



Simple and Effective: E-mail for Attendance Accountability

While the most important aspect of lockdown is closing and locking doors to keep students safe, an effective system of student accountability can save first responders valuable response time in an actual crisis incident. At several schools within DoDEA, teachers and staff use e-mail to take attendance and provide accountability during a lockdown. The system is efficient, straightforward, and simple to use. According to Scott Tefft, principal of Delalio Elementary School at Camp Lejeune, “Using e-mail eliminated the bottle neck that can occur with the phone, gave us clear updates that we could share with Emergency Services, sped up the process considerably, and reduced risk.”

Here is how staff at Delalio report attendance: Each staff member has an e-mail account and has created an e-mail message for lockdown which is saved to the “draft folder” in their e-mail application. The draft e-mail already has the e-mail addresses of all the recipients placed on the “To” line and the subject line already reads “Lockdown Attendance.” During a lockdown, the teacher simply clicks on the draft folder icon, clicks the pre-written e-mail, types in the updated attendance in the subject line (i.e., “Room 102: OK” or “-2”), adds any explanation in the body of the e-mail, and then sends the message. The entire process takes less than a minute. In addition, notes Mr. Tefft, “Because the e-mail message is being sent to a number of key individuals, it can be accessed by several members of the crisis management team from any computer in the school.”



Crisis Management Team members at Tarawa Terrace II Elementary School, Camp Lejeune, demonstrate a lockdown best practice: one person reads incoming e-mails, another notes results, and a third remains on the line with 911.

While some schools still use the telephone to report attendance, Principal Tefft and others find that e-mail is a more convenient method. It also keeps the phone lines open for emergency responders. Additionally, he observed that using e-mail to report attendance provides a written record which the crisis management team can reference to resolve errors or uncertainty. “This is very important during a high stress, dangerous situation,” noted Tefft. “Where children and safety are concerned, failure is not an option.” ■

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Teachers Help Security Forces Practice Response

A success story from Guam offers an innovative way to bring educators and security forces together to enhance crisis management training. Administrators from Andersen Elementary School and Andersen Middle School invited Technical Sergeant Nixon and officers from the 36th Security Forces Squadron to brief teachers on procedures used to respond to active shooter situations and then demonstrate the procedures.



“The point of the training was to help the teachers understand how the Security Forces respond to an active shooter scenario and to see how quickly everything happens,” explained Andersen Elementary School Administrative Officer Carter Gingrich. “We brought in the experts, gave them twenty minutes to do an in-depth briefing and then five minutes for the demonstration,” he added.

Mr. Gingrich explained that students were not present, and teachers from both schools participated: “The responders asked the faculty to scream and yell as they entered the building to simulate the noise and confusion of a hostage situation.” The Security Forces reserved a special role for Mr. Gingrich: “I got to be the hostage — to the amusement of the faculty.”

The training accomplished the objective. “Watching the responders “sweep into the building, communi-

cate despite the noise and confusion, and take control of the situation,” increased the school community’s confidence that the security forces were prepared to respond. He concluded, “We all realize that we’ll probably never see this type of situation, but it’s always best to be proactive instead of reactive when training for emergencies.”

Special thanks to Andersen Elementary third grade teacher Rebekah (Becky) Levy for contributing this success story. Contact safeschools@csc.com to share your story. ■

Military Pathways Webinar on Teen Self-Injury and Suicide Prevention

On March 3, Military Pathways will host a webinar titled Teen Self-Injury and Suicide Prevention to help school administrators understand self-injury and suicidal ideation. Self injury expert Barent Walsh, Ph.D., and Diane Santoro, manager of the Signs of Suicide (SOS) Program, will discuss the warning signs and appropriate response. During the Webinar, Dr. Walsh and Ms. Santoro will discuss:

- ◆ Signs, symptoms, and treatment of self-injury.
- ◆ How to deal with self-injury in a school setting.
- ◆ Implementing a self-injury prevention program in school.
- ◆ Warning signs of depression and suicide.
- ◆ Research on suicide prevention programs.
- ◆ How to implement the SOS Booster Program.

Military Pathways materials are available to all DoDEA schools and the Office of the Secretary of Defense distributed SOS kits to all military-impacted schools. To participate contact military@mentalhealthscreening.org or visit www.mentalhealthscreening.org/programs/military and click “sign-up” under “Teen Self-Injury and Suicide Prevention Webinar.” ■

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

CSC Safe Schools Newsletter Editorial Staff

Sarah Markel, Brian McKeon, Bert Garcia

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Hot Wash: Clean Up and Cool Down After an Exercise



After the next Crisis Management Team table top exercise, include a step called a “Hot Wash.” Many educators who are personally connected with the military may already be familiar with this term. For those who are not, a Hot Wash gathers the lessons learned during an exercise before they lose their immediacy for the participants.

The term Hot Wash comes from the practice used by some soldiers of dousing their weapons in extremely hot water as a means of removing grit and residue after firing. While this practice by no means eliminates the need to properly break down the weapon later for cleaning, it removes the major debris and ensures the cleaning process goes more smoothly. One infantry soldier described it as “the quick and dirty cleaning that can save a lot of time later.”

The Hot Wash conversation serves much the same purpose. It does not replace the After Action Report (AAR) which can include a formal write-up, analysis, charts, and even slides. Rather, the Hot Wash prepares the team for the AAR. According to Tim Price, Installation Antiterrorism Officer, Fort Benning, “A Hot Wash is a conversation before the official AAR which captures events while they are still fresh on the participants’ minds.”

During this informal conversation, held immediately after an incident or training exercise, participants discuss their responses. Sometimes those responses are more emotional than substantive, because individuals are still excited about participating in the crisis simulation. To help them articulate the logic behind their comment, it is helpful if one person is assigned the role of note taker. Those notes can form the basis for later analysis and thoughtful discussion. Mr. Price noted, “We make a list on butcher paper of what we want to sustain and what we need to improve. Later, that information goes into the formal write-up and is submitted to the chain of command.”



The Hot Wash offers a unique name for a feedback model many schools and government agencies are already using to increase the effectiveness and efficiency of their training exercises. Making time for this critical conversation allows people space to talk about their feelings, gives them a chance to air grievances, and assures them that they are being heard by the rest of the team.

Sometimes when participants disagree, there can be tension in the room. The facilitator can manage potential conflict by laying ground rules and keeping the conversation on topic. Mr. Price takes a direct approach to manage those critical conversations: “I say to people, no thin skins in here. What’s said in a Hot Wash can make us better.” ■

Hot Wash comments following the Fort Benning Table Top Exercise. Clockwise from top: Mr. Robert (Bob) Brown, Director of Plans, Training, Mobilization and Security; Mr. Tim Price, Installation Antiterrorism Officer; and Ms. Ellen Talley, Antiterrorism Representative for the Human Resources Directorate.

New Drug Trend: Inhaling Bath Salts

What will they think of next? Poison Control Centers around the United States are reporting an increase in calls related to a new trend in drug use among teenagers and young adults. According to the Drug Enforcement Agency (DEA), a substance known and sold as “bath salts” is being snorted, and sometimes injected, to get high.

According to law enforcement agents and poison control centers, the bath salts — that students refer to by street names such as Ivory Wave, Bliss, White Lightning, and Hurricane Charlie — can cause paranoia, hallucinations, delusions, rapid heart rate, chest pain, and suicidal ideation. The stimulants in these drugs include mephedrone and methylenedioxypyrovalerone (MDPV). The DEA reports that the effects of inhaling the powders can be as powerful as using cocaine.



In the United States, bath salts are typically sold in packets or jars. While they were previously sold in department stores, they are increasingly being sold in convenience stores and gas stations. As one analyst observed, the sale of bath salts in gas stations is a clue that they are being used as drugs. While there have been no reports thus far of these types of bath salts being sold on military installations, and they have already been banned in Europe, parents and educators may want to use this opportunity for a frank discussion with students about the importance of making intelligent life choices and avoiding illegal and dangerous substances. ■

Teens Take Greater Risk With Peers

If a teenage driver is approaching a traffic light and it turns yellow, are they more likely to accelerate through the intersection or stop for the light? Research conducted by a team from Temple University concluded that if the teens have friends in the car, they are more likely to take a risk and attempt to make it through the intersection.

In a study published in the January 2011 edition of *Developmental Science*, researchers Jason Chein and Laurence Steinberg confirm that teenagers are more likely to experiment with risky behaviors, such as “binge drinking, cigarette smoking, and careless driving,” when friends are present. They note that these types of behaviors “present the greatest threat to the well-being of young people in industrialized societies.”

Building on research conducted by Harvard Medical School (see the December 2006 *DoDEA Safe Schools Newsletter*, page 4), the Temple University team used functional magnetic resonance imaging to measure brain activity in adolescents as they completed tasks alone and with peers. Players received a monetary reward for making it through the course quickly and had to make a decision regarding whether to stop for a yellow light. Running through the yellow light offered the payoff of completing the course quickly, but also the consequences of a crash, which added a considerable delay.

Each participant played alone and with friends. The results were not even close. Both older participants and teenagers behaved cautiously when they played alone. But when friends were present, teenagers took greater risk. According to Chein, “The regions of the brain associated with reward showed greater activation when the adolescents knew they were being observed by peers.” Teens were not distracted by friends, they were incentivized by their presence. The researchers concluded, “Being with friends primes the reward system and makes teens pay more attention to the potential pay offs of a risky decision.” Translation: Students are more likely to take risks if they think it will help them “look cool.” For additional information contact safeschools@csc.com. ■

When Dating Violence Turns Digital

In some ways very little has changed about youth relationships. Boys still open doors for girls; teens still attend football games, dances, and an occasional movie. The prevalence of cell phones and communication technology, however, has changed the way students communicate with one another, and that can affect dating relationships.

Teenagers today communicate faster and more often than previous generations. Social networking applications provide the technology and opportunity to stay in touch around the clock. Teens often feel, however, that they can no longer escape their peers by going home or hanging up the phone. When one half of the relationship becomes overbearing, the omnipresence of social media can multiply the psychological impact. Adults are often unaware of the drama because it is difficult to monitor how teens communicate online.

Surveys conducted by the Cyberbullying Research Center, an online clearinghouse of data related to use of technology by young people, indicate that many teens are engaging in relational aggression through the use of cell phones, text messages, and social networks. A November 2010 study, involving 4,400 students between the ages of 11 and 18, found that a significant number of teenage students reported experience with the electronic equivalent of dating violence. The overall findings are summarized in the table below.

Means	Victims	Perpetrators
Postings	▶ Six percent of students said their significant other posted something publicly online to “make fun of, threaten, or embarrass them.”	▶ Six percent of boys, and four percent of girls, said they posted something publicly online to make fun of, threaten, or embarrass their romantic partner.
Calls	▶ Ten percent of students said they received a threatening message from their significant other.	▶ About seven percent of youth said they sent a threatening cell phone message to their romantic partner.
Pictures	▶ More than five percent of boys, and three percent of girls, said their significant other uploaded or shared a humiliating picture of them through their cell phone.	▶ Five percent of boys, and three percent of girls, said they uploaded or shared a humiliating or harassing picture of their romantic partner online or through their cell phone.

Dating violence was found to correlate to cyberbullying. Both victims and offenders of traditional “offline” dating violence were more likely to experience cyberbullying or harass others online. Students who were victims of cyberbullying were nearly four times more likely to experience electronic teen dating violence.

As teenagers develop their interpersonal relationships, they can learn to protect their personal information, and respect their peers’ privacy. Regrettably, researchers found that students who share their passwords with their significant other are nearly three times as likely to be victims of electronic dating violence.

Additionally, the Cyberbullying Research Center cited results from an Associated Press poll on the digital influences in teen relationships. The poll found that one-fifth of students in a relationship said that their partner wrote something about them online that was not true, and 22 percent of youth felt that their significant other “checked up on them too often” online or via cell phone. For more information on cyberbullying, contact safeschools@csc.com. ■

Best Practices for Classroom Management

In most DoDEA schools, elementary classrooms are orderly. Teacher-student and student-student relationships are positive, and teaching and learning take place without major disruption. Classroom teachers recognize the importance of preventing significant behavior problems and typically use a variety of prevention strategies – engaging instruction, well-managed classrooms, and positive relationships with students. However, occasionally some teachers have a class in which one or a few students exhibit persistent or significant problem behaviors – children who are disruptive, oppositional, distracting, or defiant.



An estimated one-third of U.S. students have trouble paying attention due to classroom distractions. These issues stem from socialization problems, issues occurring at home, or the maturity level of the child in relation to his or her peers.

The U.S. Department of Education’s Institute for Education Sciences (IES) offers a distillation of the best practices for classroom management. The *IES Practice Guide: Reducing Behavior Problems in the Elementary School Classroom* was prepared for the National Center for Education Evaluation and Regional Assistance, a component of the IES. The guide offers the following five recommendations that are components of the highest rated behavior management programs:

- ◆ Identify the specifics of the problem behavior and the conditions that prompt and reinforce it.
- ◆ Modify the classroom learning environment to decrease problem behavior.
- ◆ Teach and reinforce new skills to increase appropriate behavior and preserve a positive classroom climate.
- ◆ Draw on relationships with professional colleagues and students’ families for continued guidance.
- ◆ Assess whether pervasive behavior problems warrant adopting school-wide strategies.

Develop Good Mental Habits

Many prevention programs emphasize positive traits that healthy individuals exhibit. Ideally, programs teach a repertoire of behaviors that help students and teachers successfully navigate the challenges in the classroom and outside of school. These include:

- ✓ Persisting.
- ✓ Thinking and communicating with clarity.
- ✓ Managing impulsivity.
- ✓ Listening with empathy.
- ✓ Thinking flexibly.
- ✓ Striving for accuracy.
- ✓ Solving problems.
- ✓ Thinking interdependently.
- ✓ Applying past knowledge to new situations.
- ✓ Remaining open to continuous learning.

For each of the five recommendations, the guide discusses the evidence that supports that recommendation. In addition, IES offers tips to help implement the strategies. Finally, there is a one-page check list of actions for each strategy, and a discussion of potential “roadblocks” to implementation success.

Reducing Behavior Problems in the Elementary School Classroom is one of an extensive series of user-friendly guides for teachers from the Department of Education. The guides are available online at <http://ies.ed.gov/ncee/wcc/publications/practiceguides/>. ■