



DODEA

# SAFE Schools

## NEWSLETTER



Volume XIV - Issue 3 - November 2013

### Evacuation Prompts Synchronized Response at Anderson Elementary

When Assistant Principal Arthur Flores arrived at Anderson Elementary School in Guam at 5:30 a.m. on May 30, he was hoping for two quiet hours at his desk before the start of the school day. Instead, he found broken doors and other signs of vandalism in the main office and the office of Principal Willette Horne-Barnes. Mr. Flores immediately alerted both Anderson Air Base security and Mrs. Horne-Barnes. As more than a dozen security officers began cordoning off both the middle and elementary schools and the start of the school day drew closer, Mr. Flores and Mrs. Horne-Barnes rapidly made a series of modifications to their school’s well-honed crisis management procedures in order to accommodate the fluidity of the situation.



*The collaborative relationship between Mr. Arthur Flores and Mrs. Horne-Barnes paid off during an incident at Anderson Elementary.*

While a K-9 unit swept the school, Mrs. Horne-Barnes called the transportation department and directed arriving buses to a staging area at a local housing complex. A third grade teacher who had previously served in the security forces, manned a busy intersection where he directed walkers and staff members arriving by car to the school’s standard evacuation site. Mrs. Horne-Barnes stayed with the incident commander, Investigator Steve Piott, and communicated with the District Superintendent’s Office, while Mr. Flores went to the evacuation site. “We were concerned about our primary age children and their safety and reaction to the situation,” explained Mr. Flores. “As students were guided to the evacuation site, we reassured them that they were safe and everything would be alright.”

Throughout the incident, both Mr. Flores and Mrs. Horne-Barnes communicated with each other and the staff members involved in directing buses, students, and teachers to their respective evacuation sites. In total, 1,100 students were accounted for and safely enclosed at a number of locations while investigators ensured the school was secure.

After the incident, the Crisis Management Team met to discuss lessons learned. “The success of this evacuation is attributed to our evacuation preparedness and all staff pulling together to ensure the safety of all students,” said Mrs. Horne-Barnes. “It was a huge team effort,” she added, pointing out that the school benefitted immensely from the coordinated response of the security forces. In addition to securing the school, they also apprehended the vandals. ■

### Inside This Issue

#### News & Updates

- Evacuation Prompts Synchronized Response at Anderson Elementary ..... 1
- On Veterans Day, Remember the Sacrifices of Military Children..... 2
- Solution to Student Cell Phone Usage During a Crisis Incident..... 2

#### Safe Schools Planning

- The Power of Positive School Climate ..... 3

#### Education Issues

- Three Coping Skills to Prevent Suicidal Ideation ..... 4

#### Cybersecurity

- Current Cyber Climate: a Cue for Caution..... 5
- DoD Protects Military Families from Financial Scams ..... 5

#### Prevention Programs

- Two Simple Phrases for Maintaining Access Control during Seasonal Celebrations ..... 6
- Stress Free Holiday Food Safety ..... 6

## On Veterans Day, Remember the Sacrifices of Military Children

On June 4, 1926, nearly eight years after the close of World War I, the U.S. Congress urged the president to issue a proclamation “calling upon the officials to display the flag of the United States on all government buildings on November 11.” Congress also encouraged citizens of the United States to observe the day in schools and churches, or other suitable places, with appropriate ceremonies of friendly relations with all other peoples.

Since that time, the annual observance we now call Veterans Day has offered a chance to pause to reflect on, and honor, the sacrifices of service members. In recent years, there has been growing awareness of the tremendous support that family members, particularly children, provide to successful military operations.

In 2012, when President Obama officially proclaimed November to be Military Family Month, he emphasized the commitments and sacrifices of military dependents. Military children, he noted, “show courage and resilience as they move from base to base, school to school, home to home. And even through the strain of deployment, military families strengthen the fabric of each community they touch and enrich our national life as shining examples of patriotism.”



During this month of commemoration and celebration of our military service members, it is appropriate to take a moment to also honor the children who give so much to support their parents. Despite the stresses and responsibilities that come with parental deployment and other military missions, these students arrive at school every day ready to learn. They take on additional chores at home. When the family relocates to a new installation, they make new friends. If that installation is overseas, they adapt by learning new languages and customs.

Military children really do serve as an example to others of “what resiliency looks like.” These students may not be veterans, but what DoDEA’s students give to our nation is nothing short of heroic. ■

## Solution to Student Cell Phone Usage During a Crisis Incident

Installation officials have acknowledged that cell phone messages sent by students during an incident could distract the response, particularly if the information sent is incomplete or inaccurate. Although most schools prohibit cell phone usage during school, many parents equip their students with phones to ensure they can communicate during an incident.

The gap between rules and reality is evident in the June 2013 U.S. Department of Education report *Indicators of School Crime and Safety* that noted: 90 percent of public schools prohibit student use of cell phones, including:

- ◆ 92 percent of elementary schools,
- ◆ 97 percent of middle schools, and
- ◆ 80 percent of high schools.

Consider working with Public Affairs in advance to craft a message that students can send once the situation is stabilized, such as: “Mom, I’m okay, we’re safe, do not come to school. Teachers are taking care of us.” ■

### DoDEA Headquarters Personnel

Rose Chunik, Chief, Office of Safety and Security  
 Adam Bergstrom, Program Manager, Antiterrorism  
 Jennifer Jones, Program Manager, Physical Security and  
 Emergency Preparedness  
 Donald Golaszewski, Program Manager, Safety and Occupational Health

### CSC Safe Schools Newsletter Editorial Staff

Sarah Markel; Melissa Reeves, Ph.D.; Brian McKeon; Patrick Feeney

The material herein, including hyperlinks, is presented for information purposes only and does not constitute official policy of the Department of Defense (DoD), or the Department of Defense Education Activity (DoDEA), nor does it constitute endorsement by DoD or DoDEA of any non-federal entity or its programs. All comments and questions should be directed to safeschools@csc.com.

## The Power of Positive School Climate



Quiet corridors, students involved in learning, and a sense of belonging have been hallmarks of DoDEA schools for years. Recently, educators across the country have been exploring how to establish this type of “positive school climate.” At a July 2013 presentation, leaders at DoDEA headquarters listened to Ron Astor, Ph.D., lead researcher on a DoDEA educational partnership project in San Diego, California, explain how his project team is sharing the magic of positive school climate with U.S. public schools.

The project team surveyed students, parents, and staff members to solicit their views of how to enhance school security and positive school climate. Then the team worked with teachers and parents to identify resources to implement the

suggestions. The resulting measures helped parents, students, and educators deepen their personal connection to the school.

Dr. Astor explained that one critical aspect of an effective approach involves considering the impact of “contextual factors” in the community on school climate. He used his personal “Matryoshka Doll Theory” of school security to illustrate how psychological tensions in the community affect the school. Just as the Russian dolls fit inside each other, the emotional climate experienced by students is influenced by the surrounding social stresses due to community crime, economic downturns, or military deployments.

As the project has moved into its third year, the team has been able to measure improvement and trace a statistically significant change in attitude. Interestingly, these improvements were the result of simple solutions. The ideas, suggested by parents and school staff members, included starting a school garden and inviting students and parents to participate in planting and caring for flowers. Quantitative benefits of these programs included a decrease in incidents of bullying and truancy, and an increase in observations of peer support, student conduct, and academic achievement.

One finding that could benefit other U.S. public schools, Dr. Astor noted, concerns celebrating racial and ethnic diversity: consider viewing a family’s connection with the military as another aspect of diversity. Thus, on November 10, 2012, one southern California school celebrated the 237th anniversary of the founding of the Marine Corps! The school held a “birthday party for the Marine Corps” and invited the parents of the military connected students to describe what it is like to serve in the military. This celebration subtly educated the other students, as well as staff members, about some of the stresses and privileges of serving as part of a military family. This insight strengthened the climate of the military-connected school. ■



### Six Steps to Establishing (and Maintaining) Positive School Climate

- ◆ Establish clear expectations for student behavior and achievement.
- ◆ Involve all stakeholders including: students, parents, teachers, and school support staff.
- ◆ Invite all stakeholders to support the effort with creative ideas.
- ◆ Share leadership, responsibility, and accountability.
- ◆ Embrace diverse perspectives.
- ◆ Celebrate inner strength and resilience.

## Three Coping Skills to Prevent Suicidal Ideation

A recent review of teen suicide prevention practices used since 1991 has found that school-based suicide prevention programs are, in fact, effective in increasing community knowledge and attitudes toward suicide. The review, which was commissioned by the U.S. federal government, concluded that the programs had only a negligible effect on reducing suicidal behavior. In other words, the programs effectively prevented suicide by teaching community members to identify risk factors for suicide, but they did not give individual students the coping skills necessary to prevent suicidal ideation.



Recent research conducted by a national policy institute, suggests that the onset of suicidal thoughts can be prevented by teaching young people three specific coping skills: problem solving, emotional regulation, and support seeking. The following is a brief overview of each technique.

Problem solving may seem self-explanatory, but in moments of stress, many people become overwhelmed by their troubles. Instead of avoiding difficulties, people with strong problem solving skills tend to break tasks down into manageable chunks, similar to the way students approach research projects. Teaching problem solving can reduce conflict among students, which in turn positively influences emotional well-being and behavior. For a fact sheet on how to help teens develop problem solving skills, visit [www.ohioline.osu.edu/hyg-fact/5000/pdf/5301.pdf](http://www.ohioline.osu.edu/hyg-fact/5000/pdf/5301.pdf).

Emotional Regulation is a skill many people, including adults, lack. It involves learning to understand how emotions work and developing the skills necessary to manage turbulent emotions rather than being managed by them. Practicing emotional regulation helps people reduce their vulnerability to negative emotions and to build positive emotional experiences. Individuals can learn emotional regulation by working with a clinical psychologist trained in a technique called dialectical behavior therapy. There is also a growing body of self-help information for individuals interested in developing their emotional regulation skills. To learn more about effective strategies, go to [www.ncbi.nlm.nih.gov/pubmed/22582737](http://www.ncbi.nlm.nih.gov/pubmed/22582737).

Many suicide prevention programs, including the SOS Signs of Suicide Program, emphasize support-seeking as an important skill in preventing suicide. Most suicide prevention literature urges people contemplating suicide to talk to a friend, reach out to a support hotline, or seek professional counseling. Unfortunately, many teenagers resist asking for help from adults and miss opportunities to solve small problems. Over time, those troubles metastasize and can begin to seem insurmountable. One study found that, in the case of dating violence, girls were much more likely to ask a friend for support, but rarely did the friends have the knowledge or experience to be of genuine assistance. Teachers, coaches, counselors, and parents/sponsors may wish to keep this in mind when they interact with students and encourage them to confide in a caring and trusted adult during times of stress. To request SOS kits or for more information, visit [www.militarymentalhealth.org](http://www.militarymentalhealth.org). ■

### Signs of Teen Suicide

According to the SOS (Signs of Suicide) Program, many of the signs and symptoms of suicidal feelings are similar to those of depression. The following are signs that an adolescent may be considering suicide and should be taken seriously:

- ▶ Changes in eating and sleeping habits;
- ▶ Withdrawal from friends, family, and regular activities;
- ▶ Giving away prized possessions;
- ▶ Unusual neglect of personal appearance;
- ▶ Loss of interest in pleasurable activities;
- ▶ Violent actions, rebellious behavior, or running away. ■

## Current Cyber Climate: a Cue for Caution

While Department of Defense (DoD) cybersecurity policies may seem tedious, these security precautions protect DoD networks and national security. A single misused or misplaced USB drive can threaten your organization’s sensitive information as well as your personal data.

Last June policymakers, industry experts, and DoD officials came together in Washington, D.C. to discuss and listen to the latest trends in defense policy at a U.S. national security conference. Amidst a packed agenda, several speakers stressed the topic of cybersecurity and warfare. Deputy Secretary of Defense Ashton Carter, who spoke at the conference, deemed the strategic importance of securing America’s cyberspace the highest priority: “We all have to play our part in defending the nation’s networks . . . [This is] job one!”



*Deputy Secretary of Defense Ashton Carter prioritizes cybersecurity.*

David Barno, a retired U.S. Army lieutenant general, summarized a series of cyber hacking incidents in the past 12 months to illustrate what he called the “silicon wars.” One attack, on August 15, 2012, was directed at an oil company’s 30,000 hard drives, which were wiped clean in an instant. One month later, another anonymous hacking of some dozen U.S. banks completely disrupted their ability to do business for days. Then in April of this year, the Associated Press Twitter account was hacked and issued a false news story. The 140 character message triggered a chain of events which caused the New York Stock Exchange to lose \$180 billion of value in seconds.

Today’s environment requires that all digital citizens secure not only personal networks and mobile devices, but also department or agency networks and devices. DoDEA educators and administrators can use the case studies mentioned above to remind students, staff, and others to take cybersecurity seriously. As one senior technology analyst put it: “We are all consumers of IT; we have to become consumers of our own protection, as well.” ■

### DoD Protects Military Families from Financial Scams

In a recent interview with the American Forces Press Service, Barbara Thompson, director of the Defense Department’s Office of Family Policy, Children, and Youth, spoke about the financial fraud threats facing active duty service members. Unfortunately, military personnel make lucrative targets for financial scammers, due to their dependable income and vulnerabilities associated with frequent transitions.

Military personnel need to beware of particular types of scams, including “movers” who lack liability insurance and those who simply steal household goods. Thompson reminded service members that they also need to protect themselves from scams involving: house foreclosures, auto loans, and credit cards. Several DoD resources exist to help military personnel avoid these particular scams:

- ▶ The Military OneSource website offers financial counseling and good consumer tip sheets. Call Military OneSource at 800-342-9647 or visit the financial counseling section on [www.militaryonesource.mil/](http://www.militaryonesource.mil/).
- ▶ The Better Business Bureau Military Line has information on questionable businesses ([www.bbb.org/us/military-line/](http://www.bbb.org/us/military-line/)).
- ▶ Installation legal assistance officers and installation financial counselors provide support and guidance at family assistance centers on base.

“The bottom line,” Thompson said “is you have to be a smart and savvy consumer.” She encourages service members to thoroughly investigate off-installation service providers or businesses and to know their rights prior to entrusting any funds or goods to anyone. ■

## Two Simple Phrases for Maintaining Access Control during Seasonal Celebrations

November and December bring celebrations, parties, and guests bearing trays of food to schools. To maintain access control despite an increase in visitors, remember these two magical phrases:



- ◆ “May I help you?” This simple phrase can be used to redirect visitors to the school office or prompt individuals to introduce themselves and state the purpose of their visit. If someone encountered in the hallway is not wearing a visitor’s badge he or she should be redirected to the front office.
- ◆ “Two logs are better than one.” If several visitors need to sign in simultaneously, office personnel can spread pages from a loose leaf visitors log and start two lines. Consolidate the entries later.

School security is only as strong as the weakest link. Remind staff members before the planned event that the commitment and vigilance of every individual helps maintain the high standards established during the year. ■

## Stress Free Holiday Food Safety

Along with falling temperatures and rising cheer, November marks the beginning of the holiday season. During this season many family, friends, and communities will gather to enjoy extensive feasts prepared by each other for each other. Now is the time to start thinking about food safety, said Colleen Kesselring, registered dietitian, DoDEA School Meals Program. She cited the [foodsafety.gov](http://foodsafety.gov) holiday reminder, which encourages individuals to take steps to ensure “that your special meal is successful, safe, and stress-free.”



Watch a demonstration of safe food handling techniques at [www.foodsafety.gov/keep/events/holidays/index.html](http://www.foodsafety.gov/keep/events/holidays/index.html).

No one wants to bring or prepare the dish that makes someone sick at a school or office holiday party. So, in the June 2013 DoDEA Newsletter, Ms. Kesselring introduced the four tenets of food safety: Clean, Separate, Cook, and Chill. To further help cooks and helpers more effectively and efficiently implement that four step process, Kesselring shared a list of five essential tools and practices that provide the foundation for an illness-free holiday season:

1. Food thermometers are absolutely necessary for ensuring the turkey and other meats are thoroughly cooked to the core. The bacteria *Clostridium Perfringens* found in meat is responsible for over one million illnesses every year, but is killed by heat.
2. Hand sanitizer should be used and easily accessible to help prevent the spread of the bacteria on human skin (*Staphylococcus*) onto food.
3. Appropriate serving utensils, dishes, and platters allow for “small batch” serving, so the bulk of the food can stay hot in the oven, or chilled in the refrigerator. As the rule dictates, perishable foods left at room temperature for two hours must be tossed out.
4. Slow cookers, warming trays, and hot chafing dishes will keep food hot and safe in the buffet line.
5. Storage containers, sticky notes, and a marker allow for safe storage and proper labeling.

While everyone is vulnerable to foods tainted by bacteria, viruses, parasites, and other contaminants, Kesselring pointed out that some groups are particularly vulnerable. “The elderly, young children, pregnant women, and persons treated for certain illnesses are at greater risk for adverse outcomes,” she noted. For additional resources and tips, such as food storage labels or refrigerator storage charts, contact [safeschools@csc.com](mailto:safeschools@csc.com). For more information on preventing food poisoning, visit [www.foodsafety.gov/poisoning/index.html](http://www.foodsafety.gov/poisoning/index.html). ■