



The Laboratory Charter School of Communication and Languages

Emergency Preparedness and Response Policy

Code: 805

Status: Active

Adopted: March 29, 1993

Last Revised: February 23, 2023

Purpose

The Board of Laboratory Charter School recognizes its paramount responsibility for ensuring the safety and security of all students, staff, visitors, and facilities. To fulfill this responsibility, the Board commits to providing the necessary infrastructure, equipment, and training to mitigate the effects of all potential hazards and emergencies. These may include, but are not limited to, natural disasters, hazardous materials, fires, weapons, bomb threats, intruders, terrorism, communicable diseases, and pandemics.

This policy emphasizes the importance of advance planning, ongoing training, practice drills, and comprehensive implementation as essential components in safeguarding the school community. **[22 PA Code 10.24]**

Authority

Laboratory Charter School, in cooperation with the Pennsylvania Emergency Management Agency (PEMA) and the county Emergency Management Agency, shall develop and implement a comprehensive disaster response and emergency preparedness plan. This plan shall be consistent with PEMA guidelines, as well as other applicable state and federal requirements. **[35 Pa. C.S.A. 7701]**

The Board shall ensure compliance with all relevant regulations and guidelines issued by the Pennsylvania Department of Health, the Pennsylvania Department of Education, and local law enforcement agencies. **[24 P.S. 1301-B]**

Pursuant to state law, the Board mandates that emergency preparedness drills, emergency evacuation exercises, and school security drills be conducted regularly to ensure the readiness of students and staff. **[24 P.S. 1517; 24 P.S. 1518]**

Definitions

- **School Security Drill:** A planned exercise designed to practice procedures for responding to an emergency situation. This may include, but is not limited to, scenarios involving acts of terrorism, armed intruders, or other violent threats. [24 P.S. 1302.1-A]
- **School Safety and Security Assessment:** A strategic evaluation of the school's facilities and programs aimed at identifying potential safety and security threats. [24 P.S. 1303-B]

Delegation of Responsibility

The Superintendent or the Superintendent's designee is responsible for collaborating with key stakeholders—parents/guardians, students, staff, community agencies, local law enforcement, and first responders—in the development and implementation of the school's emergency preparedness plan. [24 P.S. 1303-A]

The Superintendent or designee shall also establish and maintain a communication system to promptly notify parents/guardians of any evacuation or sheltering procedures, and to alert the school community when necessary. [24 P.S. 1517]

By April 10 each year, the Superintendent shall certify that all required emergency evacuation drills and school security drills have been conducted in compliance with the law. [24 P.S. 1517]

In accordance with state law and regulations, the Superintendent shall execute a memorandum of understanding (MOU) with each local police department that has jurisdiction over school property. [22 PA Code 10.11; 24 P.S. 1303-A]

The Board directs the Superintendent or designee to periodically complete a School Safety and Security Assessment in compliance with legal requirements, based on the needs of the school and the availability of funding and resources. [24 P.S. 1303-B]

Guidelines

Emergency Planning

The emergency preparedness plan shall be accessible in every building of Laboratory Charter School, reviewed annually, and modified as necessary. Copies of the plan shall be shared with the county Emergency Management Agency, local police departments, and local fire departments that have jurisdiction over school property. The school must obtain assurances from these agencies that the plan will be safeguarded and maintained confidentially. [22 PA Code 10.24]

Information regarding the emergency preparedness plan shall be communicated appropriately to students, parents/guardians, staff, the community, and other relevant stakeholders. [35 Pa. C.S.A. 7701]

By September 30 of each year, the school shall compile and provide all required information to assist local police and fire departments in responding to an emergency. In the event of an emergency or disaster, this information shall be immediately deployed to the Incident Command Post. **[24 P.S. 1303-A]**

School facilities, including buses and other transportation vehicles owned or leased by the school, shall be made available to local, county, and state officials for emergency planning and exercises. **[24 P.S. 1501]**

Continuity of Student Learning and Core Operations

In the event of an emergency, local, county, or state officials may require that school facilities be made available to serve as mass-care facilities. School-owned buses and other transportation vehicles may also be utilized by these officials. The Superintendent or designee shall determine whether to close schools or suspend the education program to protect the health and safety of students and staff. **[35 Pa. C.S.A. 7701]**

State officials may direct schools to close in order to mitigate the spread of infection or illness during designated emergencies. **[35 Pa. C.S.A. 7301 et seq.]**

The emergency preparedness plan shall include provisions for the continuity of student learning during school closings or periods of excessive absenteeism. Alternatives for maintaining instruction may include web-based lessons, mailed assignments, and other activities that meet the instructional day requirements under the law. **[24 P.S. 520.1; 24 P.S. 1506; 22 PA Code 11.2]**

The continuity of core operations, such as payroll and ongoing communication with staff, students, and parents/guardians, shall also be addressed in the emergency preparedness plan. **[24 P.S. 520.1]**

Education and Training

Students and staff shall receive instruction and practice on how to appropriately respond to emergency situations. Regular drills shall be conducted to ensure familiarity with emergency procedures. **[24 P.S. 1517]**

Effective infection control and prevention education shall be continuously promoted, including practices such as frequent handwashing and proper cough/sneeze etiquette, to limit the spread of germs. **[24 P.S. 1303-B; Pol. 203]**

The school shall provide mandatory training for all staff on school safety and security in accordance with state law and the standards set by the state's Safety and Security Committee. Training areas may include:

- Situational awareness **[24 P.S. 1302-E]**
- Trauma-informed approaches **[Pol. 146.1]**
- Behavioral health awareness **[24 P.S. 1302-E]**

- Suicide and bullying awareness [**Pol. 249; Pol. 819**]
- Substance use awareness [**Pol. 227; Pol. 351**]
- Emergency training drills (fire, natural disaster, active shooter, hostage situations, and bomb threats) [**24 P.S. 1517**]
- Identification and recognition of student behavior that may indicate a threat to safety [**24 P.S. 1302-E; Pol. 236.1**]

This training shall count toward the professional education requirements, in compliance with state law and the school's Professional Education Plan. [**24 P.S. 1205.2**]

Employees are required to complete a minimum of three (3) hours of safety and security training every five (5) years. [**24 P.S. 1205.7**]

Required Drills

- **Emergency Preparedness Drill:** Annually, all school buildings shall conduct a disaster response or emergency preparedness plan drill in compliance with legal requirements. [**22 PA Code 10.24**]
- **Fire Drills:** Each school building shall conduct fire drills at least once a month during the school year, as mandated by law. [**24 P.S. 1517; 24 P.S. 1518**]
- **School Security Drills:** These drills shall be conducted while school is in session, with students present. School security drills may substitute for a fire drill in the month they are conducted. The Superintendent or designee may conduct up to two additional school security drills each year in place of the required fire drills. [**24 P.S. 1302.1-A**]

The Superintendent or designee shall oversee the instruction and training of students and staff in procedures for conducting school security drills and responding to emergencies. The local law enforcement and emergency management agency shall be notified prior to conducting these drills, and parents/guardians shall be informed in advance of any scheduled school security drill. [**24 P.S. 1517**]

- **Bus Evacuation Drills:** Bus evacuation and safety drills shall be conducted at least twice a year, in compliance with legal requirements. [**75 Pa. C.S.A. 4552**]

Safe2Say Something Program

The Board directs the Superintendent or designee to develop procedures for assessing and responding to reports received through the Safe2Say Something anonymous reporting program, in accordance with the law. The procedures shall establish a framework for school administration and staff to respond to reports, coordinate with the county emergency dispatch center(s) and local law enforcement, and ensure the safety and security of students, staff, and school facilities. [**24 P.S. 1303-D**]

Legal References

- **22 PA Code 10.24** (School Emergency Preparedness Plans)
- **24 P.S. 1517** (Emergency Evacuation Drills)
- **24 P.S. 1518** (Fire Drills)
- **35 Pa. C.S.A. 7701** (Emergency Management Services Code)
- **24 P.S. 1301-B** (School Safety and Security)
- **24 P.S. 1303-B** (School Safety and Security Assessment)
- **24 P.S. 1303-A** (Memorandum of Understanding with Local Law Enforcement)
- **35 Pa. C.S.A. 7301 et seq.** (Pennsylvania Emergency Management Agency Act)
- **24 P.S. 520.1** (Continuity of Education)
- **20 U.S.C. 7112** (Safe and Drug-Free Schools and Communities Act)
- **20 U.S.C. 7118** (Comprehensive School Safety Initiative)
- **24 P.S. 1205.2** (Professional Education Requirements)
- **24 P.S. 1205.7** (School Safety and Security Training)
- **24 P.S. 1302-E** (Behavioral Health Awareness)
- **24 P.S. 1302.1-A** (School Security Drills)
- **24 P.S. 1303-D** (Safe2Say Something Program)
- **75 Pa. C.S.A. 4552** (Bus Evacuation Drills)
- **Pol. 203** (Health Services and Procedures)
- **Pol. 146.1** (Trauma-Informed Approach)
- **Pol. 227** (Substance Abuse)
- **Pol. 236.1** (Threat Assessment)
- **Pol. 249** (Bullying/Cyberbullying)
- **Pol. 351** (Drug and Alcohol Testing)
- **Pol. 819** (Suicide Awareness, Prevention, and Response)