

Students Speak Up, Safely Take the Wheel

For most American teenagers, learning to drive is a rite of passage. Many military teenagers stationed overseas miss out on this experience because they cannot obtain a driver's license in the host country without a driver's education course. Now, thanks to recommendations from student leaders on the Teen Advisory Panel of the Army Family Action Plan (AFAP), teens on seven garrisons in Germany can learn to drive.

Every year, installations around the world hold AFAPs to improve the quality of life for military family members. When teenagers at the 2010 conference in Weisbaden spoke up about driving, Installation Management Command



(IMCOM) purchased seven driving simulators for use as part of a driver's education program conducted by Child and Youth Services (CYS). Shay Berchtold, the School of Knowledge, Inspiration, Exploration and Skills (SKIES) director, runs the program at Kaiserslautern. She notes many teenagers enjoy learning on the simulator. "It makes most adults sick with all the motion, but for the kids it's like a video game."

The driving simulators solved a paradox. "Under German law, it is illegal to get behind the wheel unless accompanied by a German driving instructor," points out Berchtold. "So parents can't just take their child out on the road and practice like they do in the States." Without the simulators, students would need to fly home to learn to drive. Instead, after completing the half credit, 50-hour high school course that included 10 hours of simulator training, students can take follow-on instruction with a German driving instructor. The German instructors were provided training on the American driving manuals so they can teach the American standards of driving while pointing out the differences between driving in the States and driving in Germany.

While the students are learning to drive safely, parents are happy because children attending college in the United States arrive prepared for a U.S. driver's license. "Students returning to the U.S. with a valid German driver's license are immediately eligible for a stateside license in 34 states due to a reciprocal agreement with Germany," noted Judi Patrick, School Liaison Officer for U.S. Army Europe. "We are excited to announce that as of April 2012, less than a year since this program began, we have trained over 250 students in Driver's Education on Army Garrisons in Germany," said Patrick. "While the comprehensive program is currently only available in Germany, plans are in the works to extend it to Italy, Belgium, and the Netherlands in the future."

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News & Updates



Two New Bullying Documentaries Encourage Students to Speak Up

According to recent government statistics, bullying is on the rise nationwide. In 2009, the U.S. Department of Education reported that more than a quarter of students between the ages of 12 and 18 said they had been victims of bullying. A recent



rash of bullying-related suicides among students prompted initiatives, such as the federal government's Stopbullying.gov campaign, conferences, and most recently, two new documentaries designed to raise awareness of the need to speak up in defense of victims.

President Obama recently introduced *Speak Up*, a 25-minute bullying documentary, produced by the Cartoon Network as part of the "Stop Bullying: Speak Up" campaign. In this documentary, real teens describe their experience being bullied. Interviews with celebrity athletes such as tennis star Venus Williams and basketball hero Chris Webber address the importance of reporting bullying to a trusted adult. In his introductory remarks, President Obama acknowledged that bullying is something that affects all Americans. "Everyone has to take action against bullying," he said.

While Speak Up was designed primarily for viewing by middle school students, another documentary, Bully, was released in some U.S. theaters March 30 with a rating of PG-13. The movie Bully goes beyond interviews and testimonies to provide a "fly on the wall" perspective on bullying as it occurred over the course of a year in a middle school in Sioux City, Iowa. Filmmakers followed Alex Libby and four other students on the bus,

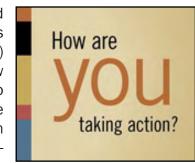
in the hallways, and at P.E. class, recording the taunts, insults, and abuse they received from peers. Some of the material is painful to watch.

Child mental health professionals have expressed concern that bullied children may be re-traumatized while viewing the film. Similarly, children who witnessed bullying in the past may experience painful feelings of guilt and need additional support. Because of this, the DVD release of the film this autumn will include instructional materials for parents and educators who wish to show the film to students. The materials will include talking points and resources for further support.

DoDEA uses several effective bullying prevention programs. To learn more about DoDEA's efforts to implement the federal government wide initiative Stopbullying.gov campaign, visit www.dodea.edu/back_to_school/2011_12.cfm?cld=bully&sld=Home.

SAMHSA Establishes National Prevention Week: May 20-26

The Substance Abuse and Mental Health Services Administration (SAMHSA) has established a new annual observance to raise awareness of the importance of prevention programs. National Prevention Week, May 20-26,



2012, "celebrates the work that community organizations and individuals do year-round to prevent substance abuse and promote mental, emotional, and behavioral well-being." To learn more, visit www.samhsa.gov/preventionweek.

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Tchools

Safe Schools Planning

Spring Fever Brings Bomb Threats and Other Disruptions

Veteran school administrators recognize that May brings "bomb threat season" as warmer weather, the end of the school year, and final exams increase the temptation to call in a bomb threat to get out of class. During an interview at DoDEA Headquarters, Ms. Kim Perino, Program Manager for Emergency Preparedness, noted that a simple way to plan bomb threat response procedures involves thinking logically about how a bomb threat unfolds from start to finish. The typical bomb threat includes the initial threat, reporting, response, and investigation.

Perino suggested administrators start by considering the source. "There are three ways schools can find out about bomb threats," Perino explained, "verbal, written, or physical." Verbal bomb threats could include phone calls to the school office or upset individuals making a threat in person. Written threats could be received via text message, e-mail, or from someone turning in a paper they find on the floor with a written threat or plan on it. Physical threats could include delivery of a suspicious package. Familiarizing staff with the procedures for responding to each type of threat, and keeping checklists readily available, ensures that everyone knows how to take appropriate action.

School officials need to preserve the evidence and report the threat to police or security officials. "The act of making a bomb threat is a crime, so bomb threats merit reporting as a serious incident," observed Perino.

The usual response to a bomb threat involves evacuation. Movement of students and staff could vary depending on the reported location of the threat. For example, based on the information available, law enforcement/security officials may direct the school to evacuate to a different location than the normal evacuation site. Discussing the procedures at a crisis management team meeting and practicing evacuation increases the probability of a smooth response.

Establishing options for communication during movement of students and staff also improves response. Perino noted that school personnel should not use radios or cell phones within a distance of 200 to 300 feet of the suspected location of a bomb.



Follow up actions can include formal reporting, discussion of how to improve procedures for future incidents, and investigation by law enforcement. "Let the police conduct their investigation," advised Perino. Sometimes the language used in the threat or the means of delivery can help police identify the perpetrator.

When confronted with a rash of bomb threats, some school administrators have developed creative approaches to deterring threats originating from students. Years ago, one administrator reportedly told students that if the school lost academic time due to bomb threats classes would be held on Saturday. And it worked. In the U.S. Department of Justice report titled *Bomb Threats in Schools*, DOJ's Office of Community Oriented Policing Services suggests that school administrators remind students that making a bomb threat is a crime and the consequences can include significant fines and years in prison.

To request a copy of the updated August 2011 version of the report, visit DOJ's National Criminal Justice Research Service (NCJRS) at www.ncjrs.gov/App/Publications/abstract.aspx?ID=258822 or download the summary directly from the NCJRS database www.ncjrs.gov/App/AbstractDB/AbstractDBSearch.aspx. ■

Education Issues



Bracing for BRAC and other Transitions

As the end of the school year approaches, many students, families, and educators confront the need to move to a new location and re-establish themselves in a new community. Children from military families repeatedly demonstrate resilience in these circumstances, but occasionally, they might resist, resort to regressive behaviors, or voice frustration that they have sacrificed enough. In addition, this year many teachers, counselors, and school administrators affected by the Base Realignment and Closure (BRAC) decisions will find themselves closing one school and starting work this fall in a new school in a different community or continent. Understanding why moves cause tension and learning strategies for addressing inevitable hurdles can ease the transition for students, families, and educators.

Apprehension often stems from fear of the unknown, and sometimes, that fear is legitimate. Students value their friends highly and fear feeling isolated in a new school. Families know from experience the tasks required to move household belongings, and might not relish repeating the arrangements for everything from phone service to registering at the new school. Additionally, school staff members who have lived in a community for 15 to 20 years have legitimate concerns about the uncertainty surrounding a new position. Surrendering stability to find a new job in a new community is difficult.

Leaving the known for the unknown is scary, yet there are benefits. One reason former DoDEA students are highly valued by employers is the ability of DoDEA students to smoothly adjust to the constant reorganization of modern industry. Although changes are most painful for those individuals who have grown the deepest roots, these individuals are also in a position to reap the greatest benefit.

For additional information on managing change and referrals on resources available at new locations, visit Military One Source at www.militaryonesource.com. For additional information on coping with change, contact safeschools@csc.com.

Strategies for Managing Psychological Stress Due to Transitions

The table below identifies typical challenges associated with transition and strategies for responding to each, as well as actions that students, parents, and educators can take to implement these strategies. The tips for students can be adjusted to make them age appropriate for older elementary, middle, or high school students.

Challenge	Strategy	Students	Parents/	Educators
			Sponsors	
Replace fear	with action.	Research the new location; this breeds excitement.	Check with unit command to verify requirements.	Ensure students' records will transfer seamlessly.
Feeling overwhelmed by uncertainty.	Prioritize, focus.	Review goals. Identify achievable objectives for first month and year.	Delegate the tasks needed to complete the move, and schedule the work.	Distribute to parents/sponsors a checklist of actions needed.
Counter resistance	with Purpose.	Create reminders of purpose such as a screen saver or bookmark.	Thank friends for support. Prepare to fulfill personal mission.	Re-examine long range goals. Consider additional education.
Acknowledge loss	but strengthen connection.	Distribute address. Ask friends to write.	Use journaling/ blogging to share.	Refer parents to available resources.



The Riddle of the Quick Response (QR) Code: Holmes and Watson on the Case

Many advertisements, brochures and even children's magazines have been showing up recently with a mysterious square insignia that looks like a complex bar code. The accompanying text usually invites the reader to scan the Quick Response Code or "QR Code" into their smartphone to quickly upload information or a coupon for a discount. Usually, the code connects the reader directly to a Web site.

In their cameo appearance below, the famous fictional detective Sherlock Holmes and his assistant Dr. Watson attempt to solve the riddle of whether the QR Code is a good thing or a bad thing.

Watson: My dear Holmes, what is this strange hieroglyph tucked into the corner of this advertisement?



Holmes: My dear Watson, did you not see the phrase in the advertising copy that says, "If you would like a coupon visit our Web site?" Obviously, this is a two dimensional way of providing the URL or Web site link. Users with camera phones can take a picture of the QR Code using "third-party" applications, and it will take them directly to the Web site.

Watson: Indeed, but is it, as they say today, a benefit or a bug?

Holmes: That depends, Watson, on how it behaves when it enters your phone. Alas, you will not know the result until you have scanned it. It will either do damage or provide benefit. It might provide direct access to the information you seek, which would be a good thing. Then again, it might eat your computer — or implant coded instructions on your phone that allow someone else to control the device and extract information such as passwords, credit card numbers, and bank account information.

Watson: That sounds perfectly dreadful, Holmes! But how is one to know in advance whether the QR Code is dangerous?

Holmes: That, Watson, is precisely the problem. One cannot. In fact, some criminal elements purposely design their QR Code squares to show a message indicating the code did not scan correctly so that the victim forgets they attempted to scan it, when in fact, the malware has already gone to work taking over the computer.

Watson: Certainly there must be something we can do.



Evaluate based on context and source.
This QR Code example is from the U.S.
Computer Readiness
Team and leads to www.us-cert.gov.

Holmes: Supposedly yes, there are applications one can download from the Internet that will translate the two dimensional code into text so that users can read what it says before accessing the hyperlink. But alas, that is at best an unsatisfactory measure. The QR Code could still be a trick. The guideline for determining whether to click on normal URLs is not to click on a Web site unless you know who it is from and that it is safe. But with a QR Code, the user cannot see where they are going. For now, judicious people will refrain and reckless people will bear the consequences. It is not that different from crossing the street. Some will look both ways, and some, dear Watson, will get hit. Meanwhile, for a description of QR Codes from the Department of Homeland Security, visit the U.S. Government's Computer Emergency Readiness Team (US-CERT) at www.us-cert.gov and enter "QR Code" in the search window in the top right.

Prevention Programs



Making the Most of Military Family Life Consultants (MFLCs)

Just when counselors and school psychologists felt spread thinly between required meetings, duties, and standardized tests, the cavalry arrives in the form of Military Family Life Consultants (MFLCs). These licensed and credentialed counselors are specifically authorized by DoD to supplement existing military support services, including DoDEA schools and summer programs. Understanding the services that MFLCs can and cannot provide, helps counselors and school psychologists utilize MFLCs and leave themselves free to concentrate on the activities that only DoDEA personnel can accomplish.

According to the MFLC standard operating procedures, the Office of the Deputy Under Secretary of Defense for Military Community and Family Policy developed the MFLC program to provide "private and confidential non-medical, short term, situational, problem solving, and financial counseling services to augment existing military support services." That means that an MFLC is a licensed, independent contractor who is deployed to an installation for two to three months to help military personnel or their families with issues such as deployment, reunion and reintegration, communication, and grief and loss.



Two features distinguish the MFLC program from other sources of support for military families. According to the Office of the Secretary of Defense, "MFLC contacts are completely confidential; records are not kept, and details of interactions are not shared." In other words, if a military family member asks an MFLC consultant a question, the MFLC is not required to report that request up the chain of command. Naturally, MFLC consultants still have a professional "duty to warn" if an individual reports indications of potential or ongoing harm to self or others, but they can assist military families by helping them connect with local resources.

One DoDEA counselor who successfully incorporated MFLCs into the school's activities explained: "The MFLC will not be here in three months, so rather than use them for tasks that require a sustained relationship, the MFLC can teach a bullying prevention course or substance abuse prevention class and free up a counselor to meet with students individually." MFLCs can also provide logistical support and problem-solving.

There are some limitations. All MFLCs are professionally licensed care givers, but that includes psychologists, social workers, professional counselors, or family therapists, so a school might not be able to predict far in advance the exact capabilities that will be available. School officials can address this concern by coordinating with incoming MFLCs, however, to capitalize on their skills and experience.

And MFLCs bring resources! MFLCs come with access to a library of more than 150 modules that have briefings, materials, and talking points, and are ready for presentation. Reviewing the titles below can help school personnel start brainstorming how to supplement present efforts:

- Appropriate School Bus Behavior
- Avoiding and Putting a Stop to Gossip
- Building Partnerships with Parents
- Challenges of Reunion and Reintegration
- Coping with Job Uncertainty

- Cyber-bullying
- Deployment Survival (age-appropriate classes)
- Helping the Service Member Reconnect with their Child
- The Military Spouse: Commander and Chief on the Home Front

For more information about MFLCs contact mflc.program@healthnet.com. Share MFLC success stories at safeschools@csc.com.