



SAFE SCHOOLS

NEWSLETTER



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INSIDE
this issue

Safe Schools News & Updates 1

- Ribbon of Promise Offers
- School Violence Prevention Play at No Cost
- Safe School Planning Prevents Incident
- Making Intervention Programs More Effective
- Reminders Regarding Intervening in Student Fights

Safe School Planning 4

- Balancing Security & Threat

Intervention Strategies 5

- Recognizing & Responding to Suicidal Students

Education Issues 6

- CDC: Troubled Students Signal Before Shooting

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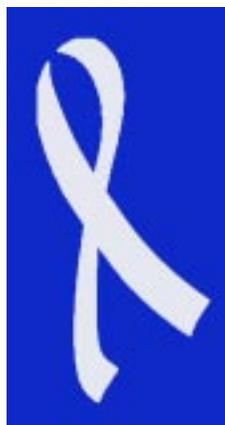
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Safe Schools NEWS

Ribbon of Promise Offers

School Violence Prevention Play at No Cost



During January 2002, Olympia H.S., Olympia, Washington; Woodhaven H.S., Woodhaven, Michigan; Leland H.S., San Jose, California; and Brazoswood High School, Clute, Texas will perform William Matrosimone's school violence prevention play *Bang Bang You're Dead*. DoDEA schools that would like to perform the play can obtain the dramatic scripts from the *Ribbon of Promise Campaign to End School Violence* Internet site (www.ribbonofpromise.org/). The performances are possible because Mr. Matrosimone licenses the play to schools at no cost as long as they perform it to enhance security awareness and agree to the specifications on the Internet site, i.e., no admission charges, no more photocopying of the play than necessary. A discussion guide accompanying the play includes questions that teachers or actors can use to help students viewing the play consider the choices that either cause or prevent school violence.





Safe School Planning Prevents Incident

“You can’t have the feeling that it couldn’t happen here. We’re saying just the opposite: It could happen here. . . . What we were led to believe would work did work, and it prevented what could have been a horrific tragedy.”

New Bedford Mayor,
Frederick M. Kalisz Jr.

On Saturday, November 24, 2001, police arrested three students in connection with a plan to use guns and explosives to harm other students at New Bedford High School, Massachusetts.

Prevention measures used by the school included:

Policies

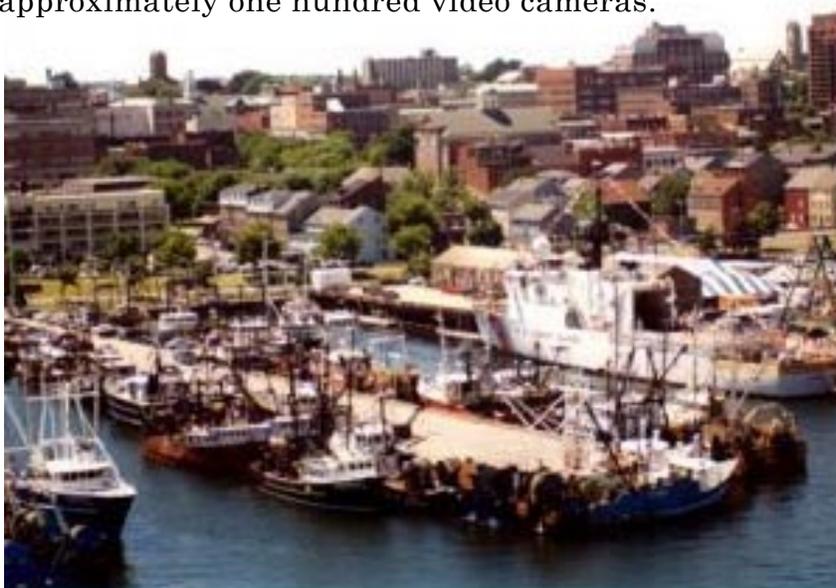
- School climate/security awareness: A custodian reported the note that resulted in the arrests; a student alerted a teacher about the planned “Columbine High School style attack.”
- IRP exercises: floor plans given to police special forces (SWAT) teams.
- SWAT team conducted simulations in the school during non-school hours.

Programs

- School administrators attended violence prevention workshops.
- School Resource Officer (SRO) program started in September 2001. SROs heard similar reports from several students.

Physical security

- Communication: classroom inter-coms, two-way radios.
- Surveillance: approximately one hundred video cameras.



(Sources: *New York Times*, 11/26/01; *Providence Journal*, 11/26/01; *Washington Post*, 11/26/01 and 12/27/01; and www.ci.new-bedford.ma.us)





Making Intervention Programs More Effective

The University of Colorado Center for the Study and Prevention of Violence (CSPV, www.colorado.edu/cspv) explains that educators are key to implementing intervention programs (IP) effectively because they encourage students to use learned social and emotional skills to solve actual conflicts in the classroom. CSPV suggests enhancing program implementation by arranging for substitute instructors and allowing everyday classroom teachers to attend both days of a two-day workshop.

Reminders Regarding Intervening in Student Fights

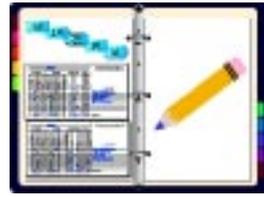
The Virginia Center for School Safety (www.vaschoolsafety.com) reminds school administrators and teachers intervening in student fights to strive for safety, effective communication, mobilization, control and evaluation.

OBJECTIVES	SAFETY: <i>Protect yourself as you attempt to protect students.</i>
	EFFECTIVE COMMUNICATION: <i>Speak loudly or call students by name to distract and interrupt the conflict.</i>
	MOBILIZE STUDENTS: <i>Move student onlookers away from the area of the conflict.</i>
	SITUATION CONTROL: <i>Attempt to limit the number of students joining the conflict, mobilize student onlookers and assign staff members to each student participant.</i>
	EVALUATION: <i>Evaluate the situation and provide medical services and discipline action as necessary.</i>

ACTIONS	➤ Disperse student bystanders to ensure the safety of students.
	➤ Request help from other students and adults in responding to the incident.
	➤ Concentrate on diffusing the fighting.
	➤ Arrange for medical services if necessary.
	➤ Learn how to intervene safely with dangerous individuals.
	➤ Evaluate the situation later with the school crisis response team by providing disciplinary action and counseling as appropriate.

Source: Hanover County, Virginia guidance on Intervening in Student Fights from the Incident Response Plan example provided on the Virginia Center for Safe Schools Internet site (www.pen.k12.va.us/VDOE/Instruction/model.html)





Safe School Planning

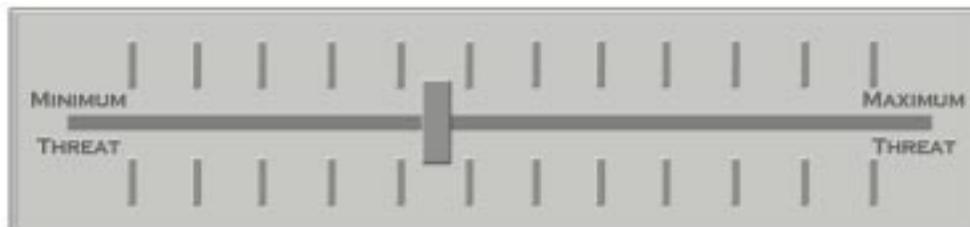
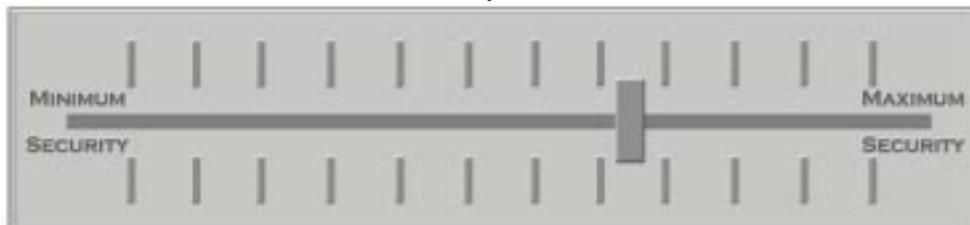
Balancing Security & Threat

Plans to create and maintain a safe school will be unfounded unless the threat, or the risk to the school, is evaluated first. The Five Phase Process, described in the DoDEA Safe Schools Handbook, enables administrators to develop their plans by evaluating the level of risk to the school and then determining the most appropriate measures to take to reduce the risk from that threat. This is the same approach used by military commands to protect DoD personnel, their families, installations, facilities, information and other resources from terrorist acts.

Department of Defense Instruction (DoDI) 2000.16, dated June 14, 2001 defines the Antiterrorism (AT) Standards that serve as the basis for the DoDEA AT Prescriptive Standards. Military commands are required to determine Force Protection Conditions (FPCON) for their installations. Commanders will use FPCON as the means of preparation to protect against acts of terrorism. Protection measures will be based on the evaluated threat. This technique of correlating the security measures to the threat is directly transferable to the Five Phase Process.

Principals using the Five Phase Process to write a plan for their school, *evaluate the threat* as they identify problems (Phase 1) and determine security objectives (Phase 2). School administrators *adjust school security* to meet the threat as they evaluate measures/identify options (Phase 3) and select options (Phase 4). The graphic below depicts the principal's challenge of keeping security slightly higher than the anticipated threat.

The Security Continuum



The Threat Continuum

As each of you know from living on or near military bases, FPCON are varied to meet the changing conditions of the threat. The key factor in this correlation is to never let the threat overmatch the protection. Similarly, always develop your safe school plans to match or surpass the threat you have determined is present. By doing this, you will be complying with the DoDEA Implementing Guidelines and creating a safe school at the same time.



Recognizing & Responding to Suicidal Students



*“For young people 15-24 years old, suicide is the third leading cause of death, behind unintentional injury and homicide. In 1998, more teenagers and young adults died from suicide than from cancer, heart disease, AIDS, birth defects, stroke, pneumonia and influenza, and chronic lung disease **combined.**”*

CDC Factsheet “Suicides in the United States”
(www.cdc.gov/ncipc/factsheets/suifacts.htm)

Familiarity with suicide warning signs and the school’s system for referring students at risk might help DoDEA school administrators and teachers prevent student suicides. Teachers are in a difficult situation because although they have an opportunity to observe early warning signs in students’ classroom behavior, conversation, writing and artistic assignments, they have not received training in how to respond to suicidal students. School personnel also have a responsibility to refer the student for appropriate counseling and intervention. Fortunately, the February 1, 1990, DS Manual 2943.0 *DoDDS School Action Plan for Crises Intervention and Response to Death* (www.odedodea.edu/foia/iod/pdf/2943_0.pdf) provides excellent guidance for principals and school staff on how to establish a suicide prevention plan for their school.

The guide describes the actions needed for prevention, intervention, and post-vention. Guidelines for establishing a Crisis Intervention Team include: “Youth Suicide Signals” (p.12, p.24 and p.27.1), specific intervention procedures (p.22) and examples of appropriate but sensitive notification to the school community.

Early warning signs of suicidal students identified by the National Association of School Psychologists (NASP, www.nasponline.org/NEAT/syouth.html) include: suicide notes, suicide threats, previous attempts, depression, final arrangements (i.e. giving away prized possessions), efforts to hurt themselves, inability to concentrate or think rationally, and sudden changes in behavior or physical appearance. NASP cautions that students with a plan and access to weapons are at serious risk and should be referred immediately to the school contact person.

Further sources of information on youth suicide prevention include:

American Association of Suicidology (www.suicidology.org)

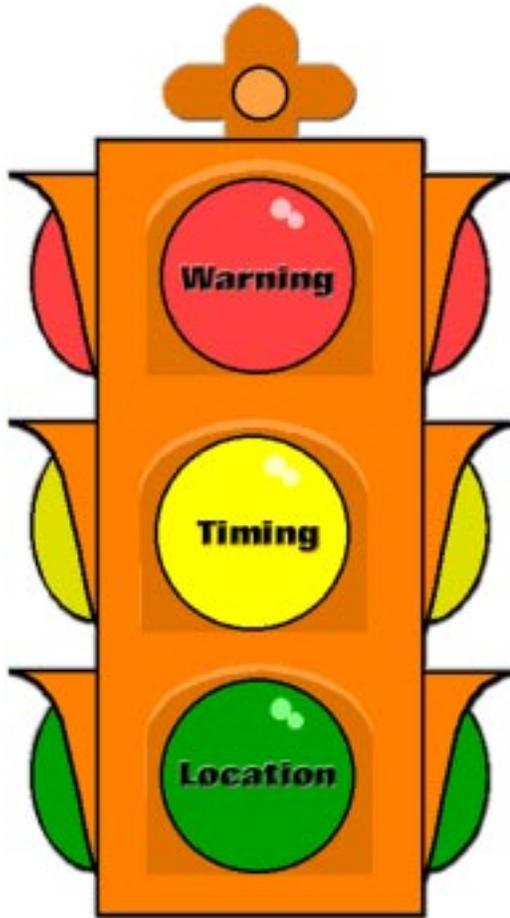
Suicide Awareness/Voice of Education (SAVE, www.save.org)

Yellow Ribbon Suicide Prevention Program (www.yellowribbon.org)

Kidsource (www.kidsource.com/kidsource/content2/news2/suicide.html).



CDC: Troubled Students Signal Before Shooting



The Centers for Disease Control and Prevention (CDC) agreed with the U.S. Secret Service (Newsletter #1-3) that troubled students usually tell others of their plans before shooting other students and teachers (www.cdc.gov/od/oc/media/pressrel/r011204.htm). The CDC report *School Associated Violent Deaths* (www.cdc.gov/ncipc/schoolviolencejoc11149.pdf), published in the December 5, 2001 Journal of the American Medical Association (JAMA), concluded that enough school violence incidents have occurred to offer some guidance for prevention efforts.

The Departments of Education and Justice cooperated with CDC in design and review of the study. CDC researchers searched news reports of incidents of violence at school, then contacted law enforcement and school officials to learn the specifics of each incident. Of 220 events identified, 41 occurred at elementary schools, 34 at middle schools, and 143 at high schools. Of 253 victims, 172 were students (68%), and 18 were teachers or school staff members (7.1%).

Key study findings that could guide violence prevention efforts:

- WARNING:** Student shooters usually indicated their intentions before the incident through written notes (16%) verbal threats (34%) or journal entries (4%).
- TIMING:** Incidents tend to occur before school, during change of classes, during the school lunch period, or at the end of the school day.
- LOCATION:** More incidents occur outside of school in parking lots (38%) and athletic fields or playgrounds (24%) than in classrooms (11%).

Researchers also noted that while the number of school violence incidents decreased, the number of incidents resulting in multiple victims increased. Since interpersonal disputes were the motive in 46 percent of the incidents, researchers suggested anti-bullying and conflict resolution training might enhance students' safety.

