



### Interactive Video Teaches Decision-Making

WILL Interactive, Inc. produces digital game-based training and education videos that can be used to teach critical thinking, judgment, and decision-making to high school students and staff. Sharon Sloane, President of WILL, explained that users assume the identity of a character, confront personal conflicts, make tough choices, and experience the consequences of those decisions. The CD-ROM videos are presently used by schools, the military, and industry. Details on the interactive training programs are available from WILL Interactive at [www.willinteractive.com](http://www.willinteractive.com). ■

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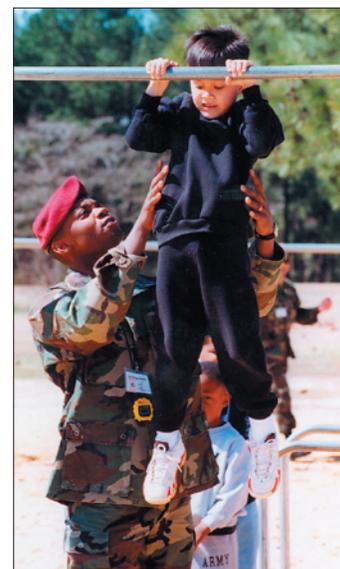
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### DoDEA School Includes Parents in Anti-Bullying Program

At Liberty Intermediate School, Principal Mary Dalla Betta includes parents in the school-wide anti-bullying program. The program is coordinated by Dr. Carol Jaxson Jäger, a counselor who provides tips to help parents determine whether their child is being bullied. The school's anti-bullying Web page provides the following indicators that parents should look for:

- ▶ Excuses for not wanting to go to school.
- ▶ Unexplained bruises.
- ▶ Torn clothing.
- ▶ Continually "losing" supplies or money.
- ▶ Problems sleeping/nightmares.
- ▶ Sudden drop in academic performance.



The school Web site reinforces that parental involvement is critical to the success of all students. It states that the school will be characterized by "respect for parents and a recognition of the important contribution they make."

Dr. Marla Bonds and Sally Stoker, M.S.W., who developed the program used by Liberty Intermediate School, *Bully-Proofing Your School: A Comprehensive Approach for Middle Schools*, state that involving parents has several benefits. Parents who are aware of the school's anti-bullying program frequently:

- ▶ Feel reassured that their child is safe at school.
- ▶ Identify more closely with the school.
- ▶ View the school as being responsive to students' needs.
- ▶ Support efforts to develop ethical character and good values.

Dr. Bonds explains that parental involvement mobilizes the "caring majority" of a school to eliminate bullying. To learn more about Liberty Intermediate School's anti-bullying program visit [www.libe-is.eu.dodea.edu/Bully.htm](http://www.libe-is.eu.dodea.edu/Bully.htm). To purchase *Bully-Proofing Your School* visit Parentbooks at [www.parentbooks.ca/Violence & Bullying in Schools.html](http://www.parentbooks.ca/Violence & Bullying in Schools.html). ■



## Awareness Counters “Robo-Trippin”

“Robo-Trippin” is a new and increasingly socially acceptable trend among teenagers looking for a cheap high. Also known as “DXing,” it involves drinking bottles of cough medicine to get high. According to postings on MySpace.com and other popular teen Web sites, “sippin’ syrup” is a cocktail of over-the-counter (OTC) cold medications (either ground up or in liquid form) mixed with Sprite™ or Hawaiian Punch™.

The active ingredient in cough medicine, dextromethorphan (DXM), is safe in small doses, but excessive quantities can cause varying degrees of euphoria, hallucination, and black-outs. Teens say they like the feeling of relaxation that comes while abusing DXM. Unfortunately, that feeling of relaxation comes from slowed breathing which can cause brain damage, cerebral bleeding, stroke, and in some cases, death.

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DXM is addictive and is especially dangerous when mixed with other drugs or multi-symptom cold preparations. Students engaging in the practice often consume several bottles of cough syrup over the course of a day to maintain a “buzz.” Although some retailers are restricting quantities and relocating OTC drugs, students are finding alternative methods for obtaining cough medicines. Indicators of cough medicine abuse include the following:

- ▶ Excessive vomiting.
- ▶ Delirious behavior.
- ▶ Overall changes in mood.
- ▶ Shoplifting cold medicines.
- ▶ Students carrying cough medicines on their person.
- ▶ Students discussing cough medicines or using the associated slang (robo-trippin, robo-queen, DXing, sippin’ syrup, etc.).
- ▶ Numerous bottles of cough medicine in trash cans at home or at school.

More information about drinking cough medicine and the latest trends in teen drug use are available at [www.ebasedprevention.org/](http://www.ebasedprevention.org/) from the Ohio Early Warning Network. The Partnership for a Drug-Free America ([www.drugfree.org/Teen/](http://www.drugfree.org/Teen/)) contains stories and information about OTC drug use. For more information, see the Urban Dictionary for a full list of slang terms for this trend ([www.urbandictionary.com/define.php?term=robo+trippin](http://www.urbandictionary.com/define.php?term=robo+trippin)). ■

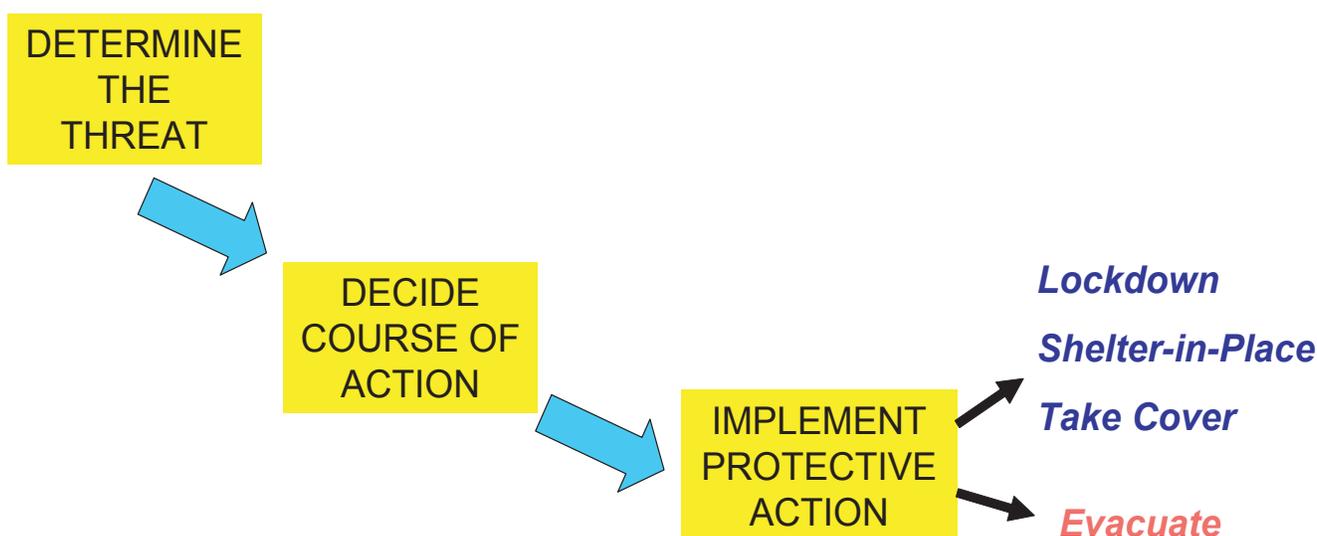
## Requests for Cybersecurity Guide

Thank you to the administrators who responded to the December 2006 newsletter article featuring the MySpace cybersecurity guide. *The Official School Administrator’s Guide to Understanding MySpace and Resolving Social Networking Issues* familiarizes administrators with the dangers and vulnerabilities that students are exposed to through social networking Web sites. Several administrators have already requested copies. To obtain an electronic copy please send an e-mail request to [safeschools@csc.com](mailto:safeschools@csc.com). Please include your name, position, school district, school, and phone number for verification purposes. ■

## Thinking Through Evacuation Procedures

Are you prepared to respond to an incident at your school? If you have accomplished the preliminary planning and coordination to ensure that you can effectively evacuate, lockdown, shelter-in-place, or take cover, you are prepared. Here is a review of the planning considerations necessary in order to be fully prepared for incident response.

### 3 STEPS TO INCIDENT RESPONSE



*If you understand the 3 Steps to Incident Response, you are well on your way to being prepared. Listed below are some questions to help you prepare.*

Periodically, it is a good idea to review your Incident Response procedures with your staff and faculty. Organize your planning by mentally stepping through the process of each of the protective actions. For example, when planning and organizing for an evacuation, ask yourself these questions:

1. Is the means of communicating or signaling the school to evacuate clear and concise? Can everybody in and around the buildings receive the command? What about students who are on the playground? What about visitors and/or vendors making deliveries? Is there an alternate means for communicating the command?
2. Do the teachers know the exact steps to take when implementing an evacuation order? How will they report that all students are present or accounted for? What process is there to ensure that the building is emptied of personnel? How will you evacuate and care for students with disabilities?
3. Has the evacuation site been pre-determined and has the site location been communicated to the teachers and staff? Is the route to the evacuation site adequate? Is it suitable in case of inclement weather? Have the fire chief and provost marshal agreed with the adequacy and appropriateness of the site? Has an alternate site been identified?
4. Will someone go to the evacuation site before students arrive to ensure that it is safe to occupy? How will they communicate with the principal to let them know whether the site is safe?

## Thinking Through Evacuation Procedures (Continued)

5. Will all the key staff be able to communicate with one another?
6. Have all plans been discussed with the first responders? Are they in agreement with the route to the evacuation site and the site itself?
7. If it is impossible to return to the school, what then? How will students be reunited with their parents? Where will the reunification take place?
8. Is the Grab & Go Kit stocked and ready for use?

Once questions such as these have been adequately answered, a drill should be conducted to test the plan. Reviewing your procedures and conducting tabletop exercises helps prepare you and your staff, but only by actually practicing the protective action will you be able to determine shortcomings and oversights. When you are satisfied with your evacuation plans, then re-examine your plans for the other protective actions. ■

### Appropriate Behavior

Many schools find innovative ways to encourage appropriate behavior. The following excerpt from the Mannheim Middle School student handbook offers a good example of how administrators establish high standards for behavior. Note that the message also fosters student identification with the school by creating the sense that students are “Mustangs.” The excerpt closes with a reminder that the ultimate goal is the development of self-discipline:

“Mannheim Middle School ‘Mustangs’ contribute positively to establishing and maintaining proper school climate and environment that are conducive to learning and achieving. They do not infringe upon others’ rights to an education or hinder the learning-teaching process in any manner. We believe in a method of discipline that develops responsibility. Clear expectations and consequences are part of our discipline plan. The primary responsibility of every student is well-disciplined behavior. Discipline is everybody’s job. The ultimate goal is self-discipline whereby each individual conducts himself in his own and other’s best interest and enhances the safety, welfare, and dignity of all students without direction by adults.”

The full text from the student handbook is available at the Mannheim Middle School Web site at [www.mann-ms.eu.dodea.edu/](http://www.mann-ms.eu.dodea.edu/). Select “Alphabetical Index,” then “Appropriate Behavior.” ■

## Share Ideas with Your Colleagues

Thank you to all of the administrators who have shared security success stories. We would like to encourage more sharing. A not-for-profit educational firm has donated \$20 Amazon.com gift certificates for your school. They will be given to the first 20 DoDEA educators who submit a description of a prevention program or security measure.

To contribute an idea, please describe a policy, prevention program, or physical security measure implemented at your school. Identify the security objective you were attempting to achieve and any lessons learned. Please include your name, position, phone number, and e-mail address for verification purposes. Send your description in MS Word™ to [safeschools@csc.com](mailto:safeschools@csc.com). ■



## Characteristics of Effective After-School Programs

According to a 2007 report from the University of Illinois at Chicago’s Collaborative for Academic, Social, and Emotional Learning (CASEL), after-school programs can enhance students’ social skills, attitude, and behavior if they are based on proven approaches. In the report, titled *The Impact of After-School Programs that Promote Personal and Social Skills*, researchers Joseph Durlak and Roger Weissberg identified common characteristics of after-school programs that succeeded in improving students’ feelings of self-confidence and self-esteem, as well as their school grades and achievement test scores.

Researcher Joseph Durlak described the four characteristics of effective programs using the acronym **SAFE** for **Sequential, Active, Focus, and Explicit**. The first two criteria relate to *how* the program provides training. The latter two criteria relate to the content, or *what* the program provides.

Successful programs provide **sequential** activities: they teach skills gradually with a series of activities that build on the previous lessons. These programs require students to attend regularly rather than offering unstructured “drop-in activities.” Effective programs are also **active**: they use interactive role-playing and participation activities to give students an opportunity to practice the skills.



The content benefits from a specific **focus**: the program concentrates on developing a few particular skills with designated time and elements of the program to work on those skills. Effective programs are also **explicit**: they identify which skills they expect to develop.

Students in programs that include all four characteristics can experience positive outcomes including: higher achievement test scores and better grades, improved self-confidence and stronger identification with their school, better behavior, and less drug use. The report is available on the CASEL Web site ([www.casel.org/downloads/ASP-Full.pdf](http://www.casel.org/downloads/ASP-Full.pdf)). A report on the authors’ presentation of the study is available from the American Youth Policy Forum ([www.aypf.org/forumbriefs/fb110906.htm](http://www.aypf.org/forumbriefs/fb110906.htm)). ■

### President Bush on Character Education

October 10, 2006

During the White House Conference on School Safety, President Bush described how character education in schools complements and reinforces values learned at home:

“The primary responsibility, the primary teacher of character education is the parent. That is the front line of enabling our society to be a compassionate, decent place. . . . And the second line of defense in schools is, obviously, teachers. And the hope is that out of this violence and terror comes this notion that teachers have got to be – and by the way, the teachers have got an unbelievably hard job to not only teach, but to show concern and compassion. They’ve got their own lives to live, they’ve got their own families to raise. . . . Now, teaching character matters, no question about it, and there’s some great curriculum to do it.”

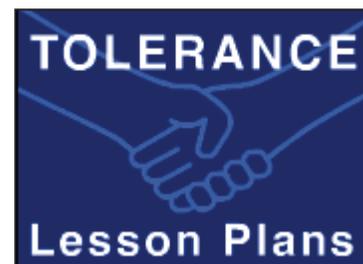
For a transcript of the President’s remarks at the White House Conference on School Safety visit [www.whitehouse.gov/infocus/education/schoolsafety](http://www.whitehouse.gov/infocus/education/schoolsafety). ■

## Web Site Offers Hate Prevention Resources

The Teaching Tolerance organization offers resources that underscore the importance of respecting all cultures and celebrating diversity. Educators looking for information to use in conjunction with Black History Month in February can order curriculum supplements from Teaching Tolerance.

Teaching Tolerance is a non-profit project of the Southern Poverty Law Center. Their mission is to help students learn to respect differences and to create classrooms where religious, cultural, and ethnic diversities are celebrated. All their materials are available to educators free of charge. These include classroom activities, games, a monthly hate-prevention magazine, guidebooks, curriculum guides, and several award-winning films, such as *The Children's March* which won an Academy Award in 2005.

According to Teaching Tolerance, "*The Children's March* tells the story of how the young people of Birmingham, Alabama braved fire hoses and police dogs in 1963 and brought segregation to its knees. Their heroism complements discussions about the ability of today's young people to be catalysts for positive social change." Jennifer Holladay, Director of Teaching Tolerance, says "*The Children's March* reminds each of us, young and old, that youth have the power to change the world."



Each film from Teaching Tolerance comes with a standards-based curriculum guide designed to integrate hate prevention into language arts, social studies, and music classes. The activities in the curriculum guides are both academically challenging and culturally interesting enough to appeal to middle and high school students. For example, one project involves studying the meter and repetition of traditional nursery rhymes and applying those patterns to songs of resistance. Another activity uses the emotional appeal of the film to encourage students to think critically about how they are affected by the media.



Teaching Tolerance also sponsors Mix It Up, a student activism initiative designed to increase social integration in schools by reducing the impermeability of social cliques. The November Safe Schools Newsletter reported on the 2006 Mix It Up at Lunch Day. An estimated four million students took part in that program, which encouraged students to occasionally sit with a new group of friends at lunch. Teaching Tolerance offers free multi-media promotional kits for Mix It Up. Grants are also available to educators and student activists who would like to implement Mix It Up in unique ways. The November article about Mix It Up at Lunch Day is available at [www.dodea.edu/offices/safety/safeSchools.cfm?sid=5](http://www.dodea.edu/offices/safety/safeSchools.cfm?sid=5).

Because Teaching Tolerance encourages youth activism, there are Web resources for teens and children. The children's Web pages include age-appropriate games, activities, and stories. The teen page includes forums, opportunities for paid publication, and appealing materials for download. There is also a program that enables school newspapers to partner with Teaching Tolerance. Most of the guides and handbooks are available in Spanish.

Visit [www.tolerance.org/index.jsp](http://www.tolerance.org/index.jsp) for further information on the many programs available. Additionally, *Safe Schools: A Handbook for Practitioners* and the supplemental *DoDEA Prevention Programs Guide* ([www.dodea.edu/offices/safety/docs/ss\\_PreventionPrograms\\_2006Spring.pdf](http://www.dodea.edu/offices/safety/docs/ss_PreventionPrograms_2006Spring.pdf)) offer numerous resources for hate prevention. ■