

# SAFE SCHOOLS NEWSLETTER



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## Act Now: You Can Obtain a Free Safety and Security Video

A copy of the video *The Students vs. School Violence* will be sent to the first ten principals who request DynCorp's Technical Assistance support this month in response to this newsletter article. The video, described in the previous newsletter (12/02) provides teachers with an excellent tool for use when helping students discuss the causes of school violence. For a chance to obtain your

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## Preparing for Bioterrorism and Chemical Weapons Attacks

How can you prepare your school for possible attacks that employ biological or chemical weapons? As the United States moves closer to the possibility of military confrontation with Iraq, U.S. public school principals are asking this question with increasing frequency. Fortunately, for most schools located on military installations, security measures will increase as Force Protection Conditions (FPCONs) change in response to the threat. DoDEA administrators also have three valuable sources of information to consult when preparing for potential terrorist attacks:

1) The DoDEA Antiterrorism Program (Regulation 4700.1);

- 2) The updated Antiterrorism Section of the DoDEA Safe Schools Handbook; and
- 3) Their own military installation.

Consider practicing an Airtight Lockdown to enhance your school's ability to cope with a chemical or biological incident. To practice implementing Airtight Lockdown procedures, close all windows, doors, and HVAC outlets as quickly as possible. Stuff wet paper or cloths sprinkled with baking soda around openings that lack a decent air seal, such as HVAC and bathroom vents, attic openings, or ill-fitting exterior openings. Augment these seals with duct or masking tape or modeling clay from the art department.

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## Daily School Security Updates from DoDEA

The DoDEA Safe Schools website offers the very latest on school safety. Researchers at George Washington University and the University of Hawaii comb the Internet for news relevant to the challenges confronted by DoDEA administrators regarding anti-bullying, behavior management, character education and other life skills issues. Daily updates summarize the essence of the research and provide Internet links to the complete article. Only worthwhile articles are selected to make your reading as productive as possible. Go to the DoDEA website, at: [www.odedodea.edu](http://www.odedodea.edu); Select: Schools, GWU Safe Schools Project, Members.

## New Director of Safe & Drug-Free Schools at Education Department

On December 17, 2002, Secretary of Education Rod Paige named former Texas appeals court justice Eric G. Andell to lead the Safe and Drug-Free Schools office. Andell, a former advisor to Paige had previously established High Point High School, an early alternative school serving students expelled from the public school system. Paige ordered the Office of Safe and Drug-Free Schools to assist schools with developing plans to deal with the threat of school violence. Andell will also lead the Department of Education's efforts on Homeland Security. For more information, see: [www.ed.gov/offices/OSDFS/](http://www.ed.gov/offices/OSDFS/) and [www.ed.gov/PressReleases/12-2002/12172002.html](http://www.ed.gov/PressReleases/12-2002/12172002.html).

## Teach Bullying Victims Verbal Defense

“One of the greatest gifts you can give your child is the confidence to speak out when someone they perceive as having more power is humiliating them.”

— Rosalind Wiseman

Renowned educator Jane Coleman taught her 5<sup>th</sup>-graders: “No one can intimidate you without your consent.” Her students, who now include medical doctors, scientists and lawyers, have kept that lesson with them throughout their lives. In the December 2002 issue of NASSP's *Principal Leadership* magazine, Wiseman explains that principals can dramatically improve the plight of bullying victims by providing training for students on how to respond to bullies. Students empowered with the belief that no one can intimidate them without their consent are less likely to become victims of date rape or abuse in social situations, at home or later in life. DoDEA educators have an opportunity to

### When Should I Phone for Technical Assistance?

#### Call us when you need help:

- Implementing any of your Safe Schools Planning Tools
- Writing your Safe Schools Plan
- Justifying funds for a needed Safe Schools Program or physical security modification

These examples are just a few ways that Technical Assistance can support you.

Please contact us at: [safeschools@dyncorp.com](mailto:safeschools@dyncorp.com), or toll free at: 1-(866) 711-6477





influence their students by teaching them not to tolerate bullying and to give them the tools they need to respond to bullies.

Encourage students and staff to report bullying by establishing an anonymous hotline or e-mail address and instituting a system for referring bullies and victims for appropriate counseling. Administrators can implement specific actions to eliminate bullying by using the ideas in the following acronym P.E.A.C.E:

**Provide training for school staff on how to spot and intervene in bullying incidents.**

**Enforce anti-bullying policies that address the needs of both victims and bullies.**

**Acknowledge what constitutes bullying behavior, including psychological bullying.**

**Communicate to parents and students how to report incidents of bullying.**

**Emphasize to the school community that bullying is not acceptable.**

An investment in anti-bullying programs for students and school staff will yield dividends in the improvement of the school climate and self-confidence of former bullying victims. For more anti-bullying action ideas, visit: [www.principals.org](http://www.principals.org) or see: [www.principals.org/news/pl\\_hiddenworld\\_1202.html](http://www.principals.org/news/pl_hiddenworld_1202.html).

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*Free Video . . . Continued from page 1*

free copy, e-mail: [safeschools@dyncorp.com](mailto:safeschools@dyncorp.com) and ask a safety or security-related question today! Winners' questions may be published in future newsletters. We hope this safety and security promotion helps create a greater awareness of the Safe Schools technical assistance that DoDEA provides for its principals and administrators.

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*Bioterrorism . . . Continued from page 1*

Assign people to keep the seals moist but not sopping wet, and keep them airtight.

If you choose to include students in the exercise, you could assign students tasks such as: maintaining class rosters, keeping seals moist, cleaning and preparing sleeping areas and doing school work. Usually a lockdown ends when local security officials come to the classroom to evacuate students.

Acknowledging that your school is taking preventive security measures and planning a response to mitigate bioterrorism or chemical attacks, reassures parents and helps students feel safer in the midst of uncertainty. For further information, see:

DoDEA Antiterrorism Program (Regulation 4700.1) [www.odedodea.edu/foia/iod/pdf/4700\\_1.pdf](http://www.odedodea.edu/foia/iod/pdf/4700_1.pdf)

CDC Chemical/Biological Terrorism Strategies, at: [www.bt.cdc.gov/Documents/BTStratPlan.pdf](http://www.bt.cdc.gov/Documents/BTStratPlan.pdf)

Red Cross Terrorism Preparedness, at: [www.redcross.org/services/disaster/keepsafe/unexpected.html](http://www.redcross.org/services/disaster/keepsafe/unexpected.html)

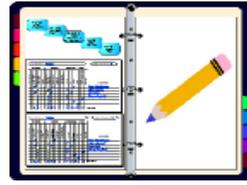
Suggested Emergency Guidelines for Anthrax Threats, at: [www.ideanet.doe.state.in.us/issas/lawrencegdlsanthrax.html](http://www.ideanet.doe.state.in.us/issas/lawrencegdlsanthrax.html)

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# Safe School Planning

## Basic Needs of Your Stakeholders

As you prepare to conduct your parent, student and staff surveys, at the start of your comprehensive Safe Schools Risk Reduction planning, be sure to inform your stakeholders.

**Students** will appreciate knowing that you are addressing school safety and security issues and that you will involve them in the process by soliciting their opinions. Communicate with students in a variety of ways. Consider using a student survey, suggestion box, hotline for inquiries, assemblies, class and homeroom visits, articles in the newspaper, morning announcements, or an open door policy by school administration that encourages inquiries about your school's safety and security policies.

Your **staff** will appreciate having their opinions considered in both the assessment and implementation of improvements to school safety. Communicate with staff in meetings and invite staff to input their ideas directly.

**Parents** want their children to be safe. They will be happy to learn that their school is making a serious effort to improve school safety. Some parents may conclude that because you are addressing school safety, you must have a security problem. To allay such concerns, communicate with parents through letters, a formal parent's newsletter, parent/teacher association meetings, and the school safety committee. Explain to parents how essential it is to always work to improve safety and security for the school and that this is simply a part of that effort. Thank parents for their support and cooperation.

If your Safe Schools Risk Reduction Plan entails significant policy changes or an expenditure of resources, your stakeholders will be interested in an explanation of your plan. In

particular, if funding is needed from the district or from DoDEA, justification will be required. Simply use the completed worksheets and surveys from the Safe School Planning process to document your needs and justify the required resources. Remember to communicate with your stakeholders prior to your assessment as well as throughout the assessment process.



Please share your ideas on prevention programs and safe schools news with us.

Consider submitting an article or just a few tips for your colleagues for the next issue of this DoDEA sponsored newsletter!

**Send your ideas or an article to [safeschools@dyncorp.com](mailto:safeschools@dyncorp.com), or phone us toll-free at: 1-(866) 711-6477.**





## Diversity Training Converts Conflict Into Learning Opportunities

If one student hails from Birmingham, Alabama and another from Columbia, Missouri, and another from Los Angeles, California, chances are they will all possess very different backgrounds and a very different view on life. By demographic make up, DoDEA students encounter multiple sources of potential conflict. In addition to the usual maturation challenges common to elementary, middle and high school students, children in military families encounter social and cultural differences. Diversity training improves students' understanding of other cultures — enabling them to evaluate communication that might otherwise be perceived as threatening or provocative.

Cultural diversity refers to the complex factors with which we are born, or that our society teaches us, that shape our sense of identity and perception of others. As students learn about another society's perceptions of appropriate personal distance, eye contact, and non-verbal communication styles, they realize that comments they might have interpreted as aggressive or threatening could be innocuous. Diversity training decreases the chances of miscommunication and the resulting frustration that contributes to conflict.

Awareness of different perceptions of physical contact helps prevent miscommunication. For example, according to the Community Policing Consortium's Diversity Bulletin, "French and Spanish men and women tend to have more physical contact than other Europeans and much more than individuals who grew up in the United States."

Learning about these differences encourages students to listen to their fellow students with a

more open mind. Diversity training teaches students to view potential communication hazards as opportunities to learn about other social cultures. Culturally aware students recognize that even an intentional insult has no effect if ignored.

### Cultural Diversity Checklist:

The following checklist can help students and school administrators avoid miscommunication with people from diverse social and cultural backgrounds:

#### **Sense of Self and Personal Space:**

- Be careful using names. Ask people what they want to be called.
- Don't feel threatened if a person from another social culture "invades your personal space" while talking with you.

#### **Eye Contact:**

- Don't interpret avoidance of eye contact as deviousness.
- Avoid prolonged staring at others.

#### **Verbal Communication:**

- Moderate your tone of voice and how loudly you speak. Speaking slowly enables non-native English speakers to better understand you.
- Use conversational silences to think and choose your words.

#### **Social Customs:**

- Some cultures do not consider punctuality a virtue.
- Respect others' beliefs.

For further information on diversity training, contact the Southern Poverty Law Center, at: [www.splcenter.org](http://www.splcenter.org), Community Policing Consortium, at [www.communitypolicing.org](http://www.communitypolicing.org) or see The Virginia School Resource Officer Program Guide, at: [www.dcjs.state.va.us](http://www.dcjs.state.va.us).



## Here It Is: Role-Playing on a Silver Platter

Ever feel frustrated to find that you must pay anywhere from \$500.00 to \$1,600.00 for violence prevention programs, before you even get to see the substantive exercises used to teach prevention skills to your students? Here are three classroom role-playing exercises that you can put to good use in your classes to help your students internalize their violence prevention skills.

### These exercises ask students how they would:

- Respond to a fellow student who is becoming dangerously socially withdrawn;
- Help a fellow student experiencing physical bullying; and
- Report imminent danger to prevent violence and help troubled students receive needed counseling.

### How should you begin? It's Easy . . .

To use these role-plays with middle level and high school students, divide the class into three groups. Then, let each group read the exercise and prepare their presentation for the class. Following the role-play, let the class write their evaluation of the responses depicted. Next, open the discussion by asking students how they would have helped the troubled student and what other actions they could have taken. By briefly writing their responses before the classroom discussion, students have an opportunity to think about how they could take personal responsibility for the school's safety and security. Giving students an opportunity to write individual responses usually makes the verbal discussion more substantive.

To further the students' thinking, teachers can ask whether the situation was realistic and whether students have experienced similar situations in their lives. The following three simulations can be re-written to include specific references to your school or to make them more appropriate for the maturity level of your students.

### 1. Social Withdrawal:

Students A, B, and C usually eat lunch together. Student D just recently moved to their school. D is in some of their same classes, but eats alone in the school cafeteria. D does not appear to have any friends and appears to wear the same clothes for several days. What are some things A, B, and C can do to help D feel more accepted at their school?

### 2. Physical Violence:

Between classes, you and your friends notice a group of students near the bathroom. You are afraid to go in there with the large group and decide not to go. You notice student E from your class go into the bathroom. You observe E show up to class late with a disheveled look and you become worried. Later you ask E why he was so late to class. He tells you that the group of students took his money and threatened to "beat him up" if he said anything. What can you do to help?

### 3. Self-injurious behavior or threats of suicide:

Your friend student F came to class late. She had been crying. Later you discovered that F and her boyfriend had just broken-up. F is devastated. She tells you that she will avoid any further romantic relationships and as far as she is concerned her life is finished. You and your friends are very concerned. You have not seen F like this before. During lunch, F gives you a sweater she had borrowed from you two weeks previously and then she quietly walks away. You are worried about F. What can you do to help?

These role-playing exercises are provided courtesy of the Center for Prevention of School Violence, North Carolina Department of Juvenile Justice and Delinquency Prevention. For more information, visit: [www.cpsv.org](http://www.cpsv.org).



Thanks to a special relationship with George Washington University, DoDEA is able to present a series of articles by prevention program experts from the University of Hawaii.



# Guest Article

## Conflict Resolution Training for Violence Prevention

Interpersonal conflicts are an inevitable part of the human condition, for adults as well as children. Whether or not such conflicts escalate to more serious acts of violence is determined, to a large extent, by participants' skills in negotiation, compromise, and problem solving—in short, by their ability to peacefully resolve conflicts. Young people need to develop social competence and skills in problem solving and conflict resolution, not only to resist high-risk situations but for everyday challenges they will face as citizens in increasingly diverse communities where conflict is an expected and normal part of daily life. The basic premise of conflict resolution training programs in schools is that these complex skills can be taught, and that their learning can prevent the occurrence of more serious retaliatory acts. Recent research indicates that most violent confrontations at school begin as relatively minor disputes that escalate if not effectively resolved. Conflict resolution training offers an opportunity to intervene in this all too frequent cycle of violence.

### What is involved in Conflict Resolution Training?

Donna Crawford and Richard Bodine of the National Center for Conflict Resolution Education ([www.nccre.org](http://www.nccre.org)) discuss four basic models for implementing conflict resolution training in schools: 1) the process curriculum approach, 2) the mediation program approach, 3) the peaceable classroom approach, and 4) the peaceable school approach. The process curriculum approach, as the name suggests, is a specific curriculum delivering the components of conflict resolution education as part of a distinct class or course such as health education. The mediation program approach is focused on training a select group of students as peer mediators, whose function is to assist fellow students in resolving interpersonal conflicts. The peaceable classroom approach is a more comprehensive classroom-wide set of strategies designed to incorporate conflict resolution into a broader framework for managing problem behaviors by promoting more respectful interactions among all students. The peaceable classroom becomes the foundation for the peaceable school approach, in which effective conflict resolution becomes the norm for the entire school.

Within each approach the specific training often involves negotiation skills, communication, peer mediation, peace education, and interpersonal problem-solving. There are a number of formal training curricula currently available, and most involve systematic instruction, discussion, modeling, role-play, and opportunities to practice learned skills.

### Best Practices in Conflict Resolution

Evaluation of comprehensive conflict resolution training programs over the past several years indicate that they are highly effective in reducing the incidence of fighting, arguing, and office referrals related to student disputes. Effective programs teach an array of skills including anger management, empathy, perspective taking, assertiveness, and communication in an effort to reduce conflict. In addition to addressing students, these programs recognize that both teachers and parents can be influential in modeling effective conflict resolution strategies. Two programs, the Resolving Conflict Creatively Program (RCCP; [www.esrnational.org](http://www.esrnational.org)) and the Peacemakers Program ([www.nes.org](http://www.nes.org)) have undergone extensive evaluation and show promising results for reducing aggression-related disciplinary incidents, suspensions for violent behavior, and school drop-out.

### Conclusion

Like most school violence prevention strategies, effective conflict resolution requires a multifaceted and sustained approach involving students, teachers, school staff, and parents. Programs such as RCCP and Peacemakers that are properly administered, using ongoing supervision, show promise as methods for successful intervention. Conflicts among individuals can actually be viewed as opportunities for growth and development. By providing consistent modeling, instruction, and feedback at an early age, most students can learn to effectively resolve disagreements with others in peaceful ways, thereby contributing to a safer and more tolerant school community.

**Note:** For more detailed information on conflict resolution education, an excellent publication is *Conflict Resolution Education: A Guide to Implementing Programs in Schools, Youth-Serving Organizations, and Community and Juvenile Justice Systems* ([www.nccre.org](http://www.nccre.org)) developed by the U.S. Department of Justice and the U.S. Department of Education.

