

806 CRISIS MANAGEMENT POLICY

[Note: The Commissioner of Education is required to maintain and make available to school boards and charter schools a Model Crisis Management Policy. See Minn. Stat. § 121A.035. School boards and charter schools must adopt a Crisis Management Policy to address potential crisis situations in their school districts or charter schools. Id. The policies must be developed in consultation with school administrators, teachers, employees, students, parents/guardians, community members, community emergency response agencies, including law enforcement and fire officials, county attorney offices, social service agencies, and any other appropriate individuals or organizations (such as Safe and Drug Free School coordinators and bus contractors). Id. Effective for the 2006-07 school year and later, the policy must include at least five school lock-down drills, five school fire drills consistent with Minn. Stat. § 299F.30, and one school tornado drill. This Model Crisis Management Policy is the result of a collaborative effort between the Minnesota Department of Education, Division of Compliance and Assistance; the Minnesota Department of Public Safety, Division of Homeland Security and Emergency Management; and the Minnesota School Boards Association.]

I. PURPOSE

The purpose of this Model Crisis Management Policy is to act as a guide for school administrators, school employees, students, school board members, and community members to address a wide range of potential crisis situations in New Discoveries Montessori Academy. The step-by-step procedures suggested by this Policy will provide guidance to the school building in drafting crisis management plans to coordinate protective actions prior to, during, and after any type of emergency or potential crisis situation. The school should develop a tailored building-specific crisis management plan for the building.

New Discoveries Montessori Academy will, to the extent possible, engage in ongoing emergency planning within NDMA and with first responders and other relevant community organizations. New Discoveries Montessori Academy will ensure that relevant first responders in the community have access to their building-specific crisis management plans and will provide training to school staff to enable them to act appropriately in the event of a crisis.

II. GENERAL INFORMATION

A. The Policy and Plans

New Discoveries Montessori Academy's Crisis Management Policy has been created in consultation with local community response agencies and other

appropriate individuals and groups that would likely be involved in the event of a school emergency. It is designed so the ~~director~~ superintendent can tailor a building-specific crisis management plan to meet that building's specific situation and needs. This Policy and the plans will be maintained and updated on an annual basis.

B. Elements of the Crisis Management Policy

1. General Crisis Procedures. The Crisis Management Policy includes general crisis procedures for securing the building, classroom evacuation, building evacuation, campus evacuation, and sheltering. The Policy designates the individual(s) who will determine when these actions will be taken. A communication system will be in place to enable the designated individual to be contacted at all times in the event of a potential crisis, setting forth the method to contact the designated individual, the provision of at least two designees when the contact person is unavailable, and the method to convey contact information to the appropriate staff persons. The alternative designees may include members of the emergency response team. A secondary method of communication should be included in the plan for use when the primary method of communication is inoperable. The building will have access to a copy of the Emergency Planning and Procedures Guide for Schools to assist in the development of building-specific crisis management plans. Finally, all general crisis procedures will address specific procedures for children with special needs such as physical, sensory, motor, developmental, and mental health challenges.

[Note: More specific information on planning for children with special needs can be found in the United States Department of Education's document entitled, "Practical Information on Crisis Planning, a Guide for Schools and Communities," at page 6.30. A website link is provided in the resource section of this Policy.]

- a. Lock-Down Procedures. Lock-down procedures will be used in situations where harm may result to persons inside the school building, such as a shooting, hostage incident, intruder, trespass, disturbance, or when determined to be necessary by the ~~director~~ superintendent or his or her designee. The ~~director~~ superintendent or designee will announce the lock-down over the public address system or other designated system. Code words will not be used. Provisions for emergency evacuation will be maintained even in the event of a lock-down.

[Note: State law requires a minimum of five school lock-down drills each school year. See Minn. Stat. § 121A.035.]

- b. Evacuation Procedures. Evacuations of classrooms and the building shall be implemented at the discretion of the

~~director~~superintendent or his or her designee. The crisis management plan will include procedures for transporting students and staff a safe distance from harm to a designated safe area until released by the ~~director~~superintendent or designee. Safe areas may change based upon the specific emergency situation. The evacuation procedures should include specific procedures for children with special needs, including children with limited mobility (wheelchairs, braces, crutches, etc.), visual impairments, hearing impairments, and other sensory, developmental, or mental health needs. The evacuation procedures should also address transporting necessary medications for students that take medications during the school day.

- c. Sheltering Procedures. Sheltering provides refuge for students, staff, and visitors within the school building during an emergency. Shelters are safe areas that maximize the safety of inhabitants. Safe areas may change based upon the specific emergency. The ~~director~~superintendent or his or her designee will announce the need for sheltering over the public address system or other designated system.

[Note: State law requires a minimum of five school fire drills, consistent with Minn. Stat. § 299F.30, and one school tornado drill each school year. See Minn. Stat. § 121A.035.]

[Note: The attached Emergency Planning and Procedures Guide for Schools has sample lock-down procedures, evacuation procedures, and sheltering procedures.]

2. Crisis-Specific Procedures. The Crisis Management Policy includes crisis-specific procedures for crisis situations that may occur during the school day or at school-sponsored events and functions. These procedures are designed to enable the ~~director~~superintendent to tailor response procedures when creating a building-specific crisis management plan.

[Note: The attached Emergency Planning and Procedures Guide for Schools includes crisis-specific procedures.]

3. School Emergency Response Teams

- a. Composition. The ~~director~~superintendent will select a school emergency response team that will be trained to respond to emergency situations. All school emergency response team members will receive on-going training to carry out the building's crisis management plans and will have knowledge of procedures, evacuation routes, and safe areas. For purposes of student safety and accountability, to the extent possible, school emergency response team members will not have direct responsibility for the

supervision of students. Team members must be willing to be actively involved in the resolution of crises and be available to assist in any crisis situation as deemed necessary by the ~~director~~superintendent. New Discoveries Montessori Academy will maintain a current list of school emergency response team members which will be updated annually. The ~~director~~, and his or her alternative designees, will know the location of that list in the event of a school emergency. A copy of the list will be kept on file in the school office.

[Note: The attached Emergency Planning and Procedures Guide for Schools has a sample School Emergency Response Team list.]

- b. Leaders. The ~~director~~superintendent or his or her designee will serve as the leader of the school emergency response team and will be the primary contact for emergency response officials. In the event the primary designee is unavailable, the designee list should include more than one alternative designee and may include members of the emergency response team. When emergency response officials are present, they may elect to take command and control of the crisis. It is critical in this situation that school officials assume a resource role and be available as necessary to emergency response officials.

III. PREPARATION BEFORE AN EMERGENCY

A. Communication

1. New Discoveries Montessori Academy Employees. Teachers generally have the most direct contact with students on a day-to-day basis. As a result, they must be aware of their role in responding to crisis situations. This also applies to non-teaching school personnel who have direct contact with students. All staff shall be aware of New Discoveries Montessori Academy's Crisis Management Policy and crisis management plan. The crisis management plan shall include the method and dates of dissemination of the plan to its staff. Employees will receive a copy of the relevant building-specific crisis management plans and shall receive periodic training on plan implementation.
2. Students and Parents. Students and parents shall be made aware of New Discoveries Montessori Academy's Crisis Management Policy and crisis management plan. The crisis management plan shall set forth how students and parents are made aware of the school plans. Students shall receive specific instruction on plan implementation and shall participate in a required number of drills and practice sessions throughout the school year.

B. Planning and Preparing for Fire

1. Designate a safe area at least 50 feet away from the building to enable students and staff to evacuate. The safe area should not interfere with emergency responders or responding vehicles and should not be in an area where evacuated persons are exposed to any products of combustion.
2. The building's facility diagram and site plan shall be available in appropriate areas of the building and shall identify the most direct evacuation routes to the designated safe areas both inside and outside of the building. The facility diagram and site plan must identify the location of the fire alarm control panel, fire alarms, fire extinguishers, hoses, water spigots, and utility shut offs.
3. Teachers and staff will receive training on the location of the primary emergency evacuation routes and alternate routes from various points in the building. During fire drills, students and staff will practice evacuations using primary evacuation routes and alternate routes.
4. Certain employees, such as those who work in hazardous areas in the building, will receive training on the locations and proper use of fire extinguishers and protective clothing and equipment.
5. Fire drills will be conducted periodically without warning at various times of the day and under different circumstances, e.g., lunchtime, recess, and during assemblies. State law requires a minimum of five fire drills each school year, consistent with Minn. Stat. § 299F.30. See Minn. Stat. § 121A.035.

[Note: The State Fire Marshal advises schools to defer fire drills during the winter months.]

6. A record of fire drills conducted at the building will be maintained in the [director's administrative](#) office.
7. New Discoveries Montessori Academy will have prearranged sites for emergency sheltering and transportation as needed.
8. New Discoveries Montessori Academy will determine which staff will remain in the building to perform essential functions if safe to do so (e.g., switchboard, building engineer, etc.). New Discoveries Montessori Academy also will designate an administrator or his or her designee to meet local fire or law enforcement agents upon their arrival.

[Note: The attached Emergency Planning and Procedures Guide for Schools has a sample fire procedure form.]

C. Facility Diagrams and Site Plans

All school buildings will have a facility diagram and site plan that includes the location of primary and secondary evacuation routes, exits, designated safe areas inside and outside of the building, and the location of fire alarm control panel, fire alarms, fire extinguishers, hoses, water spigots, and utility shut offs. All facility diagrams and site plans will be regularly updated and whenever a major change is made to a building. Facility diagrams and site plans will be available in the [administrative](#) office ~~of the director~~ and in other appropriate areas and will be easily accessible and on file in school office. Facility diagrams and site plans will be provided to first responders, such as fire and law enforcement personnel. For single building school districts, such as charter schools, a secondary location for the diagrams and site plans will be included in the district's Crisis Management Policy and may include filing documents with a charter school ~~sponsor~~[authorizer](#), or compiling facility diagrams and site plans on a CD-Rom and distributing copies to first responders or sharing the documents with first responders during the crisis planning process.

D. Emergency Telephone Numbers

New Discoveries Montessori Academy will maintain a current list of emergency telephone numbers and the names and addresses of local, county, and state personnel who may be involved in a crisis situation. The list will include telephone numbers for local police, fire, ambulance, hospital, the Poison Control Center, county and state emergency management agencies, local public works departments, local utility companies, the public health nurse, mental health/suicide hotlines, and the county welfare agency. A copy of this list will be kept on file in the school office, or at a secondary location for single building school districts, and updated annually.

New Discoveries Montessori Academy plans will set forth a process to internally communicate an emergency, using telephones in classrooms, intercom systems, or two-way radios, as well as the procedure to enable the staff to rapidly convey emergency information to a building designee. Each plan will identify a primary and secondary method of communication for both internal and secondary use. It is recommended that the plan include several methods of communication because computers, intercoms, telephones, and cell phones may not be operational or may be dangerous to use during an emergency.

[Note: The attached Emergency Planning and Procedures Guide for Schools has a sample Emergency Phone Numbers list.]

E. Warning Systems

New Discoveries Montessori Academy shall maintain a warning system designed to inform students, staff, and visitors of a crisis or emergency. This system shall be maintained on a regular basis under the maintenance plan for all school buildings.

It shall be the responsibility of the ~~director~~superintendent to inform students and employees of the warning system and the means by which the system is used to identify a specific crisis or emergency situation. Each school's building-specific crisis management plan will include the method and frequency of dissemination of the warning system information to students and employees.

F. Early School Closure Procedures

The ~~director~~superintendent will make decisions about closing school as early in the day as possible. The early school closure procedures will set forth the criteria for early school closure (e.g., weather-related, utility failure, or a crisis situation), will specify how closure decisions will be communicated to staff, students, families, and the school community (designated broadcast media, local authorities, e-mail, or school web site), and will discuss the factors to be considered in closing and reopening a school or building.

Early school closure procedures also will include a reminder to parents and guardians to listen to designated local radio and TV stations for school closing announcements, where possible.

G. Media Procedures

The ~~director~~superintendent has the authority and discretion to notify parents or guardians and the school community in the event of a crisis or early school closure. The ~~director~~superintendent will designate a spokesperson who will notify the media in the event of a crisis or early school closure. The spokesperson shall receive training to ensure that the district is in strict compliance with federal and state law relative to the release of private data when conveying information to the media.

[Note: The attached Emergency Planning and Procedures Guide for Schools has a sample Media Procedures form.]

H. Grief-Counseling Procedures

Grief-counseling procedures will set forth the procedure for initiating grief-counseling plans. The procedures will utilize available resources including the school psychologist, counselor, community grief counselors, or others in the community. Grief-counseling procedures will be used whenever the ~~director~~superintendent determines it to be necessary, such as after an assault, a hostage situation, shooting, or suicide. The grief-counseling procedures shall include the following steps:

1. ~~Director~~Superintendent will meet with relevant persons, including school psychologists and counselors, to determine the level of intervention needed for students and staff.
2. Designate specific rooms as private counseling areas.

3. Escort siblings and close friends of any victims as well as others in need of emotional support to the counseling areas.
4. Prohibit media from interviewing or questioning students or staff.
5. Provide follow-up services to students and staff who receive counseling.
6. Resume normal school routines as soon as possible.

IV. SAMPLE PROCEDURES INCLUDED IN THIS POLICY

Sample procedures for the various hazards/emergencies listed below are attached to this Policy for use when drafting specific crisis management plans. After approval by the school board, an adopted procedure will become an addendum to the Crisis Management Policy.

- A. Fire
- B. Hazardous Materials
- C. Severe Weather: Tornado/Severe Thunderstorm/Flooding
- D. Medical Emergency
- E. Fight/Disturbance
- F. Assault
- G. Intruder
- H. Weapons
- I. Shooting
- J. Hostage
- K. Bomb Threat
- L. Chemical or Biological Threat
- M. Checklist for Telephone Threats
- N. Demonstration
- O. Suicide
- P. Lock-down Procedures

- Q. Shelter-In-Place Procedures
- R. Evacuation/Relocation
- S. Media Procedures
- T. Post-Crisis Procedures
- U. School Emergency Response Team
- V. Emergency Phone Numbers
- W. Highly Contagious Serious Illness or Pandemic Flu

V. MISCELLANEOUS PROCEDURES

A. Chemical Accidents

Procedures for reporting chemical accidents shall be posted at key locations such as chemistry labs, art rooms, swimming pool areas, and janitorial closets.

[Note: School buildings must maintain Material Safety Data Sheets (M.S.D.S.) for all chemicals on campus. State law, federal law, and OSHA require that pertinent staff have access to M.S.D.S. in the event of a chemical accident.]

B. Visitors

New Discoveries Montessori Academy shall implement procedures mandating visitor sign in and visitors in school buildings. See MSBA/MASA Model Policy 903 (Visitors to School District Buildings and Sites).

New Discoveries Montessori Academy shall implement procedures to minimize outside entry into school buildings except at designated check-in points and assure that all doors are locked prior to and after regular building hours.

C. Student Victims of Criminal Offenses at or on School Property

New Discoveries Montessori Academy shall establish procedures allowing student victims of criminal offenses on school property the opportunity to transfer to another school.

[Note: The No Child Left Behind Act, 20 U.S.C. § 6301, et seq.; Title IX, 20 U.S.C. § 1681, et seq.; and the Unsafe School Choice Option, 20 U.S.C. § 7912, require school districts to establish such transfer procedures.]

Legal References: Minn. Stat. Ch. 12 (Emergency Management)

Minn. Stat. § 121A.035 (Crisis Management Policy)
Minn. Stat. § 121A.06 (Reports of Dangerous Weapon Incidents in School Zones)
Minn. Stat. § 299F.30 (Fire Drill in School)
Minn. Stat. § 609.605, Subd. 4 (Trespasses on School Property)
Minn. Rules Ch. 7511 (Fire Safety)
20 U.S.C. § 1681, *et seq.* (Title IX)
20 U.S.C. § 6301, *et seq.* (No Child Left Behind)
20 U.S.C. § 7912 (Unsafe School Choice Option)
42 U.S.C. § 5121 *et seq.* (Disaster Relief and Emergency Assistance)

Cross References: MSBA/MASA Model Policy 407 (Employee Right to Know – Exposure to Hazardous Substances)
MSBA/MASA Model Policy 413 (Harassment and Violence)
MSBA/MASA Model Policy 501 (School Weapons Policy)
MSBA/MASA Model Policy 506 (Student Discipline)
MSBA/MASA Model Policy 532 (Use of Peace Officers and Crisis Teams to Remove Students with IEPs from School Grounds)
MSBA/MASA Model Policy 903 (Visitors to School District Buildings and Sites)