



SAFE Schools

NEWSLETTER



Suicide Prevention Kits Donated

Thank you for the positive feedback regarding the Jason Foundation's suicide prevention program, "A Promise for Tomorrow." The suicide prevention kits were a gift from the Jason Foundation that counselors and school psychologists can use as another tool to improve students' mental health.

The workbook and video educate students about the warning signs and ways to encourage troubled friends to seek help. The accompanying CD-ROM, that was expected to be delivered before the start of the school year, has been delayed until mid-October. Please send comments to safeschools@csc.com. ■

New Crisis Response Planning Guide Coming

In response to requests for one guide to simplify crisis planning, DoDEA administrators will soon receive DoDEA's Crisis Response Guide. The guide outlines the essentials for organizing a crisis response team and provides supplemental information on prevention, preparedness, response and recovery.



The DoDEA Crisis Response Guide serves as an umbrella document that can be supplemented with local resources and reference material. The eight-page overview covers:

- ◆ **Prevention** – Guidelines, prevention programs and physical security measures implemented to avoid incidents.
- ◆ **Preparedness** – Actions taken before an incident occurs to ensure an effective response (i.e., selecting crisis team members, assigning duties, preparing grab and go kits).
- ◆ **Response** – Decisions and protocols used to manage an incident to limit damage and injury (i.e., assessing the situation, selecting appropriate protective action, alerting authorities, and accounting for students).
- ◆ **Recovery** – Steps implemented to help students resume normal learning as soon as possible (i.e., making counselors available, and informing the school community).

Produced in coordination with the DoDEA Headquarters Education Directorate and the Office of Safety & Security, the guide contains ideas, tools and supplemental information from a variety of sources including the existing DoDEA area guides. ■

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DoD Personal Security

In June 2005, the Pentagon Force Protection Agency published a 52-page booklet titled, *Personal Security Guide*. Although written for the National Capital Region (NCR) it has applicability for DoDEA personnel worldwide. The guide coaches civilian and military employees on personal security measures that reduce the risk of both terrorism and crime.



According to the guide, the basics of personal security include:

- ◆ **Assess Your Own Situation** – Unless you have a highly publicized job within DoD your greatest personal risk is probably from crime.
- ◆ **Develop and Implement Security Plans** – Select best practices presented in the guide that are relevant to your situation. Implement them gradually over several months and update them later.
- ◆ **Cultivate Security Awareness** – The most effective measure involves becoming aware of what is normal and what is not, and recognizing threats with alertness and foresight.
- ◆ **Avoid publicity** – Don't discuss your DoD role or display badges when off DoD facilities.

Copies of the guide can be obtained from the Pentagon Force Protection Agency at 703.697.1161 or downloaded via computer servers with a “.mil” address from <https://extranet.pfpa.mil>. ■

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Student Pledge Promotes Non-violence

On October 19, 2005, a quarter of a million students across the U.S. will pledge not to use guns for violence. During ceremonies at their individual schools, students will sign banners stating their commitment and will participate in assemblies to increase awareness of the consequences of gun violence. Students will promise to:

- ✓ Avoid touching a gun, and tell an adult if they see a firearm.
- ✓ Refuse to use a gun to settle a personal problem or dispute.
- ✓ Influence their friends to keep them from using guns to settle disputes.

According to the founder of the pledge against school violence, Mary Lewis Grow, each student freely makes a personal commitment to avoid gun violence. Signing the pledge helps youth internalize this commitment and increases the probability that they will act responsibly in potentially dangerous situations. If enough students make this personal decision they can reduce violence.

Excerpt from
The Pledge Against Gun Violence

My individual choices and actions, when multiplied by those of young people throughout the country, will make a difference. Together . . . we can reverse the violence and grow up in safety.

Specific awareness activities that accompanied the 2004 pledge included:

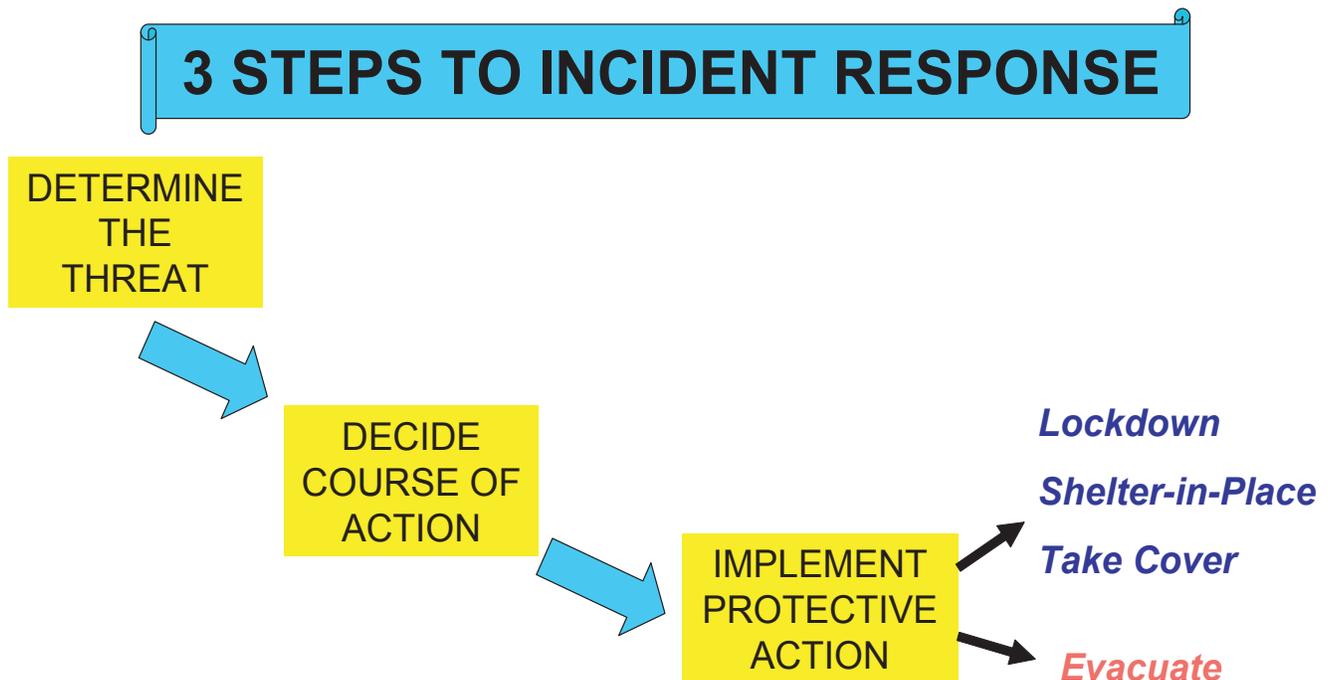
- ◆ North Carolina students taped public service announcements that were aired on local television stations.
- ◆ South Carolina sheriff's deputies and school resource officers cooperated in publicizing the pledge and staging a youth summit.

For further information visit the pledge web site at: www.pledge.org. ■

Three Steps to Incident Response

When responding to a critical incident, administrators, staff, faculty and students must know what to do. When a school is experiencing an incident, the principal should follow the easy three-step process pictured below to implement an effective protective action (e.g., lockdown, shelter-in-place, take cover, evacuate). By internalizing this three-step process, the principal can quickly and decisively choose a proper response.

- ◆ **First, Determine the Nature of the Crisis/Incident.** The School Crisis Team can assist in determining the nature of the incident. As soon as it is apparent that the situation is threatening, the principal, or designee, should activate the incident command system by phoning 911 or the appropriate emergency contact number.
- ◆ **Second, Decide on a Course of Action.** Basically, there are only two choices; STAY INSIDE or GO OUTSIDE. The proper course of action should either keep the threat from reaching the students or move the students away from the threat.
- ◆ **Third, Implement a Protective Action.** If the decision is to stay inside, the nature of the threat will dictate whether to lockdown, shelter-in-place, or take cover. If the threat dictates getting out of the building(s), then evacuation is the proper protective action.



Practicing making decisions in stressful situations will benefit both principals and crisis team leaders. Table top exercises afford the crisis team an opportunity to practice assessing the threat and selecting the appropriate protective action. Although school leaders cannot predict the exact circumstances they will confront, exercises make leaders more adept at adjusting their response based on the information available. Drills on the protective action procedures will improve the performance of staff and students during an actual incident.

Not all situations affect the entire student body. Treating one injured student or notifying students of the death of a faculty member might constitute a critical incident. These types of incidents can easily be managed to de-escalate the situation and avoid crisis without implementing a protective action. ■

Modular Approach to Drills

“Why not teach lockdown drills the way we teach other subjects?” asks JoAnn Jordan, Emergency Preparedness Education Coordinator for the Bellevue Washington Fire Department. Ms. Jordan, who spent three years as a teacher before joining the fire department, presents “Multi-hazard Planning for Schools” at the Federal Emergency Management Agency’s (FEMA) Emmitsburgh, Maryland campus. For FEMA, Ms. Jordan uses kinesthetic (get up and move) learning techniques to help educators understand the Incident Command System.

Ms. Jordan recommends using a modular approach to teach protective actions. “Usually, we teach a unit of a subject, test students’ comprehension of that subject matter, and then move on to new material,” said Jordan. She suggests teachers spend a few minutes daily for one week familiarizing students with lockdown procedures, then conduct a drill to see how the students perform. If the drill does not go well, teachers could provide further training. When students have mastered lockdown procedures they can learn about shelter-in-place or taking cover.



Jordan noted that elementary school teachers often insert physical activity between academic subjects so students do not become restless. “Why not use that opportunity to practice lockdown procedures?” asked Jordan. Since the activity takes place within the classroom, the class could conduct its own drill without disturbing others.

To take FEMA’s free “Multi-hazard Emergency Planning for Schools” course on-line, go to: <http://training.fema.gov/EMIWeb/IS/is362.asp>. ■



Benefits of Drills

Practicing protective actions yields several benefits. The more familiar staff and students become with implementing protective actions, the better they will respond. During a June 2005 Department of Education web cast on Crisis Response, FEMA Instructor Greg Champlin offered an example of a kindergarten class that had a substitute teacher when the principal conducted a lockdown drill. The substitute misunderstood the lockdown command and began evacuating the students, but the kindergartners interrupted her and said, “No, that was a lockdown drill. There’s your grab and go kit under the desk, and here is where we hide.” The kindergartners successfully explained all of the procedures to the teacher—they just were not tall enough to turn the key in the door.

According to Champlin, another school was conducting a functional exercise simulating an indoor chemical spill that required evacuation when a teacher wandered into the contaminated area. The exercise moderator tagged the teacher as a “casualty” and sent him to sit with other “casualties.” Meanwhile, his fourth grade class successfully evacuated themselves to the designated area and took attendance. Champlin maintains that frequent drills can reassure students, rather than scare them. Effective communication with parents and students before the drills is critical to success. ■



Teaching Tolerance

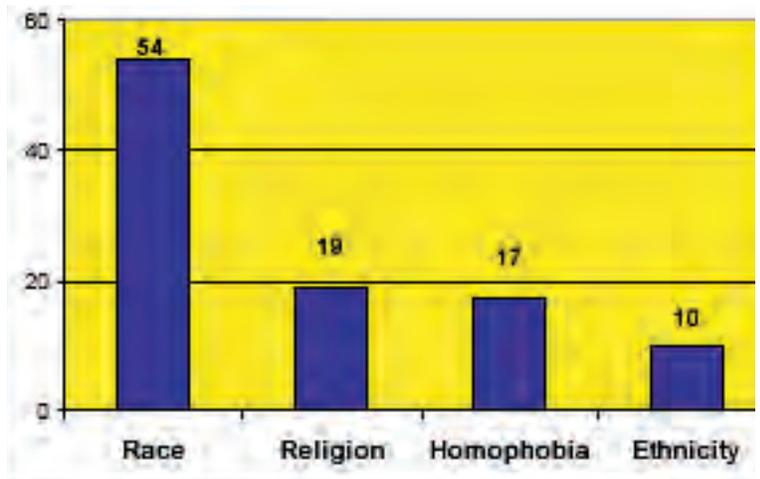
Teaching Tolerance (TT) is a national education project which helps teachers foster equity among students in school. Started in 1991, and supported by the Southern Poverty Law Center, TT is committed to helping students and educators appreciate and respect each other's differences.

Unfortunately, hate is still a part of many students' daily school experiences. According to a recent study published by the National Center for Education Statistics (NCES), "In 2003, 12 percent of students ages 12-18 reported that someone at school had used hate-related words against them. . . . During the same period, about 36 percent of students ages 12-18 saw hate-related graffiti at school."



Hate, left unaddressed, can lead to crime. The Federal Bureau of Investigation (FBI) report titled, *Hate Crime Statistics 2003*, examined 884 bias motivated incidents. The report identified the percentage of incidents motivated by specific categories of bias and found that race, religion and sexual orientation accounted for the majority of incidents (see table below).

Incidents by Category of Bias
(By Percentage)



Organizations such as TT provide educators with ideas and resources to combat these prejudices. Teaching Tolerance publishes a guide for teachers, counselors and administrators titled, *Responding to Hate at School*. This publication provides educators information about staff diversity development, indicators of student alienation, and ideas for combating bias. TT also offers a free anti-bias kit, a semi-annual magazine, and a list of websites that promote diversity.

For further information, visit the U.S. Department of Education's National Center for Education Statistics: <http://nces.ed.gov/pubsearch/pubsinfo.asp?pubid=2005002>, the FBI: www.fbi.gov/ucr/03hc.pdf, or Teaching Tolerance: www.tolerance.org/teach/about/index.jsp.

Addressing hate through diversity training will go a long way toward enhancing your school climate and helping all students feel welcome. Please share your techniques for teaching diversity. Your ideas may benefit others. Tell us what works at: safeschools@csc.com. ■



Video Promotes Liver Health

Students who are not stressed or sick will be better able to deal with everyday problems. Illness creates a physical source of stress that can exacerbate the psychological stress on troubled students. The video *Respect Yourself, Protect Yourself: Teens Talk to Teens about Liver Wellness* educates students about liver health to help them avoid this health hazard.

Respect Yourself, Protect Yourself is a nine-minute video produced by the Hepatitis Foundation International that uses attractive, athletic spokespersons to teach students how to protect their liver. The video will be available to all DoDEA schools during the 2005-2006 school year.

Respect Yourself, Protect Yourself talks about the danger of liver diseases.



Drinking too much, abusing prescription or illegal drugs, or sniffing inhalants can all damage the liver. In addition, the video warns students to be careful about where they get a tattoo, ear or body piercing. The video also cautions students to avoid sharing personal items such as toothbrushes or razors since these are all possible ways of transmitting Hepatitis B and C. Symptoms of possible liver problems include yellow eyes or skin and general fatigue. However, Hepatitis and other liver diseases can be difficult to detect and treat so the video emphasizes prevention.

This video could be used as part of a drug or AIDS prevention program. Many of the risk factors for transmission of the HIV virus and Hepatitis are the same. According to the Hepatitis B Foundation, "In the United States, over 12 million people have been infected (that's one out of 20 people). An estimated 5,000 Americans die each year from Hepatitis B and its complications."

Finally, administrators may want to encourage their staff and students to be vaccinated against Hepatitis B. In a time of crisis, educators may be exposed to blood or other bodily fluids which can also transmit the Hepatitis virus.

Without scaring viewers, *Respect Yourself, Protect Yourself* provides teens with accurate and compelling information about protecting their liver. Hopefully, DoDEA health educators will find it a welcome addition to their programs.

For further information about liver wellness visit:

- ◆ The Hepatitis B Foundation at: www.hepb.org/hepb/index.htm;
- ◆ The Centers for Disease Prevention and Control at www.cdc.gov/hepatitis;
- ◆ The American Liver Foundation at: www.liverfoundation.org, or
- ◆ The Immunization Action Coalition at www.immunize.org.

Please share your comments and opinions of the video at safeschools@csc.com. ■