

# Genesee Community Charter School

## District-wide Safety Plan

**DRAFT**

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School Leader

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## **Genesee Community Charter School**

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The Genesee Community Charter School (GCCS) Board of Trustees is committed to providing every student the physical environment within which to study, learn, and grow to the best of his/her ability.

To address threats and minimize the effects of violent incidents and/or emergencies and to facilitate the coordination of the School with local and county resources in the event of such incidents and emergencies, the State of New York has enacted the Safe Schools Against Violence in Education (SAVE) Law. This Component of the Save Law (Section 2801-1 of the Education Law of the State of New York, Section 155.17) requires the Board of Education of every School District within the State, however created, to adopt and amend a comprehensive District-Wide School Safety Plan that addresses crisis intervention and prevention, emergency response and management.

This Plan was developed by a District-Wide School Safety Team established by the School Leader and the GCCS Board of Trustees in collaboration with students, parents, teachers, administrators, school safety personnel, legal counsel, local law enforcement and emergency response agencies.

The School Leader and the GCCS Board of Trustees support the SAVE legislation and encourage and advocate on-going School-wide cooperation and support of Project SAVE. The School pledges to be vigilant and progressive in the arena of school safety, and to ensure a safe environment for all staff and students. The School reviews policies and practices annually to ensure the needs of the building are being addressed.

Below please find links to a parent resource for additional information.

**Genesee Community Charter School Discipline Policy and Code of Conduct:**

<https://www.gccschool.org/wp-content/uploads/2020/07/Attachment-D-GCCS-Discipline-Policy-and-Code-of-Conduct-4-10-19-1.pdf>

**Genesee Community Charter School DASA Website and Communication:**

<https://www.gccschool.org/about/dignity-for-all-students-act-dasa/>

**Genesee Community Charter School Comprehensive Safety Webpage:**

<https://www.gccschool.org/about/school-safety/>

Shannon M. Hillman, School Leader

**SECTION I  
GENERAL CONSIDERATIONS AND PLANNING GUIDELINES**

**A. Purpose and Statutory Authority**

The District-Wide School Safety Plan was developed pursuant to Commissioner's Regulation 155.17, which became effective March 27, 2001. This Regulation requires each public school district and BOCES to develop a District-Wide school safety plan regarding crisis intervention and emergency response and management. The Commissioner's Regulation further requires school districts and BOCES to develop their plans in consultation with appropriate state and local emergency management agencies.

**B. Chief Emergency Officer**

The Board of Trustees has designated the GCCS School Leader as the chief emergency officer whose duties shall include, but not be limited to:

- Coordination of the communication between school staff, law enforcement, and other first responders;
- 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;
- Ensure staff understanding of the district-wide school safety plan;
- Ensure the completion and yearly update of building-level emergency response plans for each school building;
- Assist in the selection of security related technology and development of procedures for the use of such technology;
- Coordinate appropriate safety, security, and emergency training for district and school staff, including required training in the emergency response plan;
- Ensure the conduct of required evacuation and lock-down drills in all district buildings as required by Education Law section 807; and
- Ensure the completion and yearly update of building-level emergency response plans by the dates designated by the commissioner.

**C. Identification of School Teams**

At the direction of the GCCS Board of Trustees, the School Leader recommended for its approval a District-Wide Safety Team charged with the development and maintenance of the District-Wide School Safety Plan. The GCCS District-Wide School Safety Team consists of the following members:

Shannon Hillman	School Leader
Maureen Milke	Coordinator of School Operations
Lisa O'Malley	Curriculum Coordinator
Allison Schultes	Board of Trustees Representative
Jennifer DeFranco-Morales	Teacher Representative
Sean Ballantic	Parent, Fire Department
Lauren Grimm	Social Worker

Sharon Fuentes  
Larry Coley  
Thomas Gleason  
Carey Sisson

School Nurse  
Head of RMSC Security  
Director of RMSC Facilities  
Director of the RMSC Preschool

#### **D. Concept of Operations**

This Comprehensive District-Wide Safety Plan includes at a minimum:

- 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;
- Policies and procedures for responding to acts of violence by students, teachers, other school personnel as well as visitors to the school, including consideration of zero-tolerance policies for school violence; and
- A description of the duties of school safety personnel, 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.

Genesee Community Charter School is located in one building on the campus of the Rochester Museum and Science Center (RMSC). As its own entity, the school also serves as a district. However, key RMSC personnel are included in the District-Wide Safety Plan and serve on the Safety Team to ensure safe and effective protocols and procedures when responding to implied or direct threats or acts of violence by students, teachers, other school personnel as well as visitors to the school.

This Comprehensive District-Wide Safety Plan is directly linked to the individual Building-Level Emergency Management Operations Plan. Protocols reflected in the District-Wide School Safety Plan guide the development and implementation of the individual Building-Level Emergency Management Plan.

In the event of an emergency or violent incident, the initial response to all emergencies will be by the Building-Level Emergency Response Team.

Upon activation of the Emergency Response Team, the School Leader or his/her designee will be notified and, where appropriate, local emergency officials will be notified.

Additional city, county and state resources could supplement the District efforts through existing protocols or emergency response actions, including post incident response.

#### **E. Plan Review and Public Comment**

Pursuant to Commissioner's Regulation Section 155.17 (e)(3), this plan is made available for public comment at least 30 days prior to its formal adoption by the GCCS Board of Trustees.

The District-Wide Plan is adopted by the GCCS Board of Trustees only after at least one public hearing that provides for the participation of school personnel, parents, students and any other interested parties.

Full copies of the District-Wide School Safety Plan are posted on the School website within 30

days of adoption.

This plan is reviewed by the District-Wide School Safety Team on at least an annual basis and updated as needed. The required annual review is completed on or before July 1 of each year after its adoption by the GCCS Board of Trustees. A copy of the plan is available in the School's Office at 657 East Avenue, Rochester, New York.

While linked to the District-Wide School Safety Plan, the Building-Level Emergency Response Plans shall be confidential and shall not be subject to disclosure under Article 6 of the Public Officers Law or any other provision of law in accordance with Education Law Section 2801-a.

## SECTION II PREVENTION, INTERVENTION, AND RESPONSE TO THREATS OR ACTS OF VIOLENCE

### A. Prevention

GCCS believes that the prevention of emergency situations is critical to maintaining a safe, orderly, and productive learning environment for students. GCCS employs several strategies for the prevention of violence and threats of violence by members of the school community.

GCCS uses Positive Behavior Intervention and Support (PBIS), a set of practices that improve behavior management, use data for making behavior-related decisions, provide professional development opportunities, and employ evidence-based instructional strategies. PBIS strategies help to improve behavioral and academic outcomes by improving school climate, preventing problem behavior, increasing learning time, promoting positive social skills, and delivering effective behavioral interventions and supports.

GCCS has developed a tiered system of supports and interventions to address students' emotional regulation. These supports and interventions include:

- Lessons on mindfulness and racial equity
- Social problem solving conferences
- Problem Solving Conferences
- Individual Written Agreement
- Individual Crisis Management Plan
- Individual Counseling
- Functional Behavior Assessment
- Behavior Intervention Plan

The following sections describe approaches and practices that make up GCCS's PBIS. Additional information can be found in GCCS's *Academic and Emotion Regulation Intervention* handbook.

#### Responsive Classroom

GCCS uses *Responsive Classroom*, a proactive approach to helping students build academic and social-emotional competencies day in and day out. *Responsive Classroom* is a way of teaching that emphasizes social, emotional, and academic growth in a strong and safe school community using practical strategies for classroom management, conflict resolution, peer mediation, and the development of social skills.

#### Caring Community Plan

GCCS has established a *Caring Community Plan*, which describes our code of conduct and discipline procedures. The *Caring Community Plan* is shared with staff and families each year, and, upon registration and re-enrollment, student and parent signatures are required to indicate a commitment to abide by and uphold the tenets of the plan.

#### Character Education

GCCS has defined a set of seven character traits that are actively taught and reinforced

throughout each day. Character learning targets are included in expedition plans and in daily lessons. Students reflect upon and assess their progress toward meeting character targets and teachers assess character targets on student progress reports. Character traits are regularly the focus of crew work, class meetings, and weekly whole-school Community Circles. Through their study of history, students examine the character traits demonstrated by key historical figures, e.g. Frederick Douglass and Susan B. Anthony.

### Anti-bullying Curriculum

Second Step's anti-bullying social-emotional curriculum is taught each year at each grade level. The curriculum addresses issues of relational aggression and provides strategies for preventing, reporting, and addressing incidents of bullying.

### Improved Communication

GCCS makes every effort to continually improve communication among school staff, between staff and students, and among students. Ongoing positive and productive communication allows us to reduce and avoid situations that may become volatile and harmful.

GCCS has developed various strategies for the improvement of communication among students, and between students and staff. Students are encouraged to report school violence and any symptoms of potentially violent behavior to the School Leader, counselor, teachers, psychologists or any other mentor without fear of retaliation. Students are also encouraged to report alleged cases of student harassment or discrimination by students or staff to an adult in the school such as an administrator, teacher, or counselor. This is covered under the Dignity for All Students Act (DASA).

- Maintaining an electronic reporting system for reporting school incidents of school violence and inappropriate behaviors;
- Maintaining a system for anonymous reporting for areas of concern;
- Annual training and staff development on the school safety plan and policies. Skills are developed in the following areas: violence prevention and intervention, conflict resolution, recognition of early warning signs of potentially violent behavior, and procedures to assist victims of school violence. Information is disseminated through handbook distribution and staff meetings; and
- GCCS also provides parents of our students and community members opportunities to understand the District's safety initiatives as well as opportunities to serve on committees, attend meetings on school safety and assist in school safety programs.

### Early Detection of Potentially Violent Behaviors

The Social Worker and the Intervention Team work in conjunction with parents, administrators, and teachers in researching, identifying and disseminating information regarding potentially violent behaviors. Additionally, the school works closely with in-school and external counselors to assist students who have exhibited violent behaviors and their families. As mandated reporters, staff members have the authority to contact Child Protective Services (CPS) to refer a student if further investigation is needed.

The United States Department of Education's "Early Warning, Timely Response" document presents a checklist of early warning signs that may be used to signal that a student may pose a threat of violence to self and others. These emotional and behavioral signs, when viewed in

context, can signal a need for intervention. GCCS staff members are trained to watch for these signs, which may include:

- Social withdrawal;
- Excessive feelings of isolation;
- Excessive feelings of rejection;
- Being the victim of violence;
- Feeling of being picked on;
- Low school interest or poor academic performance;
- Expression of violence in writing or drawing;
- Uncontrolled anger;
- Patterns of impulsive, chronic hitting and bullying;
- History of discipline problems;
- History of violent and aggressive behavior;
- Intolerance for differences and prejudicial attitudes;
- Alcohol and drug usage;
- Affiliation with gangs; and
- Inappropriate access/use of firearms Serious threats of violence.

If any adult believes that intervention for a student is warranted, they report the matter to the School Leader, who calls a meeting of the Social Emotional Intervention Team and parents to discuss the case and make appropriate crisis-management plans and referrals.

#### School Security

GCCS is a secured building accessible only through locked doors via key or magnetic key cards provided to RMSC and GCCS staff. GCCS visitors must announce their arrival at the locked GCCS entrance door (equipped with a closed-circuit TV) and are buzzed in with the expectation of signing into the River Room on the lower level. Signs are posted to direct visitors to the River Room which is a direct pathway from the front entrance. GCCS and RMSC staff have been instructed and trained to ask unfamiliar persons if they can be assisted and are escorted to the River Room when necessary. Visitors are announced by telephone to the classroom teacher before being escorted to the classroom by school personnel.

Campus security is provided by the Rochester Museum and Science Center. Security personnel of the RMSC are required to have a background check and are hired in accordance with RMSC personnel policies. RMSC Security generally makes two rounds each school day to ensure the building is secure and orderly. The River Room and office staff have been provided two two-way radios for direct communication with RMSC Security and Facilities Personnel. Additionally the GCCS support staff has building-specific two-way radios for efficient communication throughout the school.

GCCS staff utilizes the CrisisGo Application on personal and school-provided electronic devices to communicate when there is an emergency that requires swift response. The RMSC Security, the Director of Facilities and Operations, and the RMSC Preschool Director all have access to the CrisisGo Application and therefore will be alerted when there is an emergency on campus that may impact district operations.



## **B. Intervention and Response**

When a threat of violence, act of violence, or other emergency situation occurs, GCCS has a building-level plan that spells out specific roles, responsibilities, and the sequence of events that follow. The general principles of the School's intervention and emergency response plan are provided here. Additional information can be found in GCCS's Building-level Emergency Response Plan and the School's *Academic and Emotion Regulation Intervention* handbook.

### Notification of Key School Personnel

If a threat of violence, act of violence, or other emergency situation occurs, the School Leader is notified immediately. The School Leader alerts the Social Worker and/or the Restorative Practice Coach, School Safety Team and Emergency Response Team as needed, who immediately go to the scene of the incident to assess and isolate the situation and begin intervention. The Coordinator of School Operations remains in the main office to facilitate communication among staff, parents, the RMSC, and emergency response personnel as needed. The School Leader also follows emergency response protocols to inform school personnel affected or at risk of being affected by the situation. Specific emergency response protocols are described in the Building-level Emergency Response Plan.

### Notification of RMSC Security

If a threat, act of violence, or emergency requires the assistance of RMSC, the School Leader or his/her designee will phone or use the two-way radio to alert RMSC Security. RMSC may provide wheelchairs, first aid support, guidance for approaching emergency vehicles, and assistance with external communication.

### Notification of Emergency Personnel

If warranted, the School Leader or his/her designee will call 911 to request immediate assistance to address a situation. RMSC will also be notified so that security personnel may manage campus foot and vehicle traffic and direct emergency vehicles.

### Exit, Shelter-in-Place, Lockout, and Lockdown Procedures

When a threat of danger to students and staff occurs within the School or in the School's vicinity, it may become necessary to evacuate the building or campus. The School has developed plans for building, campus, and neighborhood evacuation, which are described in the Building-level Emergency Response Plan.

If a threat of danger occurs in the School's vicinity, it may become necessary to prevent admission to the school by outside persons, or lock down the school to prevent internal movement through the building. The School has developed plans for shelter-in-place, lockout, and lockdown, which are described in the Building-level Emergency Response Plan.

### Intervention for Bomb Threat

If a bomb threat is received by telephone, the respondent uses the bomb threat card located near each telephone and collects as much information as possible including all details, including background noises.

If a bomb threat is received by note, the respondent carefully reads the note but minimizes touching it; it will become police evidence.

- The respondent immediately notifies the School Leader, who activates Emergency Response Plan.
- The GCCS Emergency Response Team and RMSC security staff sweeps evacuation routes from the school to designated meeting sites. Under no circumstances should any suspicious devices be touched or moved.
- The School Leader activates the GCCS Evacuation Plan, using primary or secondary routes to minimize proximity to threat. See the Building-level Emergency Response Plan for additional information.
- If the threat is an RMSC campus-wide incident, the GCCS Emergency Response Team will evacuate students to a secondary sheltering site using the same protocols outlined in the Evacuation Plan.
- If the local Emergency Response Team, in conjunction with the GCCS Emergency Response Team, has determined the school or RMSC to be “sanitized,” students will be escorted back to their classrooms.

#### Intervention for Intruder

- Upon receipt of threat, the observer immediately contacts the Main Office and School Leader, who activates the Building-level Emergency Response Team and Emergency Response Plan.
- If a stranger without a RMSC, GCCS, or visitor badge fails to identify him/herself, the observer immediately contacts the Main Office and School Leader. The School Leader notifies RMSC Security and calls 911 to report an intruder,
- If necessary and dependent on the circumstances, the School Leader may choose to activate lockdown procedures as described in the Building-level Emergency Response Plan.

#### Intervention for Hostage-taking, Missing Child, and Kidnapping

- In the event of a hostage, missing child, or kidnapping situation, the observer notifies the Coordinator of School Operations and School Leader immediately.
- The School Leader or his/her designee alerts the RMSC Security and sends a “Crisis Go General Alert.”
- The School Leader activates the procedures outlined in the Building-level Emergency Response Plan.

#### Assistance from Local Officials

In any incident, the School Leader, with the guidance of the School Safety Team, will determine if additional assistance is needed from local agencies or officials, for example social services, grief counseling, or health intervention. The School Leader or his/her designee will contact the appropriate agencies or officials to request advice and assistance.

### **C. Post-Incident Response**

#### Zero-Tolerance Policy

GCCS maintains a zero-tolerance policy regarding aggressive physical contact between children. Hitting, scratching, pushing, kicking, and other physically harmful behaviors are strictly forbidden and are cause for immediate school leadership involvement and potential suspension.

Teasing, name-calling, and bullying are also grounds for removal from school or suspension at the School Leader's discretion. Our school houses a DASA (Dignity for All Students Act) Coordinator who investigates bullying cases. We understand that occasional incidents may occur, but we maintain zero tolerance for patterns of targeted misuse of power and/or extreme cases.

Every discipline situation offers opportunity for growth. Upon an incident of physical contact or bullying, students will spend time reflecting on the "broken" relationship and consider ways to repair the situation. Suspension may occur in school or outside of school depending on the severity and the student's readiness for rectifying the situation.

#### Notification of Parents and Community

In the event of a violent incident or emergency at school that affects members of a whole class or the whole school, parents will receive written notification of the incident, how the incident was reported and handled, and how the recovery actions following the incident will be coordinated consistent with the school's recovery plan. Local television stations may be asked to broadcast information regarding the nature of the incident and recovery plans as well as information regarding school closings. GCCS will utilize School Messenger to send timely notifications by phone, text messages, and emails regarding the incident if warranted.

Incidents involving threats or physical contact between two students will be reported to parents of both parties in writing and/or by telephone by the School Leader or classroom teacher or staff member who witnessed the incident.

There may be times when students pose a significant risk to themselves and others. Students exhibiting potentially violent behaviors or who have a history of violence, will be made known in writing to classroom teachers in their cumulative file (unless it is a result of a handicapping condition, in which case such information will be kept separate from the student's cum file). This information may also be shared with the School Leader and service providers working directly with the student. At no time will the identity of the student be made public or known to other students or families in the School.

#### Social-Emotional Learning Team

GCCS has a Social-Emotional Team consisting of the school Social Worker and Restorative Practice Coach. Together they provide proactive approaches to support social-problem solving and emotion regulation strategies. Each classroom has a designated space for students to reset and recover (R&R) when they are feeling emotionally charged or unregulated. The SEL Team supports the training of teachers and students to effectively utilize these designated classroom spaces. For students in a heightened emotional state, the office has a recovery room available. A member of the SEL team will supervise the student while providing supports to help them recover from their dysregulated state.

#### Restorative Justice

Restorative Justice is a philosophy based on a set of principles that guide the response to conflict and harm. GCCS is implementing practices of Restorative Justice, guided by a Restorative Practice Coach.

Restorative Justice's three main goals are:

- Accountability: Restorative Justice strategies provide opportunities for wrongdoers to

- be accountable to those they have harmed, and enable them to repair the harm they caused to the extent possible.
- School Community Safety: Restorative Justice recognizes the need to keep the school community safe through strategies that build relationships and empower the community to take responsibility for the well-being of its members.
  - Competency Development: Restorative Justice seeks to increase the pro-social skills of those who have harmed others, address underlying factors that lead youth to engage in delinquent behavior, and build on strengths in each young person.

If appropriate, following a threat or violent incident, the affected members of the school community meet with the Restorative Practice Coach to work through the process and ensure that the issue is satisfactorily resolved.

#### Debrief Meetings

Following a threat or violent incident, the School Leader convenes a meeting with the social worker, affected individuals, and other members of the Safety Team to debrief the incident and the effectiveness of the school's response. Policies and procedures are reviewed for possible clarification and modification.

#### Long-term Intervention

Following a threat or violent incident, the School Leader, social worker, teachers, and special education coordinator may meet to determine if long-term intervention in the form of counseling, behavior plans, or special education. Additional information can be found in the School's *Academic and Emotion Regulation Intervention* handbook.

### **SECTION III STAFF AND STUDENT TRAINING**

In accordance with Project SAVE requirements, the School conducts annual training programs for staff members in violence prevention and intervention. This on-going training and staff development includes GCCS's safety and emergency plan and its policies on discipline and crimes committed on school grounds and/or against school staff.

By October 1 of each school year, the School Leader provides written information to all students and staff about emergency procedures. Information about safety policies and procedures, including emergency drills, is provided in the staff handbook.

#### **A. Staff Training**

The following training is provided annually for staff:

- Responsive Classroom Training - Provided to new staff; elements, such as conflict resolution and social problem-solving, is reinforced throughout the year
- Training on reporting of threats and conflicts, weapons, and the roles and responsibilities of all persons involved in the school setting - Provided to all staff prior to the launch of each school year
- Training on the use of CrisisGo, the emergency communication system for staff
- Active Shooter training - provided bi-annually by the Emergency Response Team's Police representative
- Mental Health, Suicide Prevention, Bullying - Provided by the Social Emotional Learning Team to all staff prior to the launch of each school year using resources from the New York State Office of Mental Health
- First Aid, CPR, AED, Epi-pen, and Universal Precautions Training - Provided bi-annually by for all staff by the school nurse and Red Cross
- Restorative Justice Training - Provided to all staff by Restorative Practice Coach prior to the launch of each school year
- Second Step Training Anti-Bullying Curriculum Training - Reviewed with all staff prior to the launch of each school year
- Training on conflict resolution - Provided for members of the GCCS Safety/Wellness Team prior to the launch of each school year
- Training on bomb threat identification and response - Provided for members of the GCCS Safety/Wellness Team prior to the launch of each school year
- Active shooter, Shelter-in-place, Lockout, Lockdown, Hold-in-Place Training - provided for all staff prior to the launch of each school year
- Training on DASA procedures - provided for all staff prior to the launch of each school year
- Sexual Harassment Prevention Training - provided annually by Asure Consulting, the Human Resources Firm provided to the school.

#### **B. Student Training**

The following training is provided annually for students:

- Emergency procedures such as evacuation and lockdown drills - Provided to all students prior to whole-school drills; notification is provided to families through the

- school's bi-monthly newsletter for continued reinforcement from home
- Planning for fire and evacuation emergencies for both home and school - Conducted during a whole-school Community Circle in October, led by the Emergency Response Team's First Responder
  - Early Dismissal Training - notification is sent to families during and prior to the annual Early Dismissal Drill to plan for situations in which students are sent home early due to school closure including aftercare plans.
  - Second Step Anti-Bullying Curriculum and Training - Provided to students in the fall of each year.
  - Zones of Regulation Training - Provided for all students each September
  - Hygiene Training - Provided to all students each September to help students prevent the spread of viruses through proper hand-washing and respiratory care.

## **SECTION IV EMERGENCY DRILLS**

GCCS conducts the following mandated emergency drills throughout the year:

- Eight evacuation drills are conducted at different times of the school day; six evacuation drills are completed by December 31 each school year
- Four lock-down drills; two lock-down drills are completed by December 31 each school year
- An additional drill is conducted to practice evacuation procedures from Community Circle
- One early dismissal drill is conducted each school year that is no more than 15 minutes before the normal dismissal time; Procedures include notifying parents and guardians at least one week prior to the drill
- The usefulness of the communications and transportation system during emergencies is tested annually.

