

6A-1.0018 School Safety Requirements and Monitoring

(1) The purpose of this rule is to set forth requirements relating to school safety, reporting, and training. The rule also provides notice of the procedures and criteria utilized by the Office of Safe Schools to monitor school districts and individual schools for compliance with those requirements.

(2) Definitions.

(a) “CSTAG” means the Comprehensive School Threat Assessment Guidelines behavioral threat assessment instrument, which must be used for threat assessments in all public schools, including charter schools.

(b) “Department” means the Florida Department of Education.

(c) “Discharge” means to fire a gun or firearm.

(d) “Discipline” means a safe-school officer receiving a behavior-related official reprimand.

(e) “Dismissal” means a safe-school officer is permanently relieved of his position. Dismissal or termination is involuntary and initiated by the employer, including firings or other discharges for cause.

(f) “Florida Safe Schools Assessment Tool” or “FSSAT” means the site security risk assessment tool used by school officials at each school district and public school site in the state, including charter schools, to conduct security assessments, as provided in Section 1006.1493, F.S.

(g) “FortifyFL” means the mobile suspicious activity reporting tool that allows students and members of the community to report information anonymously concerning unsafe, potentially harmful, dangerous, violent, or criminal activities, or threats of such activities to law enforcement or school officials as described in Section 943.082, F.S.

(h) “Law enforcement officer” means the persons identified in Section 943.10(1), F.S.

(i) “Office” means the Department’s Office of Safe Schools.

(j) “Safe-school officer” means a school resource officer, a school-safety officer, a school guardian, or a school security guard, as identified in Section 1006.12(1)-(4), F.S.

(k) “School administrator” means the school personnel identified in Section 1012.01(3), F.S.

(l) “School-based mental health services provider” means a school psychologist certified under Rule 6A-4.0311, F.A.C., a school social worker certified under Rule 6A-4.035, F.A.C., a school counselor certified under Rule 6A-4.0181, F.A.C., or a mental health professional licensed under Chapter 490 or 491, Florida Statutes, who is employed or contracted by a district to provide mental health services in schools.

(m) “School day” means any day, including a partial day, where students are physically present at school for instructional purposes, as defined by Section 1011.60(2), F.S., and Rule 6A-1.045111, F.A.C.

(n) “School district” or “district” means a Florida school district or district school board, the Florida Virtual School (Section 1002.37, F.S.), the Florida School for the Deaf and the Blind (Section 1002.36, F.S.), and Developmental Research (Laboratory) Schools (Section 1002.32, F.S.).

(o) “School safety specialist” means the district school superintendent’s designee per Section 1006.07(6)(a), F.S., responsible for the oversight of all aspects of school safety and security within the school district and who is a school administrator or a law enforcement officer.

(p) “SESIR” means School Environmental Safety Incident Reporting, as identified in Rule 6A-1.0017, F.A.C.

(q) “Substantive threat” means a threat where the intent to harm is either present or unclear, and requires protective action, as further defined in the CSTAG, Form CSTAG-2021.

(r) “Suspected deficiency” means that there is at least some evidence that a district or school is not acting in compliance with the safety requirements set forth in this rule.

(s) “Transient threat” means a threat where there is not a sustained intent to harm and the situation can be quickly resolved with apology, retraction, or explanation by the person who made the threat, as defined in the CSTAG, Form CSTAG-2021.

(3) District contact information.

(a) By August 1 of each year, each school district must submit the name, phone number, and email address for each school safety specialist to the Office at SafeSchools@fldoe.org.

(b) When any changes occur to the information required by paragraph (3)(a), the district must update the information within one (1) school day.

(4) Monitoring by the District School Safety Specialist.

(a) School safety specialists are responsible for the supervision and oversight for all school safety and security personnel, policies, and procedures in the school district, including at charter schools.

(b) Districts must establish policies that require the school safety specialist to review school district and charter school policies and procedures at least annually for compliance with state law and rules, as provided by Section 1006.07(6)(a)1., F.S.

(c) Districts must establish policies that explain the process the school safety specialist will use to identify and correct instances of noncompliance at a school with a requirement in this rule, or other state law or rules relating to safety. Such policies must require the following:

1. Deficiencies relating to safe-school officer coverage must be resolved by the next school day;

2. Notification to the Office within twenty-four (24) hours at SafeSchools@fldoe.org of any deficiencies relating to safe-school officer coverage and any instance of noncompliance that is determined to be an imminent threat to the health, safety, or welfare of students or staff. Notifications made under this subparagraph must contain particularized facts beyond noncompliance with rule or statute that explain the imminent threat; and

3. Notification to the Office within three (3) days at SafeSchools@fldoe.org of any instance of noncompliance not corrected within sixty (60) days.

(5) Monitoring by the Office of Safe Schools – Process.

(a) The Office will monitor compliance with school safety requirements identified in this rule through announced and unannounced on-site visits to schools and district facilities or offices, review of school and district websites and publications, interviews with students and staff, and review of media reports and other information submitted to or received by the Office.

(b) District and school staff must keep records demonstrating that the requirements in this rule are met and must provide those records to the Office upon request.

(c) The Office will provide notice of a suspected deficiency to the school safety specialist at the email address provided in paragraph (3)(a). Failure to maintain accurate contact information with the Office will not extend the time for correction.

(d) Districts must establish a policy concerning when the notice of suspected deficiency is provided by the school safety specialist to the district's superintendent.

(e) Time to respond and opportunity to cure.

1. When the notice of suspected deficiency concerns a failure to have a safe-school officer established or assigned at each school facility, as required by Section 1006.12, F.S., the school safety specialist must respond in writing and verify that the school(s) identified in the notice have a safe-school officer on site by the next school day.

2. In all other cases, the school safety specialist must respond in writing within five (5) school days and verify that the district or school has corrected the suspected deficiency, or within that same time period, submit a written plan describing how the district will bring the identified school(s) into compliance. A plan submitted under this paragraph must include an estimated date of completion and an explanation of alternate security measures designed to maintain a safe learning environment.

(f) Upon verification of compliance or correction of a deficiency, the Office will provide a written notice of resolution by email to the school safety specialist.

(g) When a suspected deficiency has not been timely resolved, the Office will advise the Commissioner of Education who will facilitate compliance to the maximum extent provided under law, as provided in Section 1001.11(9), F.S.

(6) Safety Requirements. The Office will monitor schools and school districts for compliance with the safety requirements set forth in subsections (7) through (20) of this rule.

(7) Safe-school officer. School districts are required to establish or assign at least one safe-school officer at each school facility within the district, as provided in Section 1006.12, F.S.

(a) A school facility means a public K-12 school, including a charter school, with a Master School Identification Number (MSID) number as provided under Rule 6A-1.0016, F.A.C., with the following exceptions:

1. Schools with separate MSID numbers that are located at the same physical location and are co-located with each other are a single school facility.

2. Schools that are located at separate physical locations and are not co-located, but share one MSID number are separate school facilities.

3. A school facility does not include:

a. Schools without a physical location for instruction of students, such as virtual schools, virtual instruction programs, virtual course offerings, franchises of the Florida Virtual School and virtual charter schools;

b. Settings where instruction is provided in a county jail or state prison, in a Department of Juvenile Justice facility or program, in a hospital, or while a student is homebound;

c. Schools that provide only prekindergarten or adult education;

d. Technical centers under Section 1004.91, F.S.; and

e. Private schools, regardless of whether or not their students receive state scholarship funds under Chapter 1002, F.S.

(b) A safe-school officer must be present, at a minimum, during the school day when the school facility is open for instruction, as defined by the district school board calendar.

(c) Districts must establish a policy for safe-school officer assignment outside of the regular school day, including during before and after school, summer school, during extracurricular activities, and for school-sponsored events. In establishing this policy, districts must consider factors such as the number of persons present, the ratio of staff members to students, and other safety measures available.

(d) Survey of safe-school officers. At least annually, the Office shall conduct a survey regarding safe-school officer assignment by school. School safety specialists are responsible for completion of the survey.

(8) Alyssa's Alert. Beginning with the 2021-22 school year, school districts are required to implement a mobile panic alert system that meets all requirements of Section 1006.07(4)(c), F.S. Districts are authorized to select, free of charge, a system under Department contract. The systems under contract with the Department are posted at <http://www.fldoe.org/safe-schools/>.

(9) FortifyFL.

(a) School districts are required to maintain current school listings in the FortifyFL application, including school name, address, and MSID number. School districts are required to update FortifyFL within five (5) school days of a school opening or closing, or when any other change occurs that impacts the accuracy of district-provided information.

(b) School districts are required to maintain current contact information (telephone number and email address) in the FortifyFL application for each school's administrator and for the school safety specialist.

(c) School districts are required to promote FortifyFL, as provided in Section 943.082(4)(b), F.S. Districts are required to:

1. Advertise FortifyFL on the district website, on school campuses, in newsletters, and in school publications;
2. Install the FortifyFL app on all mobile devices issued to students; and
3. Bookmark the FortifyFL website on all computer devices issued to students.

(10) Threat assessment teams.

(a) Purpose. The purpose of the threat assessment team is to establish a process focusing on behaviors that pose a threat to school safety while serving as a preventative measure to identify needs and provide support to students. This process is also known as a care assessment.

(b) Policies.

1. Each school district must adopt policies, consistent with this rule and with model policies developed by the Office, for the establishment of threat assessment teams at each school.

2. District threat assessment policies must include procedures for referrals to mental health services identified by the school district pursuant to Section 1012.584(4), F.S.

(c) Composition. Each school's threat assessment team must include persons with expertise in counseling, instruction, school administration, and law enforcement, as provided in Section 1006.07(7)(a), F.S.

1. The counseling team member must be a school-based mental health services provider that is able to access student mental health records.

2. The law enforcement team member must be a sworn law enforcement officer, as defined by Section 943.10(1), F.S., including a School Resource Officer, school-safety officer, or other active law enforcement officer. At a minimum, a law enforcement officer serving on a threat assessment team must have access to local Records Management System information, the Criminal Justice Information System, and the Florida Crime Information Center and National Crime Information Center databases. Officers serving on school-based threat assessment teams must also have clearance to review Criminal Justice Information and Criminal History Record Information.

3. A school guardian, as defined under Section 1006.12(3), F.S., or a school security guard, as defined under Section 1006.12(4), F.S., may not serve as the law enforcement member of a threat assessment team.

(d) Instrument. Each school-based threat assessment team must use the Comprehensive School Threat Assessment Guidelines (CSTAG) model to assess the behavior of persons who may pose a threat to school staff or students and to coordinate intervention and services for such persons.

(e) Training. All threat assessment team members must be trained on the CSTAG model. For assistance in accessing this training, districts must contact the Office in writing at SafeSchools@fldoe.org.

1. For the 2021-22 school year, each member of a threat assessment team must complete Office-approved training on the CSTAG model no later than December 31, 2021.

2. Beginning with the 2022-23 school year, threat assessment teams at each school must be fully staffed and all team members must complete CSTAG training before the start of the school year. Those appointed to threat assessment teams after the start of the school year must complete CSTAG training within ninety (90) days of appointment.

(f) Meetings. Each school-based threat assessment team must meet as often as needed to fulfill its duties of assessing and intervening with persons whose behavior may pose a threat to school staff or students, but no less than monthly. Districts must adopt policies requiring threat assessment teams to maintain documentation of their meetings, including meeting dates and times, team members in attendance, cases discussed, and actions taken.

(g) Reporting. Each district must ensure that all threat assessment teams in the district report to the Office on the team's activities during the previous school year. The district school safety specialist must ensure all schools in the district timely report information required by this paragraph. Information described below is due by October 1 and must be reported using the FSSAT:

1. For the 2021-22 school year, the total number of threat assessments conducted, the number of transient threats, and the number of substantive threats.

2. Beginning in the 2022- 23 school year, the information required by subparagraph (10)(g)1. and the gender, race, and grade level of all students assessed by the threat assessment team.

(11) SESIR. Each district superintendent must designate persons responsible for SESIR reporting for their district and ensure that those persons receive live or online training, as provided in Rule 6A-1.0017(10), F.A.C.

(12) Zero-Tolerance Policies and Agreements with Law Enforcement.

(a) Each district must have zero-tolerance policies, including policies that define acts that require consultation with and reporting or referral to law enforcement, as provided by Section 1006.13, F.S.

(b) Each district must have an agreement with the county sheriff's office and local police department for reporting acts that pose a threat to school safety, as provided by Section 1006.13(4), F.S.

(c) Each district must adopt a cooperative agreement with the Department of Juvenile Justice regarding enforcement of no contact orders, as provided by Section 1006.13(6), F.S.

(13) School Security Risk Assessments and the FSSAT.

(a) Each year, the school safety specialist must complete a school security risk assessment on or before October 1 at each public school in their district using the FSSAT, as provided in Section 1006.07(6)(a)4., F.S.,

and Section 1006.1493, F.S. The school security risk assessment is not required for virtual schools or programs that do not have a physical school site.

(b) School safety specialists must report by October 15 each year in the FSSAT that required school security risk assessments are completed, as provided in Section 1011.62(15), F.S.

(c) School safety specialists must provide recommendations to the district school board and the district school superintendent, identifying strategies and activities the board should implement to improve safety and security, as provided in Section 1006.07(6)(a)4., F.S.

(d) Within thirty (30) days after the district school board meets to receive such findings, but not later than November 1, school safety specialists must submit a district best-practices assessment in the FSSAT which includes the school security risk assessment findings and recommendations as provided in Section 1006.07(6)(a)4., F.S.

(e) Each school district must develop policies that allow charter school personnel input access to the FSSAT or where input access is restricted to district personnel, develop policies for gathering information from charter schools so that FSSAT reporting requirements, including those for Fortify FL, threat assessment teams and active assailant response plans, include data from charter schools.

(14) First Responders' School Safety Recommendations.

(a) The district's school safety specialist must coordinate with public safety agencies, as defined in Section 365.171, F.S., that are designated first responders to a school's campus to tour each school's campus once every three (3) years and to provide recommendations related to school safety.

(b) Completion of such tours and any recommendations must be documented in each school's security risk assessment within FSSAT.

(c) The school safety recommendations made by public safety agencies shall be included in the school safety specialist's report to the superintendent and school board.

(15) Emergency drills.

(a) Active shooter and hostage situation drills must be conducted at least as often as fire drills are required by the Florida Fire Prevention Code, as adopted by the State Fire Marshal, available at www.myfloridacfo.com.

(b) Districts must document completion of emergency drills at all school facilities in the district.

(16) Active Assailant Response Plans.

(a) Each district school board must adopt an active assailant response plan, as provided in Section 1006.07(6)(c), F.S. Active assailant response plans must include, at a minimum, plans and expectations for responding to an active assailant situation using the following three (3) strategies: evading or evacuating, taking cover or hiding, and responding to or fighting back.

(b) All school personnel must be trained annually on the procedures in the district's active assailant response plan. Completion of this annual training for all school personnel must be documented in the FSSAT by October 1 of each year.

(17) School Safety Specialist Training.

(a) Each district school superintendent must designate a school safety specialist for the district that is either a school administrator employed by the district, or a law enforcement officer employed by the sheriff's office located in the school district, as provided by Section 1006.07(6)(a), F. S.

(b) Within thirty (30) calendar days of appointment, school safety specialists must complete the following online Federal Emergency Management Agency Independent Study courses: Multi-Hazard Planning for Childcare; Introduction to the Incident Command System, ICS 100; Preparing for Mass Casualty Incidents: A Guide for Schools, Higher Education, and Houses of Worship; Multi-Hazard Emergency Planning for Schools; and Planning for the Needs of Children in Disasters. These courses can be found at <https://training.fema.gov/>. School safety specialists must maintain certificates of completion.

(c) Within one (1) year of appointment, and annually thereafter, school safety specialists must earn a certificate of completion of school safety specialist training provided by the Office.

(18) Reporting Safe-School Officer Discipline, Dismissal or Discharge of Firearm.

(a) Discharge of a weapon. The school superintendent must notify the Office when a safe-school officer assigned to any school facility in the district discharges a firearm in the exercise of safe-school officer duties, other than for training purposes, as provided in Section 1006.12(5), F.S. Notification must be made no later than seventy-two (72) hours of the incident by submitting Form SSON-2021 to SafeSchools@fldoe.org.

(b) Officer dismissal or discipline.

1. The school superintendent must notify the Office when a safe-school officer assigned to a school facility in the district has been disciplined for misconduct or has been dismissed from their duties as a safe-school officer by their employer, including in cases where the officer is reassigned or moved to another school location, whether by

a school district, charter school, law enforcement agency, or private security company, as provided in Section 1006.12(5), F.S. Notification must be made no later than seventy-two (72) hours of the dismissal or disciplinary action by submitting Form SSON-2021 to SafeSchools@fldoe.org.

2. The school superintendent must notify the Office when there is an allegation of misconduct that results in a safe-school officer being placed on administrative leave or reassigned pending completion of an investigation using the procedure set forth in subparagraph (18)(b)1. Within fifteen (15) days of completion of the investigation, updated information regarding the result of the investigation must be provided to the Office.

(c) School districts must implement procedures to ensure that charter schools, law enforcement agencies, and private security firms employing or contracting with safe-school officers timely report discipline and dismissal of safe-school officers and any discharge of an officer's weapon outside of training activities, so that districts can meet the reporting requirements of this subsection.

(19) Charter School Safety Requirements.

(a) Monitoring of safety requirements for a charter school is the responsibility of the district's school safety specialist. The Office, as provided in subsection (5) of this rule, will provide any notices of suspected deficiency occurring at or by a charter school, to the district's school safety specialist for investigation and response.

(b) To ensure that a district school safety specialist is able to monitor and report on school safety and security at a charter school, each charter school must:

1. Provide contact information in the manner and frequency required by the school safety specialist;

2. Timely respond to requests for information and access made by the school safety specialist and the Office related to safety requirements set forth in this rule; and

3. Coordinate with the school safety specialist on curing suspected deficiencies identified by the specialist and the Office.

(c) Charter schools and their governing boards are responsible for meeting the safety requirements set forth in this rule. All safety requirements as set forth in subsections (6)-(18) apply to charter schools, with any changes to the requirements set forth below:

1. Safe-school officer.

a. District school safety specialists are responsible for ensuring that all charter school facilities in their district have at least one (1) safe-school officer assigned and present on campus while school is in session.

b. Each charter school is authorized to establish its own policy on when a safe-school officer must be assigned to a school facility for extracurricular activities and for school-sponsored events or adopt the district's policy.

c. District school safety specialists must keep accurate records of the number and type of safe-school officers assigned to each charter school in the district.

d. Districts and charter school governing boards must work together to determine the type of safe-school officer under Section 1006.12, F.S., that will be assigned to each charter school. The safe-school officer options for a charter school are:

(I.) Upon agreement between the school district and charter school, a school resource officer, pursuant to Section 1006.13(1), F.S.;

(II.) A school guardian, pursuant to Section 1006.13(3), F.S. and

(III.) A school security guard, pursuant to Section 1006.13(4), F.S.

2. Alyssa's Alert. A charter school is authorized to select any mobile panic alert system that meets all requirements of Section 1006.07(4), F.S., including a system that is not the same one selected by the charter's sponsor. Prior to contracting for a system that differs from that used by the charter's sponsor, a charter school must consult with the sponsor on any potential safety impact of using a different system.

3. FortifyFL.

a. The requirements set forth for districts as provided in subsection (9) for FortifyFL apply to the charter's governing board.

b. Where a charter school lacks input access to FortifyFL, the charter's governing board must ensure that the information for school listings and school contacts, as provided in paragraphs (9)(a) and (b), are timely provided to the district according to their policies.

c. A charter school governing board must ensure that FortifyFL contains contact information (telephone number and email address) for a school administrator designated by the governing board or principal to receive tips and notifications from Fortify FL for the charter school.

4. Threat Assessment Teams. A charter school governing board is authorized to adopt its own threat assessment policies or adopt the district's policies, as long as the charter school's policies meet the requirements of Section 1006.07(7), F.S., and the requirements of subsection (10) of this rule.

5. SESIR. The SESIR duties set forth in subsection (11) must be performed by the charter school's principal or equivalent personnel, as provided in Rule 6A-1.0017(11), F.A.C.

6. Zero-Tolerance Policies and Agreements with Law Enforcement.

a. In order to comply with SESIR incident reporting procedures set forth in Rule 6A-1.0017, F.A.C., charter school governing boards must establish policies identifying which incidents require consultation with or referral to law enforcement. In lieu of establishing their own policies, a charter school is authorized to adopt the sponsor's policy.

b. Charter school governing boards are not required to enter agreements, as set forth in paragraphs (13)(b) and (c).

7. School Security Risk Assessments and the FSSAT.

a. In order for the district's school safety specialist to complete the school security risk assessment at a charter school and to meet the reporting requirements found in subsection (13), a charter school must cooperate with the school safety specialist's requests for information and access.

b. For charter schools that lack input access to the FSSAT, the charter school's governing board must ensure that any information needed for required reporting of safety information within FSSAT is timely provided to the district according to their policies.

8. Emergency Drills. Drills conducted at charter schools must be coordinated with the district's school safety specialist and documentation required by subsection (15) must be provided by the charter school to the sponsoring district's school safety specialist, by the method and time, as established by the district's school safety specialist.

9. Active Assailant Response Plans. The requirements for districts, as provided in subsection (16) for an Active Assailant Response Plan, apply to the charter's governing board. Each charter school must adopt a plan and train all school personnel by the beginning of the 2021-22 school year. Charter schools that open after the 2021-22 school year must adopt an active assailant response plan and train all school personnel on the plan before the school opens.

10. Reporting Safe-School Officer Discipline, Dismissal or Discharge of Firearm. Charter school governing boards must comply with district procedures authorized under paragraph (18)(c) for reporting information on

safe-school officer discipline and dismissal, and discharge of a firearm in the exercise of safe-school officer duties occurring while assigned to a charter school.

(20) Virtual Schools. Virtual schools and their governing boards are responsible for meeting the safety requirements set forth in this rule, with any changes to the requirements set forth below:

(a) Except for the requirement to complete the district best practices assessment found in paragraph (13)(d), subsections (7), (8), and (13) – (18) of this rule are inapplicable to schools without a physical location for instruction of students, such as virtual schools, virtual instruction programs, franchises of the Florida Virtual School and virtual charter schools.

(b) Florida Virtual School may meet the requirements of paragraphs (12)(b) and (c) with policies that address referral and consultation with law enforcement, and enforcement no contact orders.

(21) The following forms are hereby incorporated by reference and made a part of this rule. Copies may be obtained from the Florida Department of Education, 325 West Gaines Street, Tallahassee, FL 32399-0400.

(a) Comprehensive School Threat Assessment Guidelines, Form CSTAG-2021(insert link) effective July 2021.

(b) Safe-School Officer Notification Report, Form SSON-2021 (insert link) effective July 2021.

(c) Model Behavioral Threat Assessment Policies and Best Practices for K-12 Schools, Form BTAP-2021 (insert link) effective July 2021.

Rulemaking Authority 1001.02(2)(n), 1001.11(9), 1001.212(14), FS. Law Implemented 943.082(4)(b), 1001.11(9), 1001.212(4), (12), (14), (15), 1006.07(6), (7), (9), 1006.12(5), 1006.1493, FS. History–New