



# SAFE Schools

## NEWSLETTER



### New Prevention Programs Guide Available

The Spring 2006 Prevention Programs Guide was sent to all administrators on May 1, 2006. This edition is the fourth in a series of supplementary guides to the DoDEA Safe Schools Handbook (Chapter 3, Section 2) and presents 22 additional program descriptions.

This reference guide is a resource for administrators and counselors to use when selecting prevention programs to reduce negative behaviors such as bullying or aggression. For copies of the new and previous Prevention Program Guides visit: [www.dodea.edu/offices/safety/safeSchools.cfm?sid=5](http://www.dodea.edu/offices/safety/safeSchools.cfm?sid=5). ■

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### Students Report Potential School Violence Plots

Multiple news reports indicate that since March 1, 2006, law enforcement and school authorities have foiled 10 alleged plots of school violence. The plots targeted students, faculty, and staff across the United States. During the third week of April alone, young people alerted authorities to plots in Alaska, Mississippi, Kansas, and Washington. Here are several lessons learned from these incidents:

- ✓ **It Can Happen Here!** The good news is, it can be prevented. In each of the reported locations, school authorities and local residents were shocked by the revelations. In the April incidents, authorities found caches of weapons and ammunition in suspects' homes. In one plot, a search turned up a homemade bomb and CD with instructions for making explosives.
- ✓ **Security Awareness Training Works.** All of the alleged plots were thwarted because young people recognized danger signals, knew whom to tell, and had the courage to report the information. Administrators can use these incidents as a teaching opportunity. Remind staff, students, and parents to report threats of violence that they hear, see, or read. Everyone in the school community **MUST KNOW HOW TO REPORT POTENTIAL SCHOOL VIOLENCE!**
- ✓ **Prevention Programs (i.e., Anti-bullying) Help Prevent Violence.** In 2002, the U.S. Secret Service reported that the motive in 75 percent of school shootings was revenge for on-going bullying. Retaliation for bullying was cited as a possible motive in several of the recent plots. A school-wide anti-bullying program increases the probability that bystanders will defend victims, victims will report abuse, and adults will be able to intervene effectively.



All of us should listen more closely to troubled students who may confide their anger and angst. The bottom line – “turn up your hearing aid” and be receptive to students who seem troubled or want to talk. For more information and suggestions contact: [safeschools@csc.com](mailto:safeschools@csc.com). ■

## Campaign Teaches Behavior and Safety on Buses

*Did you know that overseas, traffic is not required to stop for buses loading/unloading children? Traffic laws and security concerns vary throughout DoDEA's theaters of operations. In a recent interview, the Supervisor of the Alconbury School Bus Office, Gilbert Christovale, described one region's effort to improve safety and security by educating students and parents.*

From April 17-21, the Alconbury School Bus Office (SBO) presented its semi-annual campaign to remind students of proper school bus behavior. Supervisor Gilbert Christovale (Chris) noted that all SBOs across DoDDS-Europe take time near the beginning of the school year, and at the conclusion of Spring Break, to remind students that the school bus is an extension of the classroom. The same high standards for behavior expected in DoDEA schools apply while students are riding the bus.

Mr. Christovale noted that in addition to reminders about proper behavior, "students receive information on 'stranger danger,' and general security awareness training on how to get to and from the bus stop safely." He also includes anti-bullying lessons that teach students that "if they feel they are being bullied, they can tell the bus driver." Mr. Christovale explained how school bus safety benefits from the support of administrators.

Administrators have empowered drivers by establishing a discipline referral procedure. Drivers know that if they report discipline problems or bullying incidents, administrators will take appropriate action.

Discipline is administered according to a published table of consequences. The table is distributed to families when students receive their bus pass. Conse-

quences range from a phone call to parents to possible suspension or revocation of bus riding privileges.

Parents help reinforce good bus behavior by reviewing the code of conduct, including the table of consequences, with their children. When parents sign for the bus pass in the fall, they are reminded that their children are expected to behave properly on the bus, and notified that riding the school bus is a privilege. For further information on the school bus safety classes, and particularly, the Alconbury SBO anti-bullying lesson, contact Gilbert Christovale at: [gilbert.christovale@eu.dodea.edu](mailto:gilbert.christovale@eu.dodea.edu). ■

## New Look and URL for Office of Safety and Security Web Site

The Office of Safety and Security (OSS) home page has been revamped to reflect the uniform look and organizational structure adopted for the Headquarters Web site. Each Web page will have a standardized layout that includes the DoDEA logo, new URLs, and buttons on the left to connect readers with relevant topics or resources.



Within the OSS Web site, the Safe Schools Program page has been reorganized to provide easier access to newsletters and prevention program guides.

- ✓ Read a concise description of your Safe Schools Program at: [www.dodea.edu/offices/safety/safeSchools.cfm?sid=5](http://www.dodea.edu/offices/safety/safeSchools.cfm?sid=5).
- ✓ Find Newsletters more easily at: [www.dodea.edu/offices/safety/safeSchools.cfm](http://www.dodea.edu/offices/safety/safeSchools.cfm). Separate hyperlinks on the right side allow you to search the current or previous school year's newsletters.
- ✓ Search previous newsletters by topic by clicking on "Indexed Articles" half-way down the right side under "Topical Index of Newsletter Articles."

Valuable reference material, such as information on the Avian Flu, is available from the Office of Safety and Security Web site at: [www.dodea.edu/offices/safety/safeSchools.cfm?sid=5](http://www.dodea.edu/offices/safety/safeSchools.cfm?sid=5). ■

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This is an unofficial publication produced by DynCorp, Inc. on behalf of the Department of Defense Education Activity Office of Safety and Security. The material herein is presented for informational purposes and does not constitute official policy of the Department of Defense. All comments and questions should be directed to Bob Michela at: [rmichela@csc.com](mailto:rmichela@csc.com).

## Communications Are Critical

When conducting Incident Response Planning (IRP), it is extremely important to devote detailed attention to the communications aspect of your plans. As a former Army General and Deputy Chief of Command, Control and Communications was known to have said frequently, “If you don’t have communications, you ain’t got [nothing].” He knew from experience that more plans fail to work because of faulty communications, or failure to adequately plan for communications, than any other single reason. How then do we apply this “precautionary note” to Safe School Planning? The answer is to address both the procedures and equipment used for communication.

Effective implementation of Protective Actions (e.g., lockdown, shelter-in-place, take cover, evacuation) depends on good communications. When establishing your plans, ask key questions in order to ensure that you address both the procedures and the equipment in your plan. For example, to initiate a lockdown, ask:

1. What do I say?
2. How can I ensure that everybody understands what is being commanded?
3. How do I ensure that everybody in the school/on the school grounds, receives the command?
4. When the threat is over, how do I ensure that the “all clear” signal is communicated, and that all in the school or on the school grounds receive the signal?

Let’s examine the answers to these questions. It is important when initiating a lockdown to say only enough to clearly convey the command that results in the proper response. DoDEA Regulation 4700.2, “Internal Physical Security,” paragraph E2.2.1.3, (available at: [www.dodea.edu/foia/iod/pdf/4700\\_2.pdf](http://www.dodea.edu/foia/iod/pdf/4700_2.pdf)) stipulates that lockdown procedures establish “specific notification signals and/or verbal codes” to indicate the nature and possible location of the hostile or violent emergency affecting the school. Therefore, a command such as, “There is an outside situation and the school is going into lockdown at this time” would answer questions 1 and 2, and address the procedure for communicating the command.

To address question 3, a communication system that allows students, staff, guests, etc. in the classrooms, common rooms, hallways, rest rooms, and gymnasium to hear the command would be a start. But how about the people who are outside? There also must be a system for getting the word to students at recess, playing on the sports fields, etc.

Finally, DoDEA Regulation 4700.2 also requires an “all clear” signal accompanied by a verbal confirmation code. This two-part approach helps to ensure that the signal is not bogus. One possible solution is to have the military police give the “all clear” signal to each classroom, followed by a verbal confirmation code over the public address system (i.e., “the lockdown is now clear”).

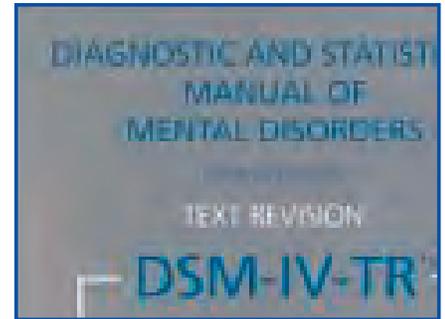
A similar approach for the other Protective Actions will round out your communication plans. Plan it, think it through, and then practice it. **Only by practicing your plan will you know if you have thought through all of the details.** ■



## A Tool for School Psychologists: The Beck Depression Inventory

In *Safeguarding Our Children: An Action Guide*, the U.S. Department of Education recommends that every school have a referral process for troubled youth. Fortunately, DoDEA administrators and staff have access to a school psychologist who can help assess students. The school psychologists have several tools available to help evaluate the mental health and stability of students. One is the Beck Depression Inventory (BDI). Although only a certified mental health professional can administer the BDI, administrators and staff benefit from a familiarity with the types of assessment tools available to help bring the appropriate assistance to troubled students.

The BDI is one of the most widely used instruments for measuring the severity of depression. This four-point scale, self-assessment survey is frequently used with adolescents 12-17 years old. It takes about 10 minutes to complete. Created by Dr. Aaron T. Beck in 1961, the BDI includes 21 multiple choice survey questions that measure characteristic attitudes and symptoms of depression.



The questionnaire asks about items related to depression symptoms such as hopelessness and irritability, cognitions such as guilt or feelings of being punished, as well as physical symptoms such as fatigue, weight loss, and lack of interest in things. Each question has a set of four possible answer choices that range in increasing intensity – 0 to 3. A mental health professional adds up the score for each of the questions and obtains the total. The highest score on each of the 21 questions is three; the highest possible total for the whole test is 63. The lowest possible score for the whole test is zero.

A revised version of the BDI was published in 1996 to correspond with the Diagnostic and Statistical Manual of Mental Disorders (DSM-IV) criteria for depression. Questions were changed and participants were asked to rate how they have been feeling for the past two weeks compared to the past week in the original BDI. The standard cut-offs for BDI-II are as follows:

- ◆ 0-13 considered normal.
- ◆ 14-19 mild to moderate depression.
- ◆ 20-28 moderate to severe depression.
- ◆ 29-63 severe depression.

There are several points to remember when using the BDI:

- ✓ It is a good screening tool for depression.
- ✓ It lacks parent and teacher input.
- ✓ It is not particularly good for gauging the severity of a depressed episode.
- ✓ The BDI is a good tool for charting the improvement in the course of adolescent depression.
- ✓ Females endorse items more readily and may need lower cut-off scores.



School psychologists have several other tools in addition to the BDI. If you suspect a child is troubled or feeling undue angst or anger, start by bringing them to the attention of your school administrator or counselor. For further information about the BDI, visit the National Association of School Psychologists at [www.nasponline.org/futures/deppres.html](http://www.nasponline.org/futures/deppres.html). For copies of *Safeguarding Our Children: An Action Guide*, visit the Department of Education Web site at: [www.ed.gov/admins/lead/safety/actguide/index.html](http://www.ed.gov/admins/lead/safety/actguide/index.html). ■

## Crystal Meth: A Popular But Dangerous Street Drug

If DoDEA teachers, principals, or administrators were to overhear students talking about “peanut butter,” “lemon drop,” “yellow barn,” “hot ice,” “super ice,” “granulated orange,” or “chicken feed” they might think these commonplace items are needed for making some school or science project. On the contrary, these monikers and others are street terms for crystal methamphetamine (crystal meth or meth), one of the popular illegal drugs among teens today. Administrators have requested information about meth so they can help students understand the dangers of this highly-addictive drug.



The University of Michigan has conducted several research studies on crystal meth, including capturing data from the 1999 *Monitoring the Future Survey*. One of the eye opening results of that survey was the use of such a dangerous drug by eighth graders. In 2002, more than 2 percent of eighth graders reported use within the past year. Additional results are summarized in the table below.

### Annual Methamphetamine Use by Secondary School Students

Grade	1999	2000	2001	2002
8th	3.2%	2.5%	2.8%	2.2%
10th	4.6%	4.0%	3.7%	3.9%
12th	4.7%	4.3%	3.9%	3.6%

(Source: 2002 *Monitoring the Future*)

Just what makes this odorless, multi-color drug so popular among teens and how can DoDEA educators recognize signs of use in students? The answer may lie in the drug’s history and the ease with which it can be made and obtained. The drug is made easily in clandestine laboratories with relatively inexpensive over-the-counter ingredients. These factors combine to make meth a drug with high potential for widespread abuse.

Methamphetamine, a derivative of amphetamine, is a powerful stimulant that affects the central nervous system. Amphetamines were originally intended for use in nasal decongestants and bronchial inhalers and have limited medical applications, which include the treatment of narcolepsy, weight control, and attention deficit disorder. Meth can be smoked, snorted, injected, and orally ingested. It is available in many different forms and may be identified by color, which ranges from white to yellow to darker colors such as red and brown. Crystal meth comes in a powder form that resembles granulated crystals and a rock form known as “ice,” which is the smoke-able version of methamphetamine that came into use during the 1980s.



Known as a favorite drug for teens that attend clubs and rave parties, crystal meth is illegal. Methamphetamine is a Schedule II stimulant drug. A Schedule II controlled substance has high potential for abuse and may lead to severe psychological or physical dependence.

Crystal meth use is also associated with many serious physical problems. The drug can cause rapid heart rate, increased blood pres-

## Crystal Meth: A Popular but Dangerous Street Drug *(Continued)*

sure, and damage to the small blood vessels in the brain – which can lead to a stroke. Chronic use can result in inflammation of the heart lining. Overdoses can cause hyperthermia (elevated body temperature), convulsions, and death. Students who use crystal meth also may experience episodes of violent behavior, paranoia, anxiety, confusion, and insomnia. The drug can produce psychotic symptoms that persist for months or even years after the individual has stopped using the drug. Here are a few physical warning signs that DoDEA administrators and educators can look for when evaluating teens they suspect of substance abuse:

- ✓ Red and glazed eyes
- ✓ Lasting cough
- ✓ Chronic fatigue
- ✓ Twitching
- ✓ Jaw clinching
- ✓ Teeth grinding
- ✓ Excessive weight loss
- ✓ Decreased interest in school
- ✓ Discipline problems

*Graphic Depiction of the Affects of Crystal Meth*



Meth can be easily produced in underground labs in the U.S. and around the world. Most of the chemicals needed to produce the drug are readily available in household products or over-the-counter medicines. Although methamphetamine production appears easy, it is a dangerous process and frequently causes explosions and fires.

Methamphetamine has toxic effects. Long-term abuse results in many damaging effects, including addiction. The two tables below summarize the effects and consequences of both short and long-term use/abuse. This information can be used to better understand meth drug abuse and addiction; help educate both faculty and students about the harmful effects; and, possibly assist in prevention and treatment efforts.

Short-term Effects May Include:
▶ Increased attention and decrease of fatigue
▶ Increased activity
▶ Decreased appetite
▶ Euphoria and rush
▶ Increased respiration
▶ Hyperthermia

Long-term Effects May Include:
▶ Dependence and addictive psychosis
– Paranoia
– Hallucinations
– Mood disturbances
– Repetitive motor activity
▶ Stroke
▶ Weight loss

For more information about crystal meth, visit these Web sites:

- ◆ Substance Abuse and Mental Health Services Administration at: [www.health.org/govpubs/PHD861/](http://www.health.org/govpubs/PHD861/).
- ◆ The Drug Enforcement Administration, Methamphetamine Facts: [www.usdoj.gov/dea/concern/amphetamines.html](http://www.usdoj.gov/dea/concern/amphetamines.html).
- ◆ Koch Crime Institute: [www.kci.org](http://www.kci.org).
- ◆ The White House Office of National Drug Control Policy: [www.whitehousedrugpolicy.org](http://www.whitehousedrugpolicy.org). ■