COMPREHENSIVE SAFETY PLAN

Volume III:
Routine Safety and Security Personnel, Equipment, Standards and Procedures

BALTIMORE COUNTY PUBLIC SCHOOLS

"Safety and security don't just happen, they are the result of collective consensus and public investment. We owe our children, the most valuable citizens in our society, a life free of violence and fear."

- Nelson Mandela

TEAM BCPS

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Routine Safety and Security Personnel, Equipment, Standards, and Procedures

Introduction

This section of the *Comprehensive Safety Plan* contains information concerning the personnel, operations, equipment, standards, and procedures that Baltimore County Public Schools (BCPS) has put in place to keep students, employees, service providers, visitors, and buildings safe and secure. It establishes the minimum expectations for assuring that schools and offices are safe for teaching, learning, and working.

Assumptions inherent in the school system's use of security personnel, equipment, standards, and procedures are:
- BCPS is responsible for providing personnel, equipment, standards, and procedures that will enhance the safety of students, employees, service providers, and visitors.
- Students, employees, service providers, and visitors are responsible for adhering to all policies, rules, procedures, and protocols related to safety.

Background Information

BCPS and Baltimore County government have invested heavily in providing for the safety and security of students, employees, service providers, and visitors. Investments include security officers, school resource officers, surveillance cameras, door swipe systems and locks, protective equipment, a visitor identification system, and identification badges for students, employees, and service providers. Having these investments at one's disposal and not using them can create a false sense of security and jeopardize the safety and security of all.

Objectives

By implementing this component of the plan, the following objectives will be met:
- Ensure safe productive learning and working environments for all students, employees, and service providers using personnel, equipment, standards, and procedures.
- Increase awareness of the safety and security supports in place and individual responsibility for using them.

Purpose

Routine safety and security personnel, equipment, standards, and procedures are designed to set a consistent standard of practice to ensure the safety and security of all students, employees, service providers, and visitors. This section of the *Comprehensive Safety Plan* conveys support and standards used across the school system.

Scope of the Plan

The use of safety and security provisions applies to all schools and offices throughout the system.

Integration with Other Plans

This component of the *Comprehensive Safety Plan* supports and is integrated with *Site-Based Emergency Plans* and the *Critical Incident Response Plan*.

Safety and Security Personnel

Baltimore County Police Department (BCoPD) Partnership

The BCoPD works in collaboration with BCPS to provide a safe learning and working environment and to respond to the concerns of stakeholders.

The BCoPD has assigned a major (safe schools facilitator) and sergeant (assistant safe schools facilitator) to be housed in and work directly with staff in the Department of School Safety to support school safety programs and initiatives, to serve in an advisory capacity, and to respond to emergency concerns. This enables ongoing coordination and communication between BCPS and BCoPD at both the central office and precinct levels. These staff also participate on several BCPS committees and workgroups.

The School Guard Team oversees 270 school crossing guard positions, serving 110 public and private schools. School crossing guards contribute to protecting children and other persons crossing the intersections near various elementary, middle, and private schools to which they are assigned. They instruct students in safety rules and monitor their safety and welfare. They also assist with extended learning, other school activities, parades, and other public events.

Building Security

At the core of the responsibilities of the Office of Building Security staff is receiving information from schools concerning repair and maintenance issues and communicating these needs to the appropriate employees and service providers within the maintenance section. There are often safety implications in these requests. Employees in the call center work 24 hours a day, 7 days a week, including holidays. During the school day, the call center operations provide a critical communication link between all departments of BCPS during an emergency. The operators receive school emergency calls and alarm signals and forward that information to the correct resource to resolve the emergency.

The sources of emergency issues include:
- Calls from building occupants.
- Electronic signals from building fire systems.
- Electronic signals from building security systems.
- Electronic images from building Closed Circuit Television Systems (CCTV).
- Work order systems.
- BCoPD.
- Baltimore County Fire Department (BCoFD).

Call center personnel receive information and notify the appropriate resources. For example, water leaks, sewage back-ups and the like are passed on to the plumbing shop. Other calls for no heat, no air conditioning, etc. are passed on to the maintenance section. Most of this information comes to the call center by way of school building personnel during school hours. During non-school hours, most of the information the call center receives is either from the electronic security or fire systems. All fire and security signals flow though the call center, and the call center personnel contact and request the dispatch of either the BCoFD or the BCoPD.

Managers, School Safety

Each zone has been assigned a school safety manager and a back-up manager. These managers provide support to schools for all school safety related concerns. Responsibilities of the managers include consulting with schools and police regarding emergency responses, assisting schools in the development and completion of emergency plans, monitoring fire and scenario-based drill completion, monitoring bullying, harassment or intimidation data collection, coordinating meetings between administrators and school resource officer program personnel, and addressing concerns related to the visitor identification system and student/staff identification system. In addition, each manager is responsible for addressing specific central office or systemwide programs and initiatives. Managers can be reached by contacting the Department of School Safety at 443-809-4360.

Safety and Emergency Management Team

Each principal or office head is responsible for overseeing the formation of the school's or office complex's Safety and Emergency Management Team (SEMT), formerly called the School Emergency Management Team. This team can be called upon if an emergency arises. Certain employee's positions lend themselves to team membership. Although an individual may seem "perfect" for a role because of his or her job assignment, no one should be required to have a primary position on the SEMT if they do not feel capable of fulfilling the duties of the position when needed. Collectively, the team should possess knowledge in areas ranging from mental and physical health, first aid, handling students with special needs, access to building plans, and knowledge of community resources. Each team member should possess strong leadership skills and the ability to work under pressure.

School Resource Officers

The School Resource Officer (SRO) Program is a resource that school administrators employ to ensure safe and orderly learning environments in their schools. The SRO Program is a collaboration between the BCoPD and BCPS, which is funded by the BCoPD and staffed by uniformed police officers. The role of the SRO is threefold: law enforcer, law-related education resource, and counselor/mentor on law-related issues. The presence of the SRO on a school's campus is an effective tool in promoting positive behavior, curbing disruptive behavior, and deterring crime and violence. The SRO is responsible for promoting positive relationships among local law enforcement agencies, students, and the community at large; educating students about destructive decisions; helping to maintain a safe and orderly school environment; and enforcing the law.

To serve as an SRO, a police officer must complete 40 hours of training, which is provided for them by the National Association of School Resource Officers (NASRO). Once assigned to a school, the SRO is expected to acknowledge school protocol, maintain contact and positive relationships with the police precinct resources, and meet with the school principal and police department officials to assess and determine the effectiveness of his/her role and the program.

Each secondary school has at least one assigned SRO. Beginning in August 2018, elementary schools will receive the services of a shared SRO. One SRO from the precinct serving schools within the boundaries of that precinct will serve all elementary schools within the boundaries.

Security Patrol Officers

BCPS employs security patrol officers who respond to sites when notified of potential emergencies during the hours when schools and offices are not in session. While the security patrol officers might respond with the BCoFD or BCoPD, their main purpose is to conduct school building inspections during non-instructional hours.

Patrol officers conduct exterior building checks which consists of walking the perimeter of the building, pushing against windows, verifying exterior doors are locked, and looking for suspicious situations. After the exterior check of a building, the security patrol officers enter the building and walk the interior looking for suspicious situations. They check for unlocked windows and doors while listening for the normal building sounds signifying the HVAC equipment is running and that water lines are not leaking.

Safety and Security Equipment

Card Access Systems

The card access systems installed for school and office buildings serve to keep doors secure while allowing continuous access for approved employees and service providers who have been issued identification badges or swipe cards with access authority. The identification badge or swipe card will unlock the door for a specific amount of time and then relock. Every door opened with the card access system can be traced to a specific user. If a badge is lost or stolen, it can be rendered inoperable quickly and inexpensively as compared to a key lock. Card readers are primarily installed on doors leading to relocatable classrooms, parking lots, and front entrances.

The responsibility for maintaining card access systems is assigned to the Office of Building Security.

Closed-Circuit Television (CCTV) Systems

Every school has a CCTV system. BCPS is currently in the process of upgrading CCTV systems in all schools. This will provide coverage at all entry points into school buildings. Elementary schools have received this upgrade, middle schools are in the process of having upgraded cameras installed, and high schools are scheduled to begin their upgrades in the next fiscal year. Pan Tilt Zoom (PTZ) cameras are positioned for optimal coverage.

Each camera has approximately 30 days of video storage and can be retrieved by principals, SROs, and school safety managers.

Emergency Alert Radios

Each school and office has been provided with an emergency alert radio through the Department of School Safety that can be used to monitor severe weather conditions. The radio must be checked periodically and replenished with fresh batteries, as needed. Radios should be maintained in the main office where they can be monitored by staff. An alert will be issued when severe weather is anticipated through a warning, watch, or advisory.

Fire Systems

The Office of Building Security is responsible for maintaining the equipment that operates the fire alarm system signals from BCPS buildings. The Fire System Team repairs and maintains the fire systems and performs the inspections of the fire/sprinkler systems. All fire alarm signals terminate in the call center. Call center operators call the BCoFD to respond to specific buildings. Upon receiving an alarm, call center operators attempt to contact the school to determine if the signal is legitimate or a false alarm. If school or office personnel have confirmed that there is a fire, they can call the BCoFD directly while pulling the fire alarm. Most buildings have a sprinkler system associated with the total building fire system. Those buildings that do not have a sprinkler system have an extensive smoke detector system in place to make up for the lack of sprinklers. The components in a typical fire system are hand-pull stations, horn/strobe stations, duct smoke detectors, elevator smoke detectors, fire door smoke detectors, building smoke detectors, fire doors, fire door hold open fixtures, sprinkler systems, control panels, water flow detectors, and fire pump systems.

If a fire system is out of order or inoperable for any reason, a fire watch plan must be put in place during the time the building is occupied. The Department of Facilities Management will put the fire watch in place under the direction of the BCoFD.

Intercom Systems

Each school has a schoolwide intercom paging system that allows for two-way communication through either the overhead speakers or the classroom phones. It also allows announcements to the entire school or to programmable designated zones.

Security Systems

Each school building has a security system. The typical components of a security system include a combination of door contacts, motion detectors, and door entry buzzer systems. Normal building operations call for the security systems to be activated when the building is not occupied. Once the system is activated, signals are electronically sent to the call center personnel to determine what, if any, action steps are needed. The responsibility for maintaining all security systems belongs to the Office of Building Security.

Telephone Systems

All schools and offices are equipped with landline telephones that can be used to access assistance during an emergency. School staff should dial 9-911 on Centrex telephones for emergencies that require first responder assistance and 911 on a Cisco VOIP system. The VOIP system can display the most recent call history, allowing for a quick recall of phone numbers that are called into the location. When a landline is not available, principals and office heads can use their cellular telephones to access assistance. If an emergency overwhelms cellular towers, making it difficult or impossible to get a call through, text messaging is an option for communicating emergency needs and concerns.

Safety and Security Standards

Access for Individuals with Disabilities and Special Needs

Individuals with disabilities and special needs must be able to safely access and navigate through buildings and offices. Schools and offices must comply with all applicable codes regarding access for individuals with disabilities. BCPS has developed protocols for planning for the emergency evacuation of individuals with disabilities and other special needs and for evacuating them during an emergency. The Individual Education Plan (IEP) and 504 Plans of students indicate their needs for assistance during an emergency evacuation.

Building Occupancy

Each school building has areas such as cafeterias, auditoriums, and gymnasiums that are considered assembly areas. The Baltimore County Fire Marshall's Office is the only authorized agent to determine the capacity of occupancy for these areas of assembly. Signs should be posted in these areas and the occupancy limits not exceeded.

False Alarms

BCPS is subject to penalties for violations of the law resulting from frequent false alarms. Appropriate building management will help reduce false alarms. Security alarms triggered after hours are often related to unsecured buildings that may have open windows and doors, incorrectly used security systems, or art objects hanging from ceilings. All objects suspended from a ceiling in areas with motion sensors, including classrooms, should be removed. Building operations supervisors can assist by identifying motion detectors. Principals should share this information with all individuals and groups who use the building.

Fire Drill Evacuation Formula

When a fire alarm sounds, building occupants are expected to exit the building immediately without stopping to gather personal possessions. Individuals unable to exit the building are to be taken to identified areas of refuge by their designated assistants to await assistance from the BCoFD. The BCoFD has set the following standard for evacuation.

"Acceptable fire drill evacuation time for a one-story building is one minute for every 500 people. For school buildings of two or more stories, add one minute to the total evacuation time."

Note: Additional time might be needed in buildings that house individuals with disabilities that affect mobility.

Locked Classroom and Office Doors

Keeping classroom and office doors in a locked position is a basic security step that greatly enhances the safety of students, employees, service providers, and visitors. Interior classroom doors and offices must remain in a locked position, but not necessarily closed. Maintaining doors in a locked position will enable staff to quickly secure rooms without having to search for keys or put themselves in harm's way as they secure a room. Devices that restrict opening or prevent locking, not approved by BCoFD, may not be used.

Locked Exterior Doors

All exterior doors are to remain locked from the outside but cannot be locked from the inside while the building is occupied. Doors that are locked from the inside compromise the safety of occupants and are a violation of fire safety codes. Doors must remain closed and must not be propped open. **Visitors should assure that the exterior door they enter or exit closes securely behind them.**

Site-Based Emergency Plan

Each principal and office complex head must develop his or her own *Site-Based Emergency Plan* to promote coordinated preparedness measures and integrated emergency response procedures and enter via the Intranet. The plan must be adapted to the capabilities and special needs of each site. Therefore, differences in the needs and requirements of the site must be addressed throughout the plan.

View Panels

View panels on classroom doors must remain uncovered while students are present except when a lockdown protocol has been initiated by the incident commander during an emergency. The coverings used must be made of nonflammable materials or approved by the BCoFD.

Safety and Security Procedures

Background Checks

Each employee must undergo a required Maryland and FBI fingerprint-based background check and must be cleared to work before beginning employment with BCPS. This applies to subcontractors as well.

Early Dismissal Procedures for Students

Upon request for an early dismissal, students are released to custodial parent(s)/guardian(s). Authorization for release to anyone other than the custodial parent(s)/guardian(s) must be provided in writing or via BCPS One.

Any deviation from the authorized release process must be approved by the principal prior to the student's departure from school. It is the responsibility of a custodial parent/guardian to notify the school, in writing, if release instructions are to be revised. If written instructions are not provided to the school, the students can only be released to ride home on the assigned bus or with the custodial parent(s)/guardian(s).

If a student is to be picked up early, the parent(s)/guardian(s) or approved designee must report to the principal's office and sign for the student's release.

Each school must maintain a daily entry/exit log of students signing in late or signing out early and shall require proof of identification from individuals picking up students. All persons who enter to pick up students for an early dismissal are to have their licenses scanned through the visitor identification system. **No student may be released to an individual whose name appears on the sex offender registry who is not the custodial parent of the student**. **Parents/guardians who are on the sex offender registry must have prior approval before visiting a school**. Students who are 18 or older and who are not on record as being under the care or control of a parent/guardian may sign for their own dismissal.

A student may also be released to a person with lawful authority to take custody of the student (e.g., a police officer with a warrant, Department of Social Services worker). In such cases, the student's parent is to be notified at the earliest opportunity.

Under exceptional circumstances, such as in response to a social media threat, there could be unscheduled pickups of students involving large numbers of parents/guardians. Since school staff are unable to predict the number of parents/guardians that will come, administrators should consider designating a specific reunification area inside of the school. If additional support is needed to manage this process, administrators should contact the appropriate community superintendent's office and/or the Department of School Safety.

Employee and Student Identification

Each student and employee is to be issued an identification badge. Employees and students are required to wear their identification badges visibly on a breakaway lanyard or A clip when on school property. These badges are the property of BCPS and must be returned upon separation from BCPS. Use of the identification badge allows staff to identify individuals easily who are visitors or who do not belong in a school or office building.

Lost identification badges should be replaced immediately for students, employees, and service providers at a fee of $5. Defective badges are replaced without cost to the individual. Rule 3710, Identification Badges provides additional information regarding the badge.

Employees
Each employee is to receive a landscape-formatted blue identification card that is not specific to a school or office. Employees are responsible for safeguarding their identification badges. Any lost or damaged identification badge must be reported immediately to the employee's supervisor who is responsible for assuring the lost or damaged identification badge is reported to the Department of School Safety. In the event an employee who utilizes Kronos for timekeeping forgets his or her identification badge, the employee's supervisor must be notified at the start of the work shift. It is the responsibility of an employee's supervisor to ensure the employee's identification badge is surrendered upon separation from BCPS.

Students
Each student is to receive a portrait-formatted identification card that contains the school name and school colors. The school principal or his or her designee is responsible for issuing student identification badges. All students attending BCPS are photographed to identify them as properly enrolled students in their schools. Students are required to surrender their identification badges to the designated school staff when they transfer or withdraw from their schools. School administrators are to annually advise students of these procedures.

A classroom teacher may waive the requirement for students to wear an identification badge if the teacher believes that wearing the identification badge presents a safety risk during identified classroom or other activities, such as science, technology, physical education, music, and culinary arts. Other excluded activities may include, but are not limited to, intramurals and interscholastic sports, recess, JROTC activities, and marching band. Students are responsible for safeguarding their identification badges. Any lost or damaged identification badge must be reported immediately to a school administrator.

Locker Assignments/Security
Schools have lockers that operate either with a padlock or built-in combination lock. Students should be assigned lockers as early in the year as possible so that they can store their belongings. Ideally, each student should have his or her own locker. Under circumstances where this is not possible, students can be assigned to share a locker. Students should not be allowed to use a locker to which they have not been assigned, and unassigned lockers should be monitored for unlawful contents. The administration is to maintain a list of all locker assignments and combinations or key access. Lockers are considered property of BCPS and are subject to search by school officials if there is reason to suspect a health or safety hazard involved with the locker's contents.

Visitor Access

A door entry buzzer system is used to determine and grant appropriate access to a school or office building. The system consists of a camera located above the door, a door buzzer and speaker, a monitor in the office, and a two-button speaker box. The door can be released by depressing the second button remotely. This system is used to secure an entrance so that visitors must identify themselves and give information as to the business they have with school staff. All staff responsible for using the buzzer system are to be trained using this protocol. A visitor to an office or building can expect the following upon pressing the buzzer:

- Office staff using the speaker phone box will acknowledge the visitor.
- If not visible to the camera, the visitor will be asked to position him or herself within full view of the camera.
- The visitor will be asked the reason for the visit.
- If the visitor replies that he or she is there to see a staff member, they will be asked if they have an appointment.
- If granted admission, the visitor will be asked to report directly to the office for visitor identification.
- Upon completion of their business, the visitor must return to the office to be signed out in the visitor identification system.

Students, employees, service providers, and visitors should not open doors for other people. Each visitor must go through the visitor access process described above. **While it might seem rude to close the door before another visitor can enter, this is necessary for security purposes.**

Visitor Identification

BCPS enforces a standardized visitor registration procedure in all schools and office buildings. The system documents visitors and screens them against the National Sex Offender Registry and can be set to identify individuals who should not have contact or custody of students. It also provides a list of individuals in the building should an emergency occur. Enforcing a simple registration routine is foundational to school security. Procedures must be followed in all schools and offices during the entire year, summer included.

Designated school and office staff are to request photo identification which is scanned through an electronic system. Administrative employees and school resource officers are alerted if it is determined that there is a potential match with the National Sex Offender Registry.

Once a visitor is approved, a visitor badge is issued, which displays the name, photograph, date, and time of arrival. Visitors should not be in the building unless they have a visitor's badge, which means that they have presented photo identification and are cleared by the standard registration procedures. Visitor badges should be worn in a visible manner.

Exceptions can lead to misunderstandings. Even if an office employee personally knows a parent, the employee must still follow the standard registration procedures. If another person walks in and demands a similar courtesy of bypassing registration steps, but does not actually have legitimate school business, it puts office employees in a difficult position and jeopardizes school security. In the event of an evacuation of the building, there would be no documentation of the individual's presence in the building.

Volunteer Screening

All volunteers must complete annual online volunteer training. Employees can also volunteer, as they have been fingerprinted and had to complete a Maryland and FBI fingerprint-based background check.