



“Textbook” Evacuation in Okinawa after Earthquake

Students at Kinser Elementary School on Okinawa headed for higher ground on November 8, 2011 following an earthquake which measured 6.8 on the Richter scale. The quake occurred 133 miles off shore. While there was no damage to the building, base commander Colonel John E. Kasperski arrived at the school within minutes to issue a tsunami evacuation order as a precautionary measure.

Teachers and staff then escorted the 420 students of Kinser Elementary to a predesignated evacuation site some distance away. They used hand-held communication devices to coordinate the movement of students. Even though many of the adults were as nervous as the children about the possibility of a tsunami, everyone stayed positive. “The staff encouraged the students to keep going, to stay calm, and reassured them that we were exercising our safety procedures just like we had practiced,” noted Principal Michelle Moore-Robinson, who says that of all the things her staff did well that day, she is most proud of their calming influence upon the children.



Meanwhile, worried parents began forming a line at the school. “During an emergency situation it is critical that we are able to account for every student,” said Moore-Robinson. The school did not release students during the actual emergency response. Instead, parents were invited to join the evacuation. Later, after Colonel Kasperski announced the all-clear, several teachers and a parent volunteer set up a parent/child reunification center. Following the evacuation, the team used emergency attendance rosters to officially release 60 children to their parents. The remainder of the students returned to class.

Evacuation drills are a regular event at Kinser. In fact, the school had a Tsunami Evacuation Drill scheduled for the following week and a Fire Drill planned for that afternoon. On the return to school, after the all-clear was given, one boy asked Ms. Moore-Robinson if the fire drill would still happen. “I told him that since everyone did so well with the earthquake and tsunami response, we had probably had enough evacuations for one day,” she recalled. The boy sighed, and said, “Me too, I’m tired.” Students and staff up and down the line chuckled in agreement. ■

Inside This Issue

News & Updates

| | |
|---|---|
| “Textbook” Evacuation in Okinawa After Earthquake | 1 |
| Black History Month Offers Learning Opportunity for Preteens..... | 2 |

Safe Schools Planning

| | |
|---|---|
| Caring School Community Reduces Risk of Lone Wolf Terrorists..... | 3 |
|---|---|

Education Issues

| | |
|---|---|
| Sleep: The Stuff that Dreams (and Learning) Are Made On | 4 |
|---|---|

Cybersecurity

| | |
|--|---|
| Adapting Child Safety Lessons to the Online Environment..... | 5 |
|--|---|

Prevention Programs

| | |
|--|---|
| SAMHSA Offers Suicide Recovery Toolkit for Schools | 6 |
|--|---|



Black History Month Offers Learning Opportunity for Preteens

During February, DoDEA schools will observe Black History month with educational activities and programs that teach important lessons about the contributions of African-Americans to American history and culture. Many teachers use the history of the civil rights movement and the legacy of Dr. Martin Luther King, whose birthday is January 15, to introduce essential lessons about tolerance, kindness, compassion, and social equity.

These lessons can be particularly valuable during the middle school years when students are beginning to consider their place in relation to their peers. It is also the period, according to several studies, when students are most likely to engage in bullying and other inappropriate behaviors. The Southern Poverty Law Center resources help middle school students learn about the social costs of racial injustice, bias, and hatred.

In *A Time for Justice*, four-time Academy Award-winning filmmaker Charles Guggenheim uses historical footage and interviews with participants of the civil rights

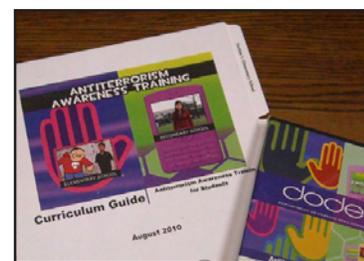
marches of the 1960s to bring the story of the civil rights movement alive for middle and high school students. The supporting materials can be integrated into reading, language arts, and social studies classes. Additional materials are available for English Language Learners (ELL).

A special teachers' edition of the 1995 documentary film, *Mighty Times: the Children's March* is also available. This inspiring program teaches students in grades six through 12 about the crucial role played by Birmingham, Alabama youth in ending segregation. The accompanying resources offer historical background on the civil rights movement, discussion questions, and ideas for in-class activities and follow-on projects.

The Teaching Tolerance educational kits and magazine are available to schools at no cost. For more information, contact safeschools@csc.com. ■

Student Antiterrorism Awareness DVDs Available

In some DoDEA schools, counselors, as part of the Crisis Management Team, use their regular visits to classrooms to present the Student Antiterrorism Awareness videos to students, review local emergency response procedures, and answer questions.



To view the videos online, visit the Office of Safety and Security at www.dodea.edu/offices/safety/anti_terror/page.cfm?cld=videos. For copies of the Curriculum Guide and DVD, contact safeschools@csc.com. ■

DoDEA Headquarters Personnel

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

CSC Safe Schools Newsletter Editorial Staff

Sarah Markel, E.J. Brletich, Brian McKeon, Bert Garcia

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Caring School Community Offers Defense Against Lone Wolf Terrorists

On August 16, 2011, President Obama said, “The risk that we’re especially concerned over right now is the lone wolf terrorist . . . when you’ve got one person who is deranged or driven by a hateful ideology, they can do a lot of damage, and it’s a lot harder to trace those lone wolf operators.”

The president was referring to a rising trend in terrorist plots: the freelance, or “lone wolf” terrorist. This is an individual acting alone who is inspired by extremist perspectives, most of which he or she has encountered online. As the military and homeland security improve defenses and put pressure on terrorist groups, terrorists resort to recruiting individuals who are already within the targeted society.



Students who feel socially isolated can be psychologically vulnerable to online propaganda and recruitment. To decrease the likelihood that individuals will be attracted to exhortations to harm others, strive to ensure that all students feel a “sense of belonging” or personal connection to the school. In addition, to ensure early detection of plots, remind all members of the school community to report, rather than dismiss, suspicious behavior.

Since lone wolf terrorists act independently, they lack the training and materials provided by an international terrorist group. Lone wolves are, however, more likely to have access to Americans or innocent civilians because they can remain undetected until they attack, and these attacks can occur overseas or within the continental United States. Examples of thwarted plots and completed attacks illustrate the threat posed by lone wolf terrorists:

Thwarted Plots

- ◆ September 2009, Hosam Maher Husein Smadi, 19, Jordanian, apprehended in an attempt to plant a bomb in a Dallas skyscraper.
- ◆ September 2009, Michael Finton, 29, American citizen and professed Jihadist fighter, arrested by the FBI after attempting to detonate a car filled with explosives outside the Federal Building in Springfield, Illinois.
- ◆ July 2011, U.S. Army PFC Naser Jason Abdo, 21, arrested for planning a shooting attack at Fort Hood. A gun store clerk alerted authorities.

Completed Attacks

- ◆ November 5, 2009, U.S. Army Major Nidal Hasan, 39, shot and killed 13 people and wounded 29 others at Fort Hood, Texas.
- ◆ March 3, 2011, Arid Uka, 21, Kosovan national, killed two U.S. airmen and wounded two others at the Frankfurt, Germany airport.
- ◆ July 22, 2011, Anders Breivik, 32, detonated a car bomb in Oslo, Norway that killed eight people and critically wounded 10 others. Breivik then drove to a youth summer camp where he shot and killed 69 attendees.

The list above excludes individuals such as Umar Farouk Abdulmutallab, the “Christmas Day Bomber,” who attempted to detonate a bomb concealed in his underwear on a flight to Detroit in 2009, as well as Faisal Shahzad who attempted to detonate an SUV near Times Square in New York City in 2010. These perpetrators received training and material support from terrorist organizations, therefore, they do not fit the strict definition of a lone wolf terrorist – an individual motivated to act independently through exposure to Web sites and e-mail communication.

Maintaining security awareness includes reminding members of the school community how to report suspicious behavior and help troubled students and colleagues find assistance. For suggestions on appropriate ways to raise security awareness without causing undue alarm, contact your local Area or District Safety and Security Office or the installation security forces. For additional copies of the DoDEA Student Antiterrorism Awareness DVD and facilitator’s guide contact safeschools@csc.com. ■

Sleep: The Stuff that Dreams (And Learning!) Are Made On

“We are such stuff
As dreams are made on;
and our little life
Is rounded with a sleep.”

The Tempest Act 4, scene 1, lines 148–158



William Shakespeare used the motifs of dreaming and sleep throughout his plays. They represent both life and death. Sometimes, as in *A Midsummer Night’s Dream*, sleep and dreaming are associated with magic. The real magic of sleep, however, comes not in the dreaming itself, but in the way sleep prepares the brain for learning. When students come to school with adequate rest, they are ready for the type of learning that really can make dreams come true.

According to a series of recent studies, sleep deprivation is widespread among children and is affecting the ability of students to learn. Research has indicated that a lack of sleep can lead to impaired ability to learn and think creatively, increased bullying and conduct disorders, and increased suicidal tendencies.

While older students can identify when lack of sleep is a problem, younger students may not even know that they are tired. DoDEA school psychologist Holly Hasenbuhler noted that instead, fatigue can show up in elementary-aged students as behavioral problems. “Instead of yawning and saying they are tired, children may be aggressive, oppositional, distracted, easily frustrated, grumpy, and irritable,” she noted. A recent study reported by the National Institutes of Health (NIH) supported Ms. Hasenbuhler’s observation. The study found that among six year olds, those who had regular bedtimes and slept for nine hours or more per night had better cognition and memory skills than a control group who got less sleep.

Recommended Amount of Sleep
(Source: Mayo Clinic)

| Age Group | Hours per Night |
|---------------------|-----------------|
| Toddlers | 12 to 14 |
| School-age children | 10 to 11 |
| Adults | 7 to 9 |

The study also found that late bedtimes are not uncommon among young children today. More than half the children studied stayed up past 11 p.m. four nights per week. Ms. Hasenbuhler pointed out that children deprived of sleep often have impaired impulse control and behave hyperactively.

Sleep is crucial to academic achievement. Administrators can encourage good sleep habits by ensuring evening events held at the school do not run late and by communicating to parents the importance of sleep and a regular bedtime. Parents/sponsors can help children increase their sleep by following these tips for good “sleep hygiene.”

- ◆ Avoid caffeinated beverages and stimulating conversation or activity immediately prior to bed time.
- ◆ Designate a quiet, dark place for sleep.
- ◆ Keep the computer, television, and video games out of the bedroom.
- ◆ Establish a soothing routine at bedtime. This can include a warm drink, prayers, stories, or soft music for young students. Teenagers may benefit from relaxation exercises and gentle stretching before bed.

Ms. Hasenbuhler concluded that the benefits of additional sleep become apparent immediately: “Getting children to bed early improves their mood, temperament, short-term memory, and ability to organize thoughts.” For more information on the relationship between sleep and student health contact safeschools@csc.com. ■

Adapting Child Safety Lessons to the Online Environment

Guidelines for how to teach children “stranger awareness” continue to evolve in response to the changing nature of online threats. Young children who are still learning to beware of strangers who approach them in person can use additional help applying this concept when they are playing on the Internet. Lessons about strangers need to be accompanied by lessons empowering students to speak up if situations they encounter online make them feel uneasy.

In an online world where the other “kid” a child has been playing with in a game might turn out to be an adult in another country, the objective is to help each child develop an intrinsic sense of self worth. The secure child will feel comfortable exiting the application and reporting the exchange to an adult if an offensive activity is suggested or they encounter content that makes them feel uneasy.

Adults need to take all of the usual precautions in introducing children to the online world, such as keeping a computer in a central location where adults can easily monitor children’s online activity and using blocking or protective software applications. In addition, adults need to establish ground rules for computer usage and carefully monitor children’s activity in online games and forums.



The following tips offer gentle ways to help children feel comfortable learning and interacting online.

- ▶ Ensure the child’s name, age, and personal information do not appear in online profiles.
- ▶ Distinguish between having a character name or a pet animal in an online game and the person who is controlling that character.
- ▶ Visit sites together, especially initially, and let children show what they can do online.
- ▶ Use filtering and monitoring applications that restrict the sites that children can visit to a list of acceptable sites.
- ▶ Show children how to use child-friendly search engines when completing homework.

In addition, adults can talk to children in advance about what they will do if something they see online makes them feel scared or uncomfortable. That increases the chances that they will feel safe reporting the situation and understand that they will not be blamed or “get in trouble” for encountering information online. Most importantly, it increases the chances they will report inappropriate advances made toward them.

Adults who are alerted to inappropriate online comments by children should take a screen shot of the exchange, and paste the image into a Word document or similar file to save it as evidence. If the child has closed the application, the image can sometimes be retrieved by reviewing the Internet History in the browser. Most computers have the capability to take a picture, or “screen shot,” of the content that appears on the screen using a “print screen” command, but the actual keys vary depending on the type of computer and keyboard. On some computers the command consists of pressing the control key and the key at the top right with the letters “PrtSc.” If this does not work, users can type “screen shot” into the help command for instructions pertinent to their computer system.

Afterwards, talk with the child, and offer positive feedback to reinforce their decision to confide in an adult. Report the incident to the system administrator who can alert other users and authorities as appropriate. Report any suspected stalking or sexual exploitation of children to law enforcement authorities immediately. For additional information on how to protect children online, visit i-Safe at www.isafe.org or the National Center for Missing and Exploited Children at www.ncmec.org. ■

SAMHSA Offers Suicide Recovery Toolkit for Schools

According to the Centers for Disease Control and Prevention (CDC), student suicides occur nationally at a rate of 6.9 deaths for every 100,000 students. Even though student suicides are a relatively rare occurrence, when they do happen, they can have a devastating effect on the school community.

Everyone is affected by the death of a student. To help school administrators plan for and respond to the tragedy of student suicide, the Suicide Prevention Resource Center, a division of the Substance Abuse and Mental Health Services Administration (SAMHSA), has released *After a Suicide: A Toolkit for Schools*. While DoDEA currently has two effective suicide prevention programs in place, some of the components of the Toolkit may provide additional resources and insight for crisis response and recovery.

The Toolkit describes the common warning signs and causes of teen suicide, provides best practices on suicide prevention in schools, and offers information about how a school should respond when a suicide has occurred. Topics include crisis response, helping students cope, working with the community, social media, and knowing when and how to request outside help. In addition, the Toolkit offers detailed information about the following elements of an effective community response to a student suicide:

- ▶ Crisis response – In the wake of a student suicide, contact students, families, and the wider community to help mitigate collective trauma and its impact on the educational environment.
- ▶ Helping students cope – Provide students with opportunities to express their feelings and come to terms with the suicide. Avoid feeding the slight, but very real, risk of suicide contagion.
- ▶ Working with the community – Communicate with other community institutions and coordinate the school’s response with them.
- ▶ Memorializing – Carefully consider how to commemorate a suicide victim. While students need the opportunity to remember the departed, the emphasis should be on restoring stability to the educational environment.
- ▶ Social media – With careful planning, media such as text messaging, twitter, and social networking sites offer opportunities for outreach and communication to the school community.
- ▶ Suicide contagion – Suicide contagion is rare, accounting for between one and five percent of all suicide deaths annually. Adolescents, however, are particularly susceptible to this phenomenon.
- ▶ Bringing in outside help – While school counselors have training in grief and trauma recovery, schools may benefit from additional support from trained professionals. Sometimes the counselors themselves need emotional support following a crisis.



In 2010, Weisbaden High School senior Logan Mitchell produced a 29-second suicide prevention awareness video titled “Shoulder to Shoulder.” For copies of the video contact DoDDS-Europe public affairs.

A student’s death affects the entire community. Therefore, the Toolkit’s authors emphasize that it is important that school authorities communicate with students, staff members, parents, and the broader community with as much sensitivity as possible and with the greatest degree of candor consistent with coordination with law enforcement and the family’s needs for confidentiality. For a Portable Document Format (PDF) version of *After a Suicide: A Toolkit for Schools*, visit www.oilspilldistress.samhsa.gov/resources/after-suicide-toolkit-schools. ■