

Uncommon  
Schools

**EXCELLENCE BOYS**

# **School Safety Plan & Emergency Response Procedures**

**2014-2015**

# Basic Information

Excellence Boys Charter School of Bedford Stuyvesant  
225 Patchen Avenue  
Brooklyn, NY 11233

Telephone Number: (718) 638-1830  
Fax Number: (718) 638-2548

Head of School: Samantha Tweedy ([stweedy@excellencecharter.org](mailto:stweedy@excellencecharter.org))  
Elementary Academy Director of Operations: Felix Li ([fli@excellencecharter.org](mailto:fli@excellencecharter.org))  
Middle Academy Director of Operations: Donnie Stuart  
([dstuart@excellencecharter.org](mailto:dstuart@excellencecharter.org))

Total number of students enrolled on site: 620

## INTRODUCTION

Excellence Boys Charter School considers emergencies and violent incidents very serious occurrences and responds to these events expeditiously. The School Safety Plan is designed to address the needs of our particular school, our urban location, and the young ages of our students. The State of New York has enacted the Safe Schools Against Violence in Education (SAVE) law. Excellence supports the SAVE legislation and intends to diligently abide by the recommendations put forth in the legislation.

## BUILDING INFORMATION

Excellence Boys Charter School is located at 225 Patchen Avenue, Brooklyn, NY. The school occupies a 90,000 square foot, six-story facility that runs the entire block of Patchen between Macon and Macdonough Streets. The building has three stairwells (one central, one on the North wing of the building, and one on the South wing of the building). There is an elevator that serves all six floors of the building:

<b>Basement:</b>	Auditorium and Music Studios
<b>1<sup>st</sup> Floor:</b>	Cafeteria and Classrooms
<b>2<sup>nd</sup> Floor:</b>	Library and Classrooms
<b>3<sup>rd</sup> Floor:</b>	Gymnasium and Classrooms
<b>4<sup>th</sup> Floor:</b>	Art Studio and Science Lab
<b>Roof:</b>	Turf Field

# **SECTION 1: GENERAL CONSIDERATIONS AND PLANNING GUIDELINES**

## **A) PURPOSE**

The Excellence Boys Charter School Safety Plan was developed pursuant to Commissioner's Regulation 155.17. The Head of School initiated the development of this plan and appointed the Directors of Operations to ensure the Plan's implementation and execution.

## **B) IDENTIFICATION OF SCHOOL SAFETY TEAM (Appendix C)**

The Directors of Operations are designated as the primary contacts for Excellence Boys Charter School. When both Directors of Operations are away, the Chain of Command is followed. Please see Appendix A. Every member of our staff is integral to the overall safety of our school. The School Safety Team consists of those listed on the Chain of Command, a parent, and select teachers. During the 2014-2015 school year, Excellence Boys will serve students in Kindergarten-8<sup>th</sup> Grade. Therefore, our students are participants in the Plan but not contributors.

## **C) CONCEPT OF INFORMATION**

The initial response to any emergency will be a process of information gathering by the Directors of Operations in conjunction with members of the Chain of Command for coordination of efforts and communication purposes. Staff members who are not explicitly members of the Chain of Command will supervise students. Local, county, and state police, fire, and other emergency personnel will be enlisted as deemed necessary by circumstances.

The Directors of Operations are recognized as the persons-in-charge and are expected to remain at the determined command site, Excellence's main office located at 225 Patchen Avenue in Brooklyn, NY. All communication is to be coordinated through the Directors of Operations' offices via the school's main number, (718) 638-1830.

## **D) PLAN REVIEW AND PUBLIC COMMENT**

Pursuant to Commissioner's Regulation 155.17 this Plan will be available for public comment at least 30 days prior to its adoption. In addition to distributing this plan to our school community, Excellence will hold a public hearing that allows for the participation of school personnel, parents, and any other interested parties.

The School Safety Plan will be formally adopted by the School's Board of Trustees after approval by the State Education Department. Full copies of the School Safety Plan and any amendments will be submitted to New York State Education Department within 30 days of adoption.

This Plan will be reviewed periodically throughout the year by the School Safety Team. Many of the components of the Plan will be treated as confidential while the non-confidential components will be shared with the public.

A required annual review will be completed on or before July 1 of each year after its adoption. The Plan is an iterative, living document that will be reviewed, modified and updated to comply with current best practices in school safety. A copy of the Plan will be available at 225 Patchen Avenue in Brooklyn, NY.

The school is prepared to effectively coordinate with the wider community in the event of a large scale emergency.

# **SECTION II: RISK REDUCTION/PREVENTION AND INTERVENTION**

## A) PREVENTION AND INTERVENTION STRATEGIES

### *Program Initiatives*

- Excellence Boys Charter School is a “sweat-the-small-stuff” school with an extended school day and year. Our families make a commitment to a rigorous academic program that can only be implemented in a safe and disciplined environment.
- Excellence Boys employs a full time Dean of Students in each Academy who serve as behavior interventionists. The Deans of Students promote positive student behavior, orchestrate the school’s character education program, and handle all discipline situations.
- Excellence Boys utilizes two character education and violence prevention programs. The Heartwood Program is a literature-based curriculum from the Heartwood Institute in Pittsburgh, Pennsylvania, that uses multicultural children’s stories to present seven universal values: courage, loyalty, justice, respect, hope, honesty, and love. Its materials include award-winning books, activity cards, and a teacher’s guide. The Second Step Youth Violence Prevention Program, developed by the Committee for Children, in Seattle, Washington, teaches empathy and problem-solving through the use of picture cards, puppets, and books. The implementation of these programs stems off incidences of violence and disruptive behavior by teaching students positive values and behaviors.
- All students are encouraged to approach any staff whenever they are concerned about their safety, especially if it involves violence or an emergency situation.

### *Training, Drills and Exercises*

- Staff will receive appropriate training in emergency procedures on a regular basis.
- The Safety Team will conduct building-wide fire/evacuation drills twelve times throughout the school year. Each drill will be followed by a meeting of the Safety Team to assess necessary improvements/alterations. Excellence Boys will periodically conduct a test of the Safety Response plan for sheltering or early dismissal. Transportation and communication procedures will be included in the test.
- The Safety Team will conduct building-wide lockdown drills 5 times throughout the school year. Each drill will be followed by a meeting of the Safety Team to assess necessary improvements/alterations.
- There are security guards at Excellence Boys during the school day. Staff members are a constant presence in our hallways. All visitors must announce themselves and be buzzed into the building. All visitors are identified before entering the building and sign in once inside. Fingerprinting and background checks have been conducted on all staff upon hiring.

### *Implementation of School Safety*

- Multiple video cameras are set up throughout the building to monitor all activity inside and outside the facility. All video can be replayed and enhanced through the



surveillance system. The Chain of Command and the appropriate local authorities, if necessary, respond in the event of all alarms being activated.

### ***Vital Education Agency Information***

- Excellence Boys utilizes PowerSchool, a school information system, designed to store extensive information regarding students and employees. PowerSchool tracks our student population, number of staff and key contact information. The ATS system (Automate the Schools) developed by the New York City Department of Education tracks our transportation information.

## **B) EARLY DETECTION OF POTENTIALLY VIOLENT BEHAVIORS**

Excellence Boys teachers and staff receive extensive professional development training, which aides them in identifying and addressing any behavior or emotional issues students may face. Regularly scheduled meetings with teachers provide ample room for staff discussion of any issues as they arise.

Excellence Boys employs a full-time Social Worker who interfaces with families to ensure students are equipped to succeed in school. She also acts a liaison to the wider community and it is her responsibility, along with the Deans of Students, to notify the faculty of any potential behavior problems. The Head of School, Directors of Operations, Academy Principals, Deans of Students, and Social Worker work collaboratively to inform families of the school's efforts to maintain a violence-free community.

## **C) HAZARD IDENTIFICATION**

The following list of potential hazards exist around Excellence Boys Charter School:

- Excellence Boys Charter School
- Community School 21
- Patchen and Ralph Avenues and Malcolm X Boulevard

# SECTION III: RESPONSE

## **A) NOTIFICATION AND ACTIVATION (INTERNAL AND EXTERNAL COMMUNICATIONS)**

In the event of an emergency, the Directors of Operations, the Head of School, the Academy Principals or any other appropriate staff member will notify local law enforcement officials via 911.

New York Police Department and New York Fire Department – 911

In the event of an emergency or threatening event, the Directors of Operations or his designee will activate the Safety Plan and the appropriate local authorities will be contacted. Methods of communication within Excellence Boys include: personal contact, telephone, telephone intercom, cellular telephones, email, and two-way radios.

Notification regarding early dismissals and/or emergency evacuations will be disseminated to the local media via the Directors of Operations. The Directors of Operations, the Head of School, the Academy Principals or their designee will manage all other internal and external communications with the media and other outlets. No employee of Excellence Boys should provide information to the media during or after an emergency unless they have received explicit permission from the Directors of Operations, Head of School or Academy Principals.

Parents, guardians, and persons in parental relationships will be contacted via telephone by teachers and other Excellence Boys staff in the event of an actual emergency.

The Directors of Operations or their designee will notify parents in event of a medical emergency or serious injury to a student.

## **B) SITUATIONAL RESPONSES**

### ***Multi Hazard Response***

#### *Identification of Potential Emergencies*

Excellence Boys believes that multi hazard emergencies could potentially fall into one of the following three categories:

- a) Natural Disasters – hurricanes, severe winter storm, earthquake, floods
- b) Man Made Disasters – plane crash, chemical or hazardous material spill
- c) School Disasters – acts of violence, terrorism, fire, explosion, flooding, or toxic substance release in school

*Identification of Responses to Emergencies*

- a) Early Dismissal – In the event of an emergency, students may be dismissed from school early to ensure their safe departure from the building and travel to their homes. While it can be difficult to coordinate transportation for early dismissals with little advance notice, the Directors of Operations will coordinate with the New York City Department of Education and the Office of Pupil Transportation Services to expedite transportation services. Early dismissal will only be utilized as a response to an emergency if it is determined that all students will reach their homes safely.
- b) Evacuation – It may be appropriate to evacuate the school in an emergency. Evacuation is the optimal response to fire, toxic threats, explosions, some acts of violence, earthquakes or when ordered to do so by law enforcement officials.

The Directors of Operations will determine if the school needs to be evacuated and the Directors of Operations, Head of School, Academy Principals or their designee will announce a “Code Red.” Teachers will bring their class rosters and count their students before leaving the building and once they reach the designated safe area. Teachers will notify the Directors of Operations, Head of School or Academy Principals immediately if students are missing. The Directors of Operations, Head of School, Academy Principals, or their designee will notify local emergency response teams/law enforcement of the emergency. No one will be permitted to re-enter until an “all clear” has been given by the Directors of Operations.

If Excellence Boys must evacuate to an alternative site, students would be taken to the Brooklyn Tabernacle Building at 600 Lafayette Avenue in Brooklyn.

- c) School Closing – School is closed or delayed in opening only when severe weather or other emergency prevents opening the school safely. Depending on the seriousness of a given emergency situation, school may be closed for a designated period of time in order to ensure that the learning environment may be restored to safety. Families and students will be notified of school closings via local media outlets.
- d) Shelter in school – There may be an emergency situation in which it is safer to have students remain in the school past normal school hours rather than evacuating or sending students home. The Directors of Operations or their designee will give explicit instructions as to where students should be located. Teachers will be responsible for their classes and will be held accountable for all students under their supervision.

### ***Response to Acts of Violence: Implied or Direct Threats***

Teachers and staff at Excellence Boys will receive professional development training in conflict resolution and de-escalation of potentially dangerous situations.

The Directors of Operations, Head of School and Academy Principals will be notified immediately of all implied or direct threats. The level of the threat will be determined through information gathering and the Directors of Operations, Head of School, Academy Principals or their designee will contact local law enforcement officials if necessary. The situation will be closely monitored and appropriate adjustments will be carried out as necessary until the threat has dissipated or local law enforcement officials have taken control of the situation.

### ***Responses to Intruder or Other Building Emergency Situation***

- The school's administrative team will be made aware of an emergency or stranger in the building or on campus. The administrator in charge will investigate the situation and determine the extent of the threat.
- If deemed appropriate, the administrator in charge will signal staff, through the use of the telephone intercom to lock down the school.
- Halls and bathrooms are to be cleared of students.
- Students and staff in the cafeteria or gym should remain where they are, close the doors and move to a corner away from the doors
- Classroom staff should
  - (1) Lock and close their doors
  - (2) Keep students away from windows and doors
  - (3) Maintain absolute silence
- The school office contact is responsible to call the authorities for assistance via 911.

### ***Responses to Bomb Threats, Threats of Violence***

- The receiver of the threat should attempt to get all information possible from the caller/suspect.
- Receiver of the threat notifies the Directors of Operations or designee who in turn notifies the Chain of Command. In the absence of both Directors of Operations, the Chain of Command will be utilized. The Directors of Operations will remain in the office to receive further directions. The Head of School's office will be designated as the Command Center.
- The Directors of Operations will have floor plans, spare room keys and all other security materials. The Directors of Operations will initiate (with available staff) a visual search of the hallway for any unusual object. Nothing should be touched. If something out-of-the-norm is found, the staff member will directly report it to the Directors of Operations.
- According to police authorities urgent evacuation is NOT normally needed.
- Evacuation sites can include the gymnasium, the turf field, the auditorium, the cafeteria, another building, city streets, or buses. An external evacuation site and routes to it must be secured before anyone is to move to the area. This mirrors our fire drill procedure of street evacuation. We do not have the luxury of bus garages, as we are an urban location.
- If and once the evacuation is authorized, the Directors of Operations and Head of School will lock all doors to the threatened floor. No public access will be allowed.
- Once all sites have been secured, the Directors of Operations will be notified when to begin the evacuation of the building.
- The Directors of Operations or their designees will announce the evacuation code "Code Red" and evacuation will occur in a prescribed, orderly manner.
- Staff should take attendance information and leave the door open, yet locked. Students should take with them only those possessions that they brought to school.
- Staff should move students to the evacuation site and remain there for further instructions, as they would in a fire drill.
- Maintenance/custodial staff (along with any chain of command staff) will assist police in a room-by-room search. The Directors of Operations should remain in the office to receive information.
- Public communication about the bomb threat will come from the Head of School (or designee) as soon as possible after the conclusion of the incident
  - (4) A letter will be sent home (and mailed later) with the students to explain the event.
  - (5) The staff will receive an email of this letter and, if appropriate, information gained during the threat. Some information may not be divulged due the needs of the law enforcement agencies and their pending investigation.
  - (6) Any information sought by the media will be directed to and given out through the Directors of Operations (or designees).

- The New York City Department of Education and the State Education Department will be notified of the bomb threat.

#### ***Hazardous Chemical/Substance Spill***

- The Directors of Operations (or other designee) notify the chain of command of the situation.
- If warranted, the decision to evacuate the building will be done so by sounding the fire alarm or calling a “Code Red.” Both actions have the same effect. Before an evacuation is conducted, all routes out of the building must be determined to be safe and away from the spill area.
- The local Fire Department and New York State DEC will be immediately notified if deemed a problem beyond the reach and expertise of Safety Team.

#### ***Fire***

- The school has fire drill procedures posted in every room, and drills are tested and practiced 12 times annually. Fire drills are standard evacuations that will also resemble Code Red, known as external evacuation. In almost all instances, fire alarms will sound, as a recognized symbol necessitating evacuation.
- All staff members are involved in assisting children out of building and to designated stations on surrounding streets. Emergency response staff helps secure the building and leave last. The goal of the school is to evacuate in under 2 minutes.

#### ***Communicable Diseases***

- If the school nurse finds that a student shows symptoms of any communicable or infectious disease reportable under the public health law that imposes a significant risk of infection of others in the school, the student should be excluded from the school and sent home immediately in a safe and proper conveyance. The school nurse shall immediately notify a local public health agency of any disease reportable under the public health law.
- Following absence on account of illness or from unknown cause, the school nurse may examine each student returning to a school without a certificate from a local public health officer, a duly licensed physician, physician assistant, or nurse practitioner.
- The nurse may make such evaluations of teachers and any other school employees, school buildings and premises as, in their discretion, they may deem necessary to protect the health of the students and staff.



***Acts of Violence***

Excellence Boys maintains a zero tolerance policy for violence by students, staff and visitors. Students adhere to a strict Code of Conduct published in the Student Handbook. Child Abuse reporting procedures will be followed for all acts of violence committed against students.

Should an act of violence occur, the Directors of Operations and/or their designee will determine the severity of the situation. The immediate threat area will be isolated and the school will be evacuated if necessary. The level of the threat will be determined through information gathering and the Directors of Operations or their designee will contact local law enforcement officials if necessary. The situation will be closely monitored and appropriate adjustments will be carried out as necessary until the threat has dissipated or local law enforcement officials have taken control of the situation.

***Response Protocols***

The Chain of Command – Appendix A – will be followed in response to all emergencies. The Directors of Operations, Head of School, Academy Principals or their designee will ultimately make decisions based on input from School Safety Team.

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

The Directors of Operations and/or their designee will determine what outside agencies to contact given the situation. In emergency situations, 911 will be called and police and/or fire departments will dispatch.

Any adult in the building can call 911 in the event that a person needs immediate medical attention and their condition may be life threatening.

- Local Fire Department **911**
- Local Ambulance **911**
- School Safety Plan Technical Hotline **(718) 935-5004**

Other representatives the Board of Education or Chancellor in New York City deems appropriate.

- Office of School Intervention and Development **(212) 374-5090**
- Emergency Information Center **(718) 935-3210**
- Division of School Facilities **(718) 391-6466**

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

Upon approval of the Excellence Boys Charter School Safety Plan by the SED, members of the Chain of Command will meet with appropriate officials within Brooklyn to disseminate the plan. The Directors of Operations will contact the highest-ranking local government official to seek advice and assistance. The school will identify resources for an emergency from the Red Cross, the Salvation Army, and the New York City Police and Fire Departments.

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

Excellence Boys will seek the assistance of the New York City Department of Education when appropriate in emergency situations.

Excellence will utilize its internal human resources and its relationship with Uncommon Schools, Inc., should an emergency situation occur.

### ***Procedures to Coordinate the Use of School District Resources and Manpower during Emergencies***

The Directors of Operations or their designee will implement emergency response procedures upon learning of an emergency situation within Excellence Boys. The Directors of Operations or their designee will notify the members of the School Safety Team who will then contact local authorities if appropriate.

The Head of School's office shall serve as the Command Center in the event of an emergency. If an emergency requires the involvement of police or fire personnel, the School Safety Team will turn authority over to local emergency crews to ensure optimal response.

### ***Protective Action Options***

Should an emergency occur at Excellence Boys, the Directors of Operations will gather the School Safety Team to formulate an appropriate plan of action following the procedures outlined earlier in this document for confronting and rectifying specific emergency situations.

The Directors of Operations or their designee may declare a school emergency and implement the procedures set forth in this document. The Head of School's Office shall become the Command Center and the Chain of Command shall report to the Command Center. The Directors of Operations shall remain in charge until local law enforcement or emergency response personnel are on the scene and take command of the situation. The following steps will occur in an actual emergency:

- Take control once informed of emergency situation
- Gather information and make appropriate decisions

- Order evacuation if necessary
- Contact appropriate law enforcement authorities as necessary
- Turn control of emergency situations over to law enforcement as required
- Test the emergency response procedures on an annual basis
- Meet with local government official to seek advice and assistance

# SECTION IV: RECOVERY

## **A) DISTRICT SUPPORT**

Excellence Boys will support its staff members and students in dealing with an emergency by providing adequate training regarding the identification and prevention of violence as well as training in appropriate responses.

The Directors of Operations and Safety Team will review the emergency response procedures for needed modifications and alterations based upon feedback from debriefing sessions.

## **B) DISASTER MENTAL HEALTH SERVICES**

Should an emergency occur, Excellence Boys will enlist the support of community mental health resources for guidance and assistance.

## **APPENDIX A: CHAIN OF COMMAND**

- 1) Felix Li & Donnie Stuart –Director of Operations – (202) 821-7684; (203) 449-2268
- 2) Samantha Tweedy – Head of School – (917) 921-3770
- 3) Keith Davis – Facility Manager – (973) 766-2998
- 4) Kevin Hall – Elementary Academy Principal – (917) 257-6923
- 5) David Berlin – Middle Academy Principal – (301) 452-0641

## **APPENDIX B: School Safety Team**

- 1) Felix Li – Elementary Academy Director of Operations – (202) 821-7684
- 2) Donnie Stuart – Middle Academy Director of Operations – (203) 449-2268
- 3) Samantha Tweedy – Head of School – (917) 921-3770
- 4) Keith Davis – Facility Manager – (973) 766-2998
- 5) Kevin Hall – Elementary Academy Principal – (917) 257-6923
- 6) David Berlin – Middle Academy Principal – (301) 452-0641
- 7) Will Herman – Elementary Academy Director of Special Projects – (207) 807- 5658
- 8) Lisa Dotson – Middle Academy Special Projects Coordinator – (678) 522-5371
- 9) Parent Representative on the Board of Trustees – (718) 638-1830