



DoDEA

# SAFE Schools

## NEWSLETTER



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### Share with Your Peers

Do you have a prevention or security solution to share with your colleagues? Receive a Hazeldon prevention video and guide when you submit a story for publication in this newsletter. The videos available are:

- ◆ *Bullying and How to Handle It* (2 available);
- ◆ *The Consequences of High School Harassment* (1);
- ◆ *The Violence in Your Life* (1); and
- ◆ *Tools to Stop Bullying in Middle School* (2).

E-mail your article to DoDEA's Safe Schools program at: [safeschools@csc.com](mailto:safeschools@csc.com). ■

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### DoDEA Surveys Ask About School Safety

Results from the *DoDEA Customer Satisfaction Survey 2004* will help set the course for the next strategic plan for schools. The surveys, intended for students, teachers and student sponsors, include several questions pertaining to school safety and security. Those interested in participating in the survey will help define the focus for future security programs.

For example, the survey asks students, sponsors and teachers to evaluate whether their school should increase the emphasis on prevention programs. Participants are also asked to identify the three biggest problems at their school. The possible responses to this question include:

- ◆ Crime/vandalism;
- ◆ Lack of discipline/more control;
- ◆ Lack of protection from physical attacks;
- ◆ Poor/outdated buildings and grounds;
- ◆ Students' lack of respect for teachers;
- ◆ Teachers' lack of respect for students; or
- ◆ Use of illegal drugs.

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Customer Satisfaction



In an introductory note to the teachers and sponsors, DoDEA Director, Dr. Joseph Tafoya explains that the survey questions are similar to those used in surveys of U.S. public schools. This similarity will enable DoDEA to compare its survey results to those of America's public schools.

The web-based questionnaires vary in length from approximately 15 questions for elementary students to 28 questions for teachers. Respondents need to complete the surveys online at the DoDEA web site by February 28, 2005. To take the *DoDEA Customer Satisfaction Survey 2004*, visit the DoDEA web site at: [https://hq-w4.dodea.edu/cust\\_survey/](https://hq-w4.dodea.edu/cust_survey/). ■



## Protecting Children from Online Sexual Predators

“One-in-five children who use the Internet will be approached by a sexual predator – a predator who may try to set up a face-to-face meeting,” according to the report, *Online Victimization: A Report on the Nation’s Youth*. Now, more than ever, students are spending a significant amount of computer time in online chat rooms. These chat room sessions make it possible for other participants to view the child’s profile, learn what the child is communicating, and meet the child. The unsuspecting child may think they are chatting with another child online, but in reality they could be chatting with a sexual predator.

How can teachers and parents combat Internet child predators? Mike Sullivan, author of *Safety Monitor*:

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*How to Protect Your Kids Online*, offers some helpful information to keep children safe while they are browsing the Internet. To protect students, Sullivan recommends educating parents and children about the existence of online predators and the dangers they pose. He says that parents should closely monitor their child’s computer activity. Sullivan tells parents to ask themselves the following questions to help determine if their child may be involved with an online predator:

- ◆ Is your child online late at night?
- ◆ Is the online activity excessive (over two hours per day)?
- ◆ Is your child alone for most of the time during his or her online sessions?
- ◆ Is your child spending the majority of his or her time online in chat rooms?
- ◆ Is your child reluctant to talk about his or her online experiences?
- ◆ Does your child minimize the screen on the computer when you walk by?
- ◆ Do you notice several programs showing in the task bar at the bottom of the computer screen, but no programs active on the monitor?

Contact the Cyber Tip Line to report a suspected online sexual predator by phoning: (800) 843-5678 or go to the Cyber Tip Line web site: [www.cybertipline.com](http://www.cybertipline.com). For more on cyber crime prevention, use these resources: [www.cyberangels.org](http://www.cyberangels.org) and [www.isafe.org](http://www.isafe.org). ■

*Consider having your students participate in the following Internet Safety Activities:*

**Skit:** Perform an Internet safety skit at school.

**Article:** Write an Internet safety article for the school newsletter.

**Commercial:** Create an Internet safety commercial to be read over the school’s PA system. For further ideas go to the i-SAFE America web site: [www.isafe.org](http://www.isafe.org). ■

## Access Control: Unauthorized Entry

School administrators often contend that many of their security problems and incidents are the result of an unauthorized person entering their school. The vast majority of these unauthorized persons are related to the students or have a connection to the school. These trespassers include a school's own suspended students, irate parents seeking revenge against a student or employee, or even drug dealers. If administrators can control who enters the campus or school buildings, security incidents should drop significantly.

The September 1999 National Institute of Justice Report, *The Appropriate and Effective Use of Security Technologies in U.S. Schools*, recommends several non-technical but effective approaches for discouraging casual intruders.

- ◆ Limit entry during the school day. Make entry possible only through the main entrance.
- ◆ Post signs warning that unauthorized trespassers are subject to arrest and vehicles are subject to search.
- ◆ Station greeters or monitors at all open entrances to the school.
- ◆ Require vehicle parking stickers/decals. Warn visitors that vehicles found on the school grounds are subject to being ticketed or towed.
- ◆ Restrict the number of entrances to the grounds and the school. Exterior doors that are open for convenience should be locked to prevent entry from the outside. These doors should be labeled "FOR EMERGENCY EXIT ONLY – ALARM WILL SOUND."



- ◆ Use school dress code policies to isolate and identify outsiders. Effective school policies include: no hats, droopy pants, or T-shirts with alcohol, drug, violence or gang affiliation messages; and no exposed tattoos. All of these items make outsiders more easily identifiable.
- ◆ Fence the perimeter of the school. Fencing will discourage casual intruders and better define school property boundaries and control zones for weapons and drug-free areas.

This is the first in a series of articles on access control. For a copy of the September 1999 National Institute of Justice Report, *The Appropriate and Effective Use of Security Technologies, in U.S. Schools*, go to the Office of Justice Programs web site: [www.ojp.usdoj.gov/nij/pubs-sum/178265.htm](http://www.ojp.usdoj.gov/nij/pubs-sum/178265.htm). ■



## School Crime Rate Drops

According to a recent report released by the U.S. Departments of Education and Justice, violent crime is dropping in schools. The report, titled *Indicators of School Crime and Safety: 2004*, was released in late November.

Findings from the report include:

- ◆ The rate of violent crime in U.S. public schools dropped 50 percent between 1992 and 2002. Violent crimes include rape, sexual assault, robbery, aggravated assault, and theft.
- ◆ Between 1993 and 2003, the percentage of high school students who reported having carried a gun, knife, or other weapon to school, within a month of the survey, decreased by half, from 12 to 6 percent.
- ◆ Between 1993 and 2003, the percentage of high school students who said they had been in a physical fight at school, within a month of the survey, declined from 16 to 13 percent.



Report findings were based on information obtained from the Justice Department, the Bureau of Justice Statistics, and the *National Crime Victimization Survey, 1992-2002*. The report, *Indicators of School Crime and Safety: 2004*, is available online from the National Center for Education Statistics. To download the report go to: [www.nces.ed.gov/pubsearch/pubsinfo.asp?pubid=2005002](http://www.nces.ed.gov/pubsearch/pubsinfo.asp?pubid=2005002) . ■

## Differing Perceptions of Bullying Found

Professor Faye Mishna, of the University of Toronto, says that while children and adults have some of the same definitions of bullying, they may differ in their perceptions of what constitutes bullying. These complexities of perceptions are outlined in an article in the journal *Children & Schools*, published by the National Association of Social Workers.

Mishna led a research team that investigated children's experiences with bullying. Researchers surveyed fourth and fifth grade children. The team compared the perspectives of 61 children with those of their parents and educators by interviewing the child, one of the parents, a teacher, the principal, or the assistant principal.

Mishna found that children and adults both define bullying by identifying the imbalance of power between the bully and the victim. Parents sometimes do not intervene because they think that some bullying is a part of normal adolescent behavior. During the interviews, one teacher described bullying as "a part of growing up." The teacher felt that moderate bullying was good because it helped victims cope with others who are controlling or manipulative. Children reported more bullying than adults noticed.

Mishna says that it is crucial for adults to validate the distress felt by a bullied child, even when the adult does not consider the situation bullying. For a copy of the article E-mail Faye Mishna: [f.mishna@utoronto.ca](mailto:f.mishna@utoronto.ca). ■

## Two Violence Prevention Groups Merge

Two anti-violence groups, dedicated to involving students in school security, recently united. In November 2004, Students Talking About Respect (STAR) joined the National Association of Students Against Violence Everywhere (SAVE). Since 2002, STAR has produced a free violence prevention curriculum. STAR makes these courses available on the Internet to help educators teach students the five principles of STAR. They are:

- ◆ Promote knowledge to prevent hatred;
- ◆ Show respect for self and others;
- ◆ Feel empathy for other people;
- ◆ Develop the power of mind and voice; and
- ◆ Act with courage to make a difference.

Just as STAR concentrates on providing tools to teach violence prevention, SAVE specializes in organizing student groups to practice violence prevention. SAVE student groups participate in projects within their school and community and educate other students about the effects and consequences of violence.

According to Dr. Pamela Riley, SAVE Director and former high school principal, 176,000 students participate in SAVE in 44 states. About 2,000 students join SAVE each month. In an interview, Dr. Riley explained SAVE's philosophy, stating "We can change peer influence to make it a positive force. Students in SAVE want safe classrooms, halls and bathrooms."

SAVE asks for a \$100 affiliation fee from chapters to support their national efforts. For more on SAVE visit their web site at: [www.nationalsave.org](http://www.nationalsave.org). ■



## Hate Prevention for Elementary School Students

Finally, there is a hate prevention program for elementary school students. Many hate prevention programs target middle and high school students because they are old enough to discuss the complexities of social problems. Now, younger students can benefit from the Hope Against Hate (HAH) project. It includes free one-week and one-day curricula for K-3 and K-6. Educators can adjust the program to the challenges facing their students.

The anti-violence organizations New Light Media and Students Talking About Respect (STAR) jointly developed HAH to interrupt the cycle of violence. These two organizations support educators with their efforts to teach tolerance to elementary school students. The goal of HAH is to teach tolerance to children at a young age, before any attitudes of prejudice or intolerance become entrenched in their minds.

HAH program materials include:

- ◆ *The Bears of Hope* (grades K-3);
- ◆ *The Voices of Hope Project* (grades 4-6); and
- ◆ Supplementary activities and worksheets.

The materials are free. The authors ask only that educators use the materials to teach elementary students to prevent hatred and resist violence. To download the free materials visit HAH at: [www.hopeagainsthate.org](http://www.hopeagainsthate.org). ■



## Father Involvement

Are the fathers of your students participating in school activities? Parental initiatives often succeed in involving mothers in their children’s educational activities, but do not always include fathers. Recently, some schools organized service projects specifically designed to recruit dads.

In Massachusetts, the Jenkins Dads Club constructed stairs and built a playground fence to improve the grounds at Jenkins Elementary School. Administrators reported great success with painting projects that give fathers an opportunity to be involved with their children’s school. Most popular were painting and one-day service projects.

Many fathers want to show their children that they care about their school, but find it difficult to attend events during the day. To help fathers participate, some schools plan evening or weekend fund raising events such as “bowling for literacy” or “golfing for literacy.”

Here are four key elements to holding successful “Daddy” projects:

1. Think big and physical;
2. Plan outside activities where possible;
3. Request volunteer skills that require tools or brute strength; and
4. Design projects that allow fathers to work with their son or daughter.

Here are six project ideas for your school:

1. Repair stairs;
2. Install a wheel chair ramp;
3. Fix holes in the fencing;
4. Paint interior halls and classrooms;
5. Create a baseball diamond; and
6. Dig holes in the garden for students to plant flower bulbs.

When parents are actively involved in their children’s school, children learn to respect their school and take responsibility for school security. Parents attitudes toward the school become more supportive as they develop a closer connection with the school. ■

### Students with Involved Fathers Achieve and Behave

The 1998 National Center for Educational Statistics (NCES) study, *Fathers’ Involvement in Their Children’s Schools*, concluded that children with fathers who are active in their schools are *more likely* to:

- ◆ Enjoy school and do well academically;
- ◆ Participate in extracurricular activities;

And, *less likely* to:

- ◆ Repeat grades; and
- ◆ Be suspended or expelled.

The study is available at the NCES web site: <http://nces.ed.gov/pubs98/fathers/98091-2.asp>. ■