551	Sexual Harassment of Students
9330	Smoking and Use of Tobacco Products
9150	Staff-Student Relations
9610	Staff Substance Abuse

## **District Policies Relating to School Safety** (continued)

<b><u>Policy</u></b>	<b><u>Title</u></b>
5310	Student Discipline
5162	Student Dismissal precautions
5312.1	Student Drug & Alcohol Abuse
5420	Student Health Services
5311.5	Student Personal Appearance Code
5500	Student Records
5450	Student Safety
8410	Student Transportation
5400	Student Welfare
5431	Suicide Prevention
7350	Suspected Child Abuse and Maltreatment
2430	Suspension of Policies
4810	Teaching about Controversial Issues
4317	Teaching about Drugs, Alcohol, Tobacco
4313	Teaching about Religion
8240	Traffic & Parking on School Property
1240	Visitors to the Schools