



Safe Schools Agenda

Volume 11, Issue 9

September 2004

Route to:

___ Superintendent
___ School Business Off.
___ Athletic Director
___ Supt. Bldgs/Grounds
___ Site Administrators
___ Transportation Dir.
___ Lunch Director
___ Classroom Teachers
___ _____

A monthly service provided to help you with your efforts to make your school safe for students, staff and the public

Safeguarding Staff and Students

Our schools take pride in being open, welcoming and safe places for students to learn and grow. Since 9/11/2001, the concept has taken on new meaning and members of the school community have shouldered new responsibilities. The threat of terrorism continues as we learn more and more about plans to bring harm to our citizens. This is no time for complacency. Schools are particularly vulnerable to terrorist attack, be it from foreign or domestic sources. They are accessible, vulnerable, and are prominent institutions in their communities.

About one quarter of the population of our country attends school each day. What a target for those who want to make a violent statement. It is instructive to recall that in the past 10 years, more than 300 school-associated violent deaths occurred on or near school campuses. We have learned that violence does not always happen "at some other school".

The responsibility and burden of providing a safe, secure and welcoming campus now requires that all members of the community play their respective roles in learning, planning, training and practicing emergency and contingency procedures.

It is imperative that each school community update existing safe school and crisis response plans, coordinate with other community agencies, train staff and conduct practice sessions. Safe school planning should address all levels of threats and risks, from violence from the outside to natural disasters to bullying. (Your teenagers see bullying as a bigger threat than terrorism.)

At the administrative level, has your school:

- developed a comprehensive school safety plan, involved community partners and conducted an assessment of your risks and assets?
- enhanced security by controlling access, screening, registering and badging all visitors?
- created a crisis response plan and an incident command structure?
- coordinated your emergency plans with community agencies?
- put in place a process to assure that all facilities and procedures are reviewed for vulnerability and adherence to established standards?
- reviewed and updated your emergency response procedures in the past three months?
- communicated with staff, students and the public about your safe school plan and what is expected of them?
- developed a plan to ensure that staff will receive proper training on their roles in taking protective measures?
- scheduled training sessions for staff on crisis response procedures?
- created threat assessment teams to monitor the behaviors of troubled students?
- kept key personnel in touch with new developments in threats and the Homeland Security Advisory System?

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For the Faculty: Tips on Personal Safety

1. Wear appropriate shoes. Watch out for wet floors, especially in hallways. Slips, trips and falls are your greatest hazards in school.
2. Watch out for slippery parking lots. Take your time getting out of your car, and let us know if we have failed to get the parking lot in shape before your arrived.
3. Report all unsafe acts and conditions promptly. You owe it to your students and your colleagues.
4. Inspect all instructional sites/classrooms before beginning activities. Adjust student activities if necessary to minimize risk from hazards.
5. Be aware of your surroundings at all times. Keep your valuables locked up. Don't work in the building alone, or exit alone to a dark parking lot.
6. Don't climb on chairs. Get help. Lift with your legs, not your back.
7. Share responsibility for control of cafeterias, hallways and sidewalks. Your quality of life is determined in large part by the culture of the school, and whether the adults are in charge.
8. Help control access to the school. If there is a stranger in the building, ask if you can help. Direct the person back to the office for clearance and issuance of a visitor badge. Notify the office that a stranger is in the building.
9. Supervise students consistently, in accordance with the discipline code. We have legal duties in this area.
10. Supervise playgrounds vigorously. Severe injuries are incurred on elementary playgrounds; plaintiff attorneys always claim lack of supervision (and they are often right).
11. Plan, plan, plan. Well-planned lessons, which actively engage the students, go a long way to controlling student behavior. Keep good records of your lesson plans and student behavior incidents. They will be invaluable if a liability claim arises.
12. Be aware of student limitations and medical conditions. Don't mismatch students of varied abilities with each other or with activities beyond their capabilities.
13. Know and follow district policy on physical contact with students. Never put yourself in a situation where you are alone with a student of the opposite sex.
14. If there is a fight between students:
 - Keep calm, identify yourself
 - Pick an onlooker by name and tell him/her to get help from a specific person
 - Dismiss the other onlookers
 - Find out who is the aggressor. Then direct the other person involved to another location
 - Don't intervene physically unless you are very confident that you can do so without sustaining injury to yourself
 - Document your recollection of the events as soon as possible
15. Support your colleagues
16. Learn and practice conflict diffusion and mediation strategies. Don't be part of the violence problem
17. Be consistent in your dealings with your students.
18. Respect your students and their parents, but let there be no doubt that school rules apply here and that the adults in charge.
19. Know your responsibilities in implementing school security plans. Participate in safe school planning teams and training activities.
20. Be observant. Watch for behaviors and events that are out of the ordinary or suspicious such as: a person or student hanging around or loitering without purpose; a person or student seeking access to school after hours; a person or student who has a "blank look" on his or her face; a person or student wearing unusual clothing which may conceal a weapon or explosives; disgruntled students, staff, parents or members of the community; threatening websites, e-mail messages; graffiti and slam books; a deviation from normal patterns of activity by vendors, delivery or service personnel.