

New York State School Safety Group 491

Safe Schools Agenda

Route to:

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

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

Mitigate Risk of Avian Flu Now

The Centers for Disease Control and Prevention considers there to be a distinct possibility of a pandemic of the H5N1 avian flu virus in the near future. The virus has not mutated to a human-to-human transmittable form, nevertheless there are practical steps that can be taken now to mitigate the harm that will be done by such a pandemic. Even if the onslaught of a pandemic seems remote, building these steps into the culture of the organization will make it stronger and better able to carry on when and if a pandemic hits.

1. Emphasize hygiene - encourage hand washing.
2. Regularly change high efficiency particulate air filters
3. Stockpile hand sanitizer, gloves, and masks.
4. Develop procedures and authorization for sending sick staff members and children home until they are medically cleared to return.
5. Anticipate the need to be flexible with leave policies and work schedules.
6. Develop position - by - position plans for staff members to work from home as appropriate.
7. Cross train to anticipate shortages in critical positions.
8. Build a cohort of potential substitutes from retired staff members and others from the community who are likely to be laid off during a pandemic.

9. "Pandemic-proof" your supply chains for critical goods, materials and services.
10. Develop and test emergency communication plans.
11. Plan for emergency energy sources in expectation that there will be electrical outages and brownouts.
12. Direct staff members to cdc.gov/flu/workplace for info on pandemic flu.

Here's Help with Incident Management Training

The U.S. Fire Administration (USFA) has announced the availability of position task books for All-Hazard Incident Management (IMT) members. Each position task book lists the competencies and behaviors for the specific position in a format that allows the trainee to be evaluated against those competencies and behaviors. Successful performance leads to certification in the position.

At this time, eight All-Hazard position task books are available for download from <http://www.usfa.dhs.gov/fireservice/subjects/incident/imt/imt-training.shtm>: Incident Commander, Operations Section Chief, Planning Section Chief, Logistics Section Chief, Finance/Administration Section Chief, Safety Officer, Liaison Officer, and Public Information Officer.

Get Risk Management on the Agenda

The pressure is on to fulfill the primary mission of the school while adjusting to outside pressures to meet NCLB standards. At the same time, school staffs meet a rising tide of hazards - students bringing weapons to school, hazing, cyber bullying, student-on-student sexual harassment, - the list goes on and on. How to manage these risks to minimize the harm that can come to people and physical assets of the school? Two thoughts come to mind: 1. Elevate the role of the Risk Manager in the organization, whether it is a stand-alone position or the duties are assigned under another title. Make sure that everyone knows what the Risk Manager does. 2. Get real commitment from the Board of Education. The Board will buy into RM fully if it knows what it is all about and how central it is to their legal and moral responsibilities.

On Stranger Danger

A young mother e-mailed us and asked us to include information on “stranger danger” in this newsletter. The topic is a bit far afield for a newsletter purportedly devoted to issues of liability, and we are confident that the topic is covered carefully in K-5 classrooms. We are not so sure that it is addressed in the upper grades, which is something for educators to consider.

Abduction of children is a real problem with potentially deadly consequences. Over 2,000 children are reported missing each year. Many of these are runaways, or are taken by non-custodial parents, or are found within several hours. **About 100 missing children each year are murdered.** A tragic reason for sharing information on stranger danger, even if it is repetitious.

Tips for Teachers and Administrators:

⇒ You do have responsibility to act “in loco parentis” while children are in your control. You must take reasonable precautions to protect children from foreseeable sources of harm while they are in your control.

Tips for Parents:

⇒ Teaching your children not to talk to strangers may not be enough. Last year, a boy lost in the woods hid from searchers because they were “strangers.” Teach them about stranger awareness by reviewing scenarios that predators use such as asking for directions, or help in finding a lost puppy, etc. Teach your children that a stranger is not a strange looking person, but someone that he/she does not know.

⇒ Whenever possible, children should have a buddy with them. They should know what to do if he/she is approached by a stranger; a safe place to go to; and to yell “NO” and run to a safe place.



- ⇒ Children should know their full name, phone number and address.
- ⇒ Children should know not to open the door, especially when they are home alone.
- ⇒ Children should know to avoid places that are not safe - isolated areas like the woods or small, dark streets.
- ⇒ Children should know that strangers should ask adults, not children for help.
- ⇒ Children should know that they should stay away from strangers’ cars at all times.
- ⇒ Children should be taught to trust their instincts. If his/her instinct is that something is dangerous or just not quite right, get out of the area, tell an adult, or call **911**. And make a lot of noise if he/she is scared.
- ⇒ Make sure your child has identification such as a tag on clothing with his/her name, your name, and a local phone number.
- ⇒ Have a current picture of the child, and identifying information written down at all times.
- ⇒ When shopping or attending large events, set up a meeting place if you become separated, or give the child a walkie-talkie so that you can get in touch quickly. (A cell phone may not work inside shopping malls.)



Helpful Websites:

- <http://www.keepkidshealthy.com>
“A Pediatrician’s Guide to Keeping Kids Healthy and Safe.”
- <http://www.theparentreport.com>
- <http://www.kidshealth.org>
- <http://www.cityofdekalb.com>
- <http://www.safetycops.com>