

HOWARD GARDNER MULTIPLE INTELLIGENCE CHARTER SCHOOL

	Administration/Board	AB20-0401
	Response to Threats	ADOPTED DATE: April 21, 2020 REVIEWED DATE: REVISED DATE: August 18, 2026

Purpose:

The Board of Trustees (“Board”) of Howard Gardner Multiple Intelligence Charter School (“Charter School”) recognizes its responsibility to safeguard the health and welfare of Charter School students and employees. Therefore, the Board shall provide the facilities, equipment, and training necessary to minimize the effects of all hazards and emergencies, including but not limited to natural disasters, hazardous chemicals, fires, weapons, bomb threats, terrorism, communicable diseases, and pandemics. Advance planning and comprehensive implementation are key components in ensuring the protection of the Charter School community.

Scope:

The Charter School must have a comprehensive emergency preparedness plan as required by 35 Pa. C.S.A. § 7701, which requires the following.

- a. The plan must be developed in cooperation with the local emergency management agency and Pennsylvania Emergency Management Agency (PEMA).
- b. The plan must be reviewed annually by the school safety and security coordinator and/or school administrator and filed with or submitted to the local emergency management agency.
- c. The plan must be submitted to each police department that has jurisdiction over the Charter School, county communications or dispatch and each local fire department having jurisdiction over the Charter School.

The Board shall instruct the CEO to utilize the resources of and comply with the requirements of the Pennsylvania Department of Health and the Pennsylvania Department of Education for emergency preparedness.

The Charter School’s system of emergency preparedness shall ensure that the health and safety of students and staff are protected, the time necessary for instructional purposes is not unduly diverted, minimum disruption to the educational program occurs, and students are helped to learn self-reliance and trained to respond sensibly to emergency situations.

School Safety and Security Coordinator

Per 24 P.S. § 13-1309-B, the CEO shall appoint a school administrator as the School Safety and Security Coordinator for the Charter School. The school safety and security coordinator shall oversee all Charter School police officers, resource officers, security guards and Charter School policies and procedures, and report directly to the CEO.

The Charter School Safety and Security Coordinator shall:

- (1) Review the Charter School’s policies and procedures relative to safety and security and compliance with Federal and State laws regarding safety and security.

(2) Coordinate training and resources for Charter School students and staff in matters relating to situational awareness, trauma-informed education awareness, behavioral health awareness, suicide and bullying awareness, substance abuse awareness and emergency procedures and training drills, including fire, natural disaster, active shooter, hostage situation and bomb threat.

(3) Coordinate safety and security assessments as necessary.

(4) Serve as the Charter School liaison with committees, the Pennsylvania Department of Education, law enforcement and other relevant organizations on matters of Charter School safety and security.

(5) Make a report no later than June 30th of the regular school year, to the Charter School's Board of Trustees ("Board") on the Charter School's current safety and security practices that identify strategies to improve safety and security. The report shall be presented to the Board at an executive session of the Board. The report shall not be subject to the act of February 14, 2008 (P.L. 6, No. 3), known as the Right-to-Know Law.

(6) Coordinate a tour of the Charter School's buildings and grounds biennially or when a building is first occupied or reconfigured with the law enforcement agencies and first responders that are primarily responsible for protecting and securing the Charter School to discuss and coordinate safety and security matters.

Procedures, Generally:

Howard Gardner Multiple Intelligence Charter School (HGMICS) takes active steps to ensure a safe environment for staff, students, and visitors. With an abundance of caution, various types of threat situations are regularly reviewed by the Safety Committee, overseen by the Safety and Security Coordinator, and practiced with all staff. In addition to this policy, procedures for fire drills and evacuations are also followed. At the start of each school year, each classroom, office, and meeting space must have the evacuation route posted outside the room. All classrooms must have checklists of emergency response procedures posted for easy reference and have an emergency kit available for immediate use and/or for evacuation.

All staff has the responsibility to identify when an internal and/or external threat is perceived and to ALERT one or more of the following: the Main Office for a school-wide announcement to be made, Any employee can dial "L" on any phone for a Lockdown Announcement, or by calling 911 for assistance from local law enforcement. Be aware that it is impossible to fully prepare for all possible scenarios; for example, if an armed intruder enters the Main Office, it may not be possible for an announcement to be made.

Command Centers are located in the Main Office and CEO's office. Command Centers have access to surveillance cameras and the public address system. All Staff should maintain an active alert response mode, using sound judgment as to what is the best response to ensure the safety and security of staff and students. Implementation of Standard Response Protocol training should be followed, based upon the judgment of the staff in charge.

— Hold, Secure, Lockdown, Evacuate, Shelter. This active alert response mode should be maintained until such time as an ALL CLEAR announcement is made through the public address system.

For a lockdown response, all staff and students are initially confined to the building due to a perceived or real threat within the building or on the external campus. It is important to remember that threatening situations can change, and adults will need to assess and reassess the situation to determine the proper course of action.

For a lock-out response, no one may enter or exit the building but movement within the building is allowed, until the all-clear signal is announced on the Public Address system.

For a shelter-in-place response, all staff and students must stay in one area, away from windows and doors until an all-clear signal is given.

Following all incidents involving a threat to the safety and security of the School, the designated administrative staff person

must fully document the incident. The CEO will assign responsibilities and provide oversight of the incident documentation process. The Business Manager reports all incidents as part of Pennsylvania Information Management System (PIMS) and Insurance Policy requirements, as appropriate.

Procedures following an actual threat:

Administration:

Notify the Board President and local law enforcement when the threat is terminated.

Distribute a message to parents explaining the situation.

Contact the Parent Forum president to minimize misinformation and assess the need for a special parent/guardian meeting. Conduct a de-briefing with all staff to minimize misinformation and collect feedback for the Safety Committee's review. If law enforcement was on the scene, debrief the experience with those involved.

Consider a press release or press conference, if the event has drawn or may draw media attention.

Assess and accommodate the need for aftercare, counseling, or incident debriefing. Allow students time for physical activity or verbal stress relief.

Convene Safety Committee to ensure thorough follow-up.

Instructional Staff:

Reassure the students that a resolution to the situation is in place. Identify students who may experience undue stress and make referral to the Counselor or Psychologist.

Resume all classroom activities as normal.

Anticipate the need for parents/guardians to discuss the situation. Consider: referring them to Administration, reiterating previously distributed messages, and/or referring to their feedback from the experience.

Procedures for a Drill Practice:

Practice of various drill responses is meant to acclimate both staff and students to the process of reacting to an immediate threat and avoiding unnecessary responses. Except for fire drills, all drills are announced and practiced in advance of the scheduled drill. While the date of the drill is known, the actual time may not be announced in advance.

Preparation for Drills:

The CEO, Principal or authorized person will make the decision to implement a security drill at least one week in advance.

Parents/guardians, faculty, and students are notified when the drill will occur, with the exception of fire drills. Staff will practice the designated drill in advance of the scheduled day of the drill.

When appropriate, the CEO or designee will notify local law enforcement prior to holding a drill and determine what level of assistance, if any is needed from responders.

At least one (1) day before the scheduled drill, staff will run through their practiced drill procedures and adjustments, as needed, that will be made for the scheduled day of the drill.

Implementation of a Drill

Administration:

Operations Coordinator or designee will inform parents/guardians using the School's notification system prior to the scheduled drill.

Drill will be announced via the Public Address (PA) system either by a pre-recorded message or by staff from the Main Office.

CEO or designee is prepared to contact 911.

All Office staff check hallways and bathrooms and bring students into offices and ensure doors are locked. Take attendance of students and adults.

Instructional Staff:

Staff in classrooms will assess the situation by listening and looking into the immediate hallway and bathrooms for students.

Once drill is announced, all Instructional Staff must secure a cell phone and emergency packet.

Staff and students that are *en route* to classrooms must be prepared to enter the nearest classroom and remain there.

Provide instructions to students and maintain a calm and quiet environment. Take attendance or headcount. Staff will assess the situation by listening and looking into the immediate hallway for students. Staff will lock and, if necessary, barricade the classroom doors, turn off lights, close blinds, and assemble students away from windows, but close to emergency exits. Maintain a quiet environment.

Staff in classrooms will reassess the situation periodically, listen for further updates on the PA system and be prepared to exit through the nearest emergency door, if necessary.

Staff in classrooms with no emergency exits must reassess and listen to further instructions on the best possible resolution.

Classes outside for physical education, recess, or other activities MUST immediately assess the danger and enter the building through the closest entrance or flee to the closest rally point.

Students in classrooms are to be away from windows and doors and remain quiet.

Take attendance of students and staff.

Under no circumstances is anyone allowed to leave the room alone.

Adults should remain calm and reassure upset students.

End of drill process:

Administration:

The CEO, Principal, or designee announces All CLEAR When Drill is over, resume normal operations as soon as possible. If needed, follow-up notification of the conclusion of the drill is issued to local responders and/or parents and guardians.

Instructional Staff:

Staff and students resume normal operations.

Debrief with staff after the conclusion of all drills. Identify if procedures need to be altered. Safety Committee follows up, as needed. Administrators record drill dates, times, process, duration, community participants, etc. for required reporting.