



DoDEA

SAFE Schools NEWSLETTER



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Reporting Status Via E-mail During Lockdowns

Crisis Management Teams in the United States are using e-mail to account for attendance during a lockdown. In the subject line of an e-mail, teachers write "Room 104: all present" if everyone is present. If missing two students they write "Room 104: -2"

In the body of the e-mail they list the students' names and note "at counselor's office." If teachers pulled three students from the hall into their room they write, "Room 204: +3" and list the names. If e-mail is not working, staff report attendance via intercom, phone, or other means. ■

Creativity Helps Maintain Security Awareness

At Zama High School (ZHS) in Japan, Principal Jerry Ashby continually looks for ways to integrate security awareness into the culture of the school. "We want the students and their families to see that safety, in general, as well as specific safety practices, are important at our school," notes Ashby. "This is not just something we have to do to check a box."

Ashby uses the school newsletter to maintain a dialogue about security with the Zama community. While the Zama High School Family Newsletter is written by the students in Sharon Goodman's journalism class, Ashby regularly submits security-related topics.



Journalism students at Zama High School incorporate security related articles into the school's Family Newsletter.

Recently the Zama school newsletter published an article about video game violence that had originally appeared in the DoDEA Safe Schools News-

letter. "I always read the Safe Schools Newsletter with the idea of passing information along to teachers, students, and parents. If there's an article that addresses issues parents need to know about, I will use the entire article or parts of it," notes Ashby.

Another creative measure used by the ZHS principal includes "Safety Week" which is held each October. "We want students to focus on safety for longer than it takes to conduct a quick drill," noted Ashby. During Safety Week the school conducted different drills every other day.

ZHS continues to conduct protective action drills throughout the year. Ashby notes that setting aside a week to focus on security awareness has been an effective way to emphasize the importance of security with Zama students. As Ashby points out, "We think we won their sustained attention early." ■

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“In Case of Emergency” (ICE)

In the wake of the July 7, 2005 terrorist attacks in London, emergency responders started the “ICE” campaign. ICE stands for “in case of emergency.” This campaign is gaining popularity in the United States.

A British paramedic noted that when he arrived at scenes of accidents, there were always mobile phones with patients. However, medics could never figure out which number to call. Individuals can assist rescue workers and hospital staff by noting their emergency contact numbers in the phone book of their cell phones using the prefix ICE, as in “ICE-Dad” or “ICE-Sue.”

As awareness of this “best practice” spreads, more rescue workers and hospital staff may call these numbers to alert family members of the predicament. Although individuals would not want to rely solely on inserting ICE in their cellular phone books, this practice helps responders gather critical medical information quickly in the event of a crisis. It can also be helpful in locating the owners of lost mobile phones. ■

MySpace Increases Youth Protections

In January, the online social network MySpace agreed with Attorney Generals from 49 states to implement new standards to protect the safety of children who use their site. The new standards, which are called “The Principles of Networking” include design features which are safer for children and easier for parents to use.

MySpace agreed to make the profiles of younger users private so they could not be accessed by potential predators. A third-party firm has been hired to block the use of the site by registered sex offenders. (According to the New York Times, this measure alone resulted

in 29,000 people being banned from the site.) Despite the changes agreed to by MySpace, savvy children can easily circumvent the security measures by setting up new e-mail addresses. Ultimately, parents are in the best position to help improve on-line security for their children.

MySpace also agreed to establish programs to educate parents about how to protect their children online, and increase cooperation with law enforcement agencies. Parents can now use features created by MySpace to block their children’s use of the site. The social networking Web site offers guidance for parents to help them teach their children about the importance



of internet security. MySpace suggests that parents monitor the sites their children visit, and place a time limit on Internet use. As one mother said in comments published in response to a *New York Times* article on this issue, “I applaud MySpace for paying attention and for not putting their heads in the sand . . . but the only known factor to prevent or to curb kids’ inappropriate Internet activity is parental supervision.”

MySpace is currently working with the National School Boards Association (NSBA) to develop a new Administrators’ Guide. For copies of the existing guide, contact safeschools@csc.com. The NSBA notes that MySpace has asked schools not to distribute the Administrators’ Guide to parents since they have other materials available for that audience. ■

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Tips for Successful Lockdown Drills

Lockdowns offer administrators a powerful tool to manage emergencies and protect lives. However, observation of more than 60 lockdown drills in U.S. public schools has shown that most schools struggle with the same aspects of this protective action. The tips below are offered to help administrators feel confident that if they call for a lockdown, their staff and students can implement it smoothly and effectively.

Establish a command post. The Crisis Management Team should determine the primary and alternate locations for a temporary command post in advance. Each member of the team should know his or her duties and designated location during a lockdown. Designate separate individuals (and back-up personnel) to call emergency responders and receive attendance reports from teachers.

Check halls for “stragglers.” While locking the classroom door, each teacher should quickly check the hall near his or her room for students. If additional students are brought into the classroom, their names should be reported in addition to the classroom attendance.

Keep students quiet and keep the lights out. In schools where administrators emphasize the serious nature of lockdowns, the halls quickly become as quiet as “ghost towns” and it is difficult to tell which rooms are occupied. However, in some schools there are classrooms where the lights are left on, students are visible from the hall, or noise can be heard because students are not taking the drill seriously.

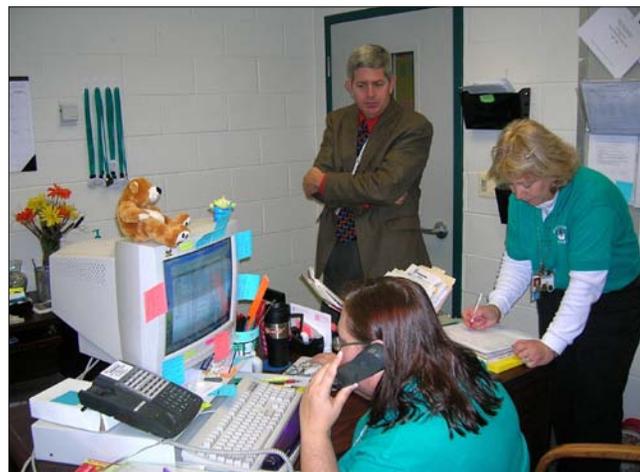
Provide training for substitute teachers. Provide regular training for substitute teachers to ensure that all faculty know how to respond during a lockdown. Using plain-English commands, instead of code words, ensures that substitute teachers, as well as visitors, understand the lockdown command.

Alert physical education classes. Establishing a procedure to alert classes outside the school building is critical to a successful lockdown. Remind teachers that if they are outside when they hear the command for lockdown they should move their students to a pre-designated, safe location (i.e., an alternative evacuation site) away from the school building, rather than bringing them inside to confront a potentially dangerous situation.

Develop procedures for the cafeteria and media center/library. Situations requiring lockdown could occur at inconvenient times. Consider the procedures you would use if students are in the cafeteria or common rooms.

Ensure administrators stay behind locked doors. There is a natural tendency among administrators to go out into the halls to check on their students and staff. However, the principal should remain in a secure room to continue to “command and control” the school until emergency responders arrive.

Addressing these challenges in advance allows administrators to reassure staff, students, and parents that the school can protect personnel during any type of crisis incident requiring a lockdown. For guidance on lockdown drills, see Tool 14a in *DoDEA’s Safe Schools Handbook* or refer to DoDEA Regulation 4700.2: Internal Physical Security available at www.dodea.edu/foia/iod/pdf/4700_2.pdf. ■



Administrators and staff members who have practiced lockdowns can often move with speed and precision to alert emergency responders and take attendance.

Preparing Students with Disabilities for Protective Action Drills

Customizing a school's crisis plan for students with disabilities helps administrators ensure that all students are protected during a crisis. Each type of disability requires specific accommodations to ensure that students with these special needs are moved to safety as quickly as their non-disabled peers. A group of students often overlooked in the crisis planning process are students with emotional disabilities. The following steps outline a process to incorporate students with emotional disabilities in your Incident Response Planning.

Review Individualized Education Plan (IEP) – Review the student's IEP and consider the specific needs of that student. Many students who have emotional disabilities require special accommodations when forced into situations involving sudden change (e.g., change of setting, multiple sources of authority).



List Accommodations – After reviewing the IEP and making lists of suggested accommodations in the event of a crisis, meet with the school's Case Study Committee to go over the recommended strategies. This committee will provide comprehensive input to strengthen the ideas proposed by the special education teacher. For example, when practicing lockdown, assign additional trained adults to sit with designated children.

Involve students in the planning process – Students will often have useful suggestions for how to make improvements to the strategies drafted by the special education teacher and Case Study Committee.

Create student-specific action steps – Work with your school Crisis Management Team to outline the specific procedures you will use to assist students with emotional needs during a critical incident. These procedures will supplement your crisis management plan.

Practice – Given the fact that students with emotional disabilities do not react well to sudden change, the plan developed for each child needs to be practiced more frequently than simply relying on building-wide drills. Teachers can practice locking down their classroom, without disturbing other classes, to help students become as familiar with lockdown procedures as they are with fire drills.

With adequate planning, students with emotional disabilities will be well prepared for a potential crisis. For more information on the crisis planning process for students with emotional disabilities visit the National Association of School Psychologists at www.nasponline.org/resources/crisis_safety/. ■

Considerations for Including Students with Special Needs in Protective Actions

- ▶ How will the protective action announcement be communicated to the student?
- ▶ How will the student communicate his/her thoughts and feelings during protective actions?
- ▶ How will the student be acclimated to any new location or setting used as a safe haven?
- ▶ Who else can assist the student if the designated teacher is not available?

Teaching Tolerance Publishes New Resources for Hate Prevention

The DoDEA Safe Schools Newsletter has reported in the past on the numerous free resources available through Teaching Tolerance.org, an on-line hate prevention program operated by the Southern Poverty Law Center. In the past year, Teaching Tolerance has published several new programs. These materials help teachers integrate hate prevention and social tolerance into classroom lessons. Two of these programs are summarized below.



Social Inclusion Programs for Students with Disabilities

Social isolation of children with disabilities typically starts in middle school, says Martha Snell, Ph.D., a professor of education at the University of Virginia. Sometimes, social isolation is so subtle that teachers are unaware, but parents may report, for example, that a student never receives invitations or social phone calls. As an antidote to this, many schools across the United States now establish social inclusion programs, such as friendship clubs.

Teaching Tolerance offers several case studies of these programs. At one successful friendship club in St. Paul, Minnesota, for instance, a sixth grader reflected on how she came to see that using the word “retarded” as a commonplace put-down was hurtful to her classmate and teacher, both of whom had siblings with Down syndrome.

Curricula for Teaching About Domestic Poverty

Domestic poverty is often a challenging topic for teachers to include in hate prevention lessons. The most common way that schools attempt to sensitize students to this complex issue is through food and charity drives. With the help of scholars from the University of Wisconsin and California State University, Teaching Tolerance developed curricula to help teachers open up class discussions that look at poverty in America through the prisms of mathematics, history, economic theory, and individual responsibility.

Teaching Tolerance makes several free materials available to assist educators in integrating these lessons into course curriculum. For children in grades K-6, the *Rhinos and Raspberries* children’s stories promote character education and emphasize the value of diversity. For older students, The Academy Award winning documentary *The Children’s March* describes student civil rights protests during the 1960s.



To learn more about successful social inclusion programs or see the case study and others like it go to www.tolerance.org/teach/magazine/features.jsp?p=0&is=41&ar=844. For more information about programs designed to promote social cohesion contact the Safe Schools Team at safeschools@csc.com. The 2007 *DoDEA Prevention Programs Guide* provides additional information about hate prevention and character education programs. ■

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Over-the-Counter Drug Use on the Rise

At a White House press conference in December 2007, President Bush noted that the Monitoring the Future study on drug use by teenagers showed an increase in the abuse of over-the-counter (OTC) medicines. The study, conducted by the University of Michigan’s Institute for Social Research, and funded by the National Institute on Drug Abuse (NIDA), found that while the overall rate of illicit drug use was down, the rate of teenagers using painkillers such as Vicodin and OxyContin had increased dramatically, in the case of the latter by thirty percent. Meanwhile, on January 9, 2008, the Substance Abuse and Mental Health Services Administration (SAMHSA) released a study showing that some 3.1 million young people admitted to using cold medicines to get high in 2006.

President Bush described the Monitoring the Future findings as “troubling.” The results underscore the value of programs that reinforce drug resistance education in schools and at home.

Recently, D.A.R.E. America (Drug Abuse Resistance Education) unveiled a new curriculum designed to educate students about the risks of abusing prescription medications and non-prescription medicines, otherwise known as OTC medicines. There is also an additional parent component, called “Family Talk” comprised of five take-home activities which correspond to the elementary lessons. “Family Talk” also offers specific techniques parents can use to limit their children’s access to medications in the home. DoDEA’s 2008 D.A.R.E. Instructor training sessions will incorporate these lessons as well as Family Talk take-home materials.

Fast Fact

Seventy-one percent of young people abusing prescription drugs report getting them from the “medicine cabinets of their own home, and the medicine cabinets of the parents of their friends,” notes John Waters, director of the White House office of National Drug Control Policy.

Following are the five key steps that D.A.R.E. recommends parents take to reduce the risk that their children will abuse OTCs or prescription drugs:

- ◆ Take inventory of every place in your home where you keep medicines, both prescriptions and over-the-counter drugs. Keep drugs in one location where your children cannot access them.
- ◆ If you leave medications out in the open, be sure to note the pill amounts in each bottle or packet, as well as the number of refills, just as you would monitor the level of alcohol in the house. If you notice pills are dwindling faster than they should, be on alert and talk with your child.
- ◆ Be aware that teens can surf the Internet for illegal pharmacies that often send drugs without a doctor’s prescription.
- ◆ Talk with the parents of friends and with relatives about monitoring medications in their homes. Discuss what you do in your own home and encourage them to take similar precautions.
- ◆ Do not allow your teen to go to a friend’s home if there’s not going to be adult supervision. “Pharming” or pill swapping most often occurs when adults are absent during a social gathering.

For more information on D.A.R.E. go to www.dare.org. The University of Michigan study is available at www.monitoringthefuture.org. The SAMHSA study is available at <http://oas.samhsa.gov/2k8/cough/cough.pdf>. ■