

SAFE Schools

OVERVIEW



Volume IX - Special Issue - Summer 2008

Our Safe Schools Program

DoDEA is committed to providing a safe and secure working and learning environment for all students and staff. The Community Strategic Plan (CSP), Goal 2, Outcome C, makes this a priority for all DoDEA schools. One of the guiding principles of the CSP, to maintain a “safe and stable learning environment,” also emphasizes this priority. To assist administrators in meeting these objectives, DoDEA has provided the DoDEA Safe Schools Program – a resource designed to help school leaders gain a working knowledge of security in the academic arena.

Created by Educators, for Educators

In 1999, DoDEA awarded a contract to a support team of former principals, counselors, police, and security experts to develop a Safe Schools Program tailored to DoDEA. This team also received input from the National Association of Secondary School Principals and the American School Counselor Association.



The Right Tools for DoDEA Schools

The collaborative effort resulted in a comprehensive Safe Schools Program that includes: training; a handbook with time saving tools; a monthly newsletter with updates on best practices and DoDEA success stories; and technical assistance available to all DoDEA administrators, staff, and crisis management team members worldwide. (For a detailed description of these program components see page 4 of this newsletter.)

The DoDEA Safe Schools Program emphasizes Risk Reduction – decreasing the chances of a critical incident happening. The program also helps crisis team members prepare to respond effectively to a critical incident and assist the school community in recovering quickly from a crisis event. Before students can learn, they need to feel safe. Join us in committing to address all of our students’ security needs by taking full advantage of the resources available through our Safe Schools Program. ■

Your Guide to the Safe Schools Program

This special Summer 2008 edition of DoDEA’s Safe Schools Newsletter provides an overview of the DoDEA Safe Schools Program, familiarizes readers with how to use the newsletters and handbook, and offers instruction on how to obtain technical assistance and additional information about the program components.

Inside This Issue

News & Updates

Our Safe Schools Program 1

Safe Schools Newsletter

Welcome to the DoDEA Safe Schools Newsletter 2

Safe Schools Handbook

How the Safe Schools Handbook Helps DoDEA 3

Program Components

Safe Schools Program Components..... 4

Meet the Team

Sarah Markel, Managing Editor 4

Welcome to the DoDEA Safe Schools Newsletter

Communication is an important facet of school security. Accordingly, the DoDEA Safe Schools Program includes a monthly newsletter which is distributed by e-mail as a downloadable PDF document. Eight years worth of newsletters are available on the DoDEA Safe Schools Program Web site at www.dodea.edu/offices/safety/safeSchools.cfm?sid=5.

This newsletter provides support to administrators, counselors, and school psychologists on several levels. It offers specific information and guidance for creating and implementing a customized safe school plan. Additionally, it serves as an ongoing professional education resource designed to provide useful and timely information about school security. The newsletter offers a forum for sharing success stories and best practices about security implementation within DoDEA so principals and crisis team members can build upon successful programs implemented by others.

Each month, a support team of school security experts, educators, and researchers produces a newsletter specifically for DoDEA. This support team scans a variety of news sources, medical studies, academic journals, and security updates to provide content for the Safe Schools Newsletter which is both useful and relevant to DoDEA. Additionally, the newsletter team works closely with professionals within DoDEA to research stories that emphasize the collaborative nature of school security within DoDEA. Each six-page, full-color newsletter contains the following sections:

- ◆ News and Updates presents current news stories and reports on developments affecting school security.
- ◆ Safe School Planning contains articles that reiterate lessons covered in the training workshops presented throughout DoDEA. Here, readers will find specific information to help them use the Safe Schools Handbook to develop a comprehensive plan and implement an effective program.
- ◆ Education Issues reports on thought-provoking studies and the latest research on school security. This section presents tips on how to educate students in the safest possible environment.
- ◆ Cybersecurity is a new feature this year. In this section we explore technological issues related to security. This includes cyber-bullying and on-line personal security.
- ◆ The Prevention Programs section delivers academic resources about anti-bullying, character education, life skills, substance abuse prevention and violence prevention programs currently and formerly in use in DoDEA, recognized by the Department of Education, or used widely in U.S. public schools.

Some principals in DoDEA distribute the newsletter to their staff, parents/sponsors, and students. Others use selected articles for their own newsletters. This is your newsletter and you are welcome to republish the content to your school community. Contributions from administrators and crisis management team members are critical to the exchange of knowledge throughout DoDEA. To share your success story, contact safeschools@csc.com. ■



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The material herein is presented for informational purposes only and does not constitute official policy of the Department of Defense, nor does it constitute an endorsement of any programs by the Department of Defense Education Activity or the Department of Defense. All comments and questions should be directed to safeschools@csc.com.

How the Safe Schools Handbook Helps DoDEA

In a cover letter introducing the second edition of the Safe Schools Handbook, Dr. Joseph Tafoya, the former DoDEA Director, noted that “the exceptional academic success enjoyed by DoDEA students is possible because they benefit from a safe and secure learning environment.” The Safe Schools Handbook is central to that mission. As Dr. Tafoya’s letter stated, the handbook provides “simplified and updated tools for your Safe School Planning.”

The *Safe Schools Handbook* was originally developed by the National Association of Secondary School Principals and a team of educators, counselors, and security experts. The Handbook was reviewed by the American School Counselor Association, the National Association of Elementary School Principals, and the International Union of Police Associations. DoDEA then awarded a contract to this multidisciplinary team to produce a special edition of the Safe Schools Handbook tailored to DoDEA schools. Extensive efforts were made to ensure the content of the DoDEA Safe Schools Handbook was applicable for DoDEA schools in the Europe, Pacific, and DDESS Areas.

The handbook was written for educators, by educators. The administrators who know the school are in the best position to determine how to improve security at their school. The content and tools were winnowed down to the essential material needed to develop a comprehensive plan. Therefore, the handbook is divided into four chapters covering 1) Risk Reduction, 2) Incident Response, 3) Resources, and 4) Antiterrorism.

Chapter 1 describes the Five Phase Process for **Risk Reduction Planning**. In 26 brief pages, administrators learn the keys to developing an effective risk reduction plan. The accompanying tools include worksheets and instructions which describe how to analyze historical data on incidents, gather input on security concerns, and review school security best practices. Chapter 1 concludes with a template of a Risk Reduction Plan.

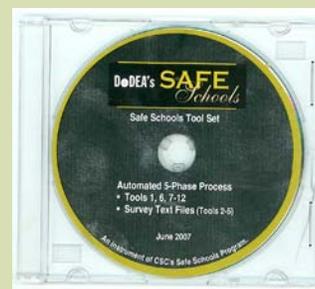
Chapter 2 describes a simplified approach to **Incident Response Planning**. This chapter describes the preparation, response, and recovery actions needed to ensure the school is ready to respond to a critical incident. Chapter 2 concludes with procedures for implementing protective actions such as lockdown, shelter-in-place, take cover, and evacuation. The accompanying tools include worksheets to assist in gathering maps, floor plans, and supplies as well as checklists for conducting protective actions.

Chapter 3 provides resources and **Supporting Information** that can be helpful in developing Safe School Plans. This chapter includes a review of school policies, prevention programs, physical security, and best practices.

Chapter 4 reviews **Antiterrorism Planning** considerations based on DoD Instruction 2000.16: Antiterrorism Standards. This chapter discusses potential terrorist attacks and provides guidance on physical security, barrier plans, parking restrictions, and Chemical, Biological, Radiological, Nuclear and High-Yield Explosives (CBRNE) considerations. It concludes with a review of the Force Protection Condition (FPCON) Measures. A glossary follows to ensure the crisis management team has a common understanding of terms.

In the words of our former director, we invite you to join us in “recommitting to excellence in school safety, security and antiterrorism planning.” The DoDEA Safe Schools Handbook helps accomplish that goal by providing strategies, tools and resources to assist administrators in developing a comprehensive Safe School Plan. ■

Automated Tools CD-ROM

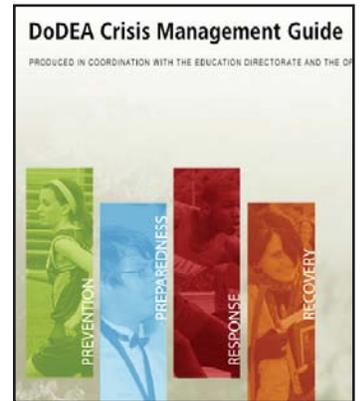


Look for your copy of the Automated Tools CD-ROM in the mail. The CD includes electronic versions of the planning tools in the handbook. Enter the data one time, and the information appears in the printed plan.

Safe Schools Program Components

The DoDEA Safe Schools Program uses several tools to help administrators accomplish risk reduction and incident response, including:

DoDEA's Safe Schools Handbook describes the Safe School Planning process and provides tools to help administrators review policy, program and physical security measures. The handbook has been tailored to DoDEA and explains how to establish security objectives and develop a plan. See the accompanying article in this newsletter for additional information on the Safe Schools Handbook.



The **DoDEA Crisis Management Guide** describes school-level application of DoD Instruction 2000.16, "DoD Antiterrorism Standards." This guide provides background on Crisis Management and includes checklists to assist Crisis Management Teams with prevention, preparedness, response and recovery.

Safe Schools Training provides knowledge, tools, and strategies to implement and update plans and comply with the DoD antiterrorism program. Administrators, counselors, and selected Crisis Management Team members can benefit by attending the training together.

The **Safe Schools Newsletters** reinforce and review concepts learned during training. They also share DoDEA success stories, best practices, research, and resources. As a supplement to the newsletter, a **Prevention Programs Guide** is published annually to update counselors, school psychologists, and other crisis team members on resources available to help all students.

The **Safe Schools E-mail Helpline** (safeschools@csc.com) handles requests for information and technical assistance. For additional information about the Safe Schools Program, visit the DoDEA Office of Safety and Security Web site at www.dodea.edu/offices/safety/safeSchools.cfm?sid=5. ■

Meet the Team: *Sarah Markel, Managing Editor*

The Safe Schools support team is intimately familiar with the issues that affect the lives of people who work and study in DoDEA. Some team members attended DoDEA schools, others are former military officers who sent their children to DoDEA schools, still others have invested a decade visiting DoDEA schools, corresponding with administrators, and developing materials to assist in keeping students secure. Please feel free to contact any of them to discuss a security concern or share what works.

Managing Editor Sarah Markel grew up in the military, but insists she was never a "brat." She knows first hand the joys (and difficulties) of moving, changing schools and getting to see the world at a young age. She started school at Patch Elementary in 1977. Over the next dozen years, she followed her father's Navy career to no less than ten locations, including Holy Loch, Charleston, Groton, Dyess AFB, Guam, and The Presidio. In 2004, Sarah's husband deployed to Afghanistan. "I learned a lot about myself during that difficult time," says Sarah. "But mostly I learned how support can make a difference long-term — my children and I had a lot of help. I'm not sure we could have done it alone."

A former English teacher, Sarah edits the DoDEA Safe Schools Newsletter and writes about school violence prevention programs. If you have a success story you want to share with Sarah, she can be reached at smarkel@csc.com. ■

