



Safety Officers Check Their Lists Twice in DoDEA

The recent addition of two new Safety Officers, one in DDESS and the other in DoDDS, demonstrates DoDEA's ongoing commitment to safety and security. By concentrating on safety, the officers enable District Safety and Security Officers (DSSOs) to focus greater resources on antiterrorism and physical security. The new safety officers are responsible for ensuring implementation of DoDEA Regulations 4800.1: Safety Program, 4800.4: Chemical Hygiene & Safety Program, and 4800.5: Bloodborne Pathogen Exposure Control Program. They provide a resource to help administrators ensure their school safety systems are in compliance with all relevant regulations.

In DoDDS-Europe, Michael Bradford brings a background in industrial and tactical safety to his role as DoDDS-Europe Safety Manager. Bradford uses a systematic approach to addressing safety issues that could potentially arise at a DoDEA school. "We assist with the Chemical Hygiene Program, playgrounds, facilities, hearing conservation, industrial safety, and accident investigations and analysis," he said. He added that the safety officers are also "the points-of-contact responsible for calling in Industrial Hygiene specialists, or an Occupational Health Nurse, if needed." Bradford has an added insight on the educator's perspective — his wife is a teacher in DoDDS-Europe.



In DDESS, Victor Padilla, a retired Army Chief Warrant Officer, brings more than two decades of experience with helicopter safety to his position. He will be using that training to develop streamlined checklists and safety systems for principals in the schools he supports. "My role is to support principals by ensuring all students are safe from injuries and accidents at school," said Padilla, who is currently visiting each school in DDESS.

Both Padilla and Bradford see communication with administrators as a core function of their positions. "If there is an issue concerning fire extinguishers in one school, it most likely affects all the others as well," said Bradford. "We do not wish to fix problems at just one school, but also pass along the solutions to all of the others." Both Safety Officers spend a considerable amount of time in the schools, talking to administrators, checking systems, and listening to administrators' concerns. DoDEA Regulation 4800.1: Safety Program is online at www.dodea.edu/home/dodea.cfm?gnav=regs. Both Bradford and Padilla welcome e-mails from administrators. They are listed on the DoDEA global e-mail directory. ■

Inside This Issue

News & Updates

Safety Officers Check Their Lists Twice in DoDEA	1
CDC Recommends All Students Receive Flu Shots	2

Safe Schools Planning

Know "the Drill" — Practice Lockdown	3
Education Issues	
Promoting Cultural Awareness During the December Holidays.....	4

Cybersecurity

How to Report and Remove Inappropriate Online Content	5
Prevention Programs	
Cutting: A Cry for Help	6

CDC Recommends All Students Receive Flu Shots

National Influenza Immunization Week is scheduled for December 8-14, 2008. Tuesday, December 9, is designated as Children's Vaccination Day. Both observances provide opportunities to enhance awareness of the benefits of flu vaccinations. Administrators may want to coordinate with local medical facilities to ensure vaccinations are available for as many students and staff members as possible.



Approximately one-third of school-age children are infected with influenza each year. While complications in that age group are rare, vaccinating children can stop the spread of flu. In 2007, the CDC reported that 86 children died from the flu.

The Centers for Disease Control and Prevention (CDC) recently expanded the influenza vaccine recommendations to include all school-age children. On February 27, 2008, the CDC's Advisory Committee on Immunization Practices (ACIP) recommended that children from six months to 18 years of age receive flu vaccinations. According to Director Julie Gerberding, M.D., the 2008-9 influenza vaccine is likely to be highly effective. Last flu season, two of the three strains in the vaccine did not

match the type of influenza that circulated in the United States. This year, early results show a direct match between the shots and the expected form of influenza.



The Department of Defense is following the lead of the CDC. In a September 29, 2008 memorandum, S. Ward Casscells, M.D., Assistant Secretary of Defense for Health Affairs, urged local installations to use this opportunity to maximize flu immunization rates within military communities. Dr. Casscells noted that installation commanders will be using the immunization program to "test installation-based processes that might be called upon in a pandemic." This could include reaching out to beneficiaries who do not routinely receive seasonal influenza vaccines and identifying additional vaccination needs that may exist (i.e., Tetanus, Diphtheria, and Pertussis (TDAP) vaccines).

The stated goal of the Secretary of Defense is to exceed "90 percent immunization of military personnel by December 31, 2008." Personnel will be on "duty status" while receiving this DoD-directed immunization or ensuring their dependants receive the shots.

Educators and parents/sponsors with questions about vaccinations can contact the DoD clinical call center at (800) 210-6469. Additionally, the CDC offers vaccination related brochures at www.cdc.gov/vaccines. Finally, the Military Vaccination (MilVax) Web site contains an unclassified version of the Commander's "Education Toolkit" at www.vaccines.mil/flu. For information about National Influenza Vaccination Week, visit www.cdc.gov/flu/nivw/index.htm. ■

<p>DoDEA Headquarters Personnel Rose Chunik, Program Manager, DoDEA Safe Schools Program</p> <p>Safe Schools Newsletter Editorial Staff Bob Michela, Sarah Markel, Brian McKeon, Bert Garcia</p> <p>Comments and questions should be directed to safeschools@csc.com.</p>	<p>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. The Department of Defense and the Department of Defense Education Activity are not responsible for the content and do not exercise control over the content of Web sites referenced in this newsletter.</p>
--	---

Know “the Drill” — Practice Lockdown

In situations requiring a lockdown, administrators need to have confidence that staff and students know what to do and can accomplish their duties effectively. Just as fire drills ensure the school can be evacuated within three minutes, conducting one or two lockdown drills per year ensures that staff and students become familiar enough with lockdown procedures that they can perform them smoothly.

Lockdown drills reveal the gaps between the paper plan and effective implementation (i.e., door knobs or locks that need repair). The suggestions below can assist Crisis Management Teams in planning and conducting a Lockdown Drill.

- ◆ **Communicate with parents in advance.** Use the first letter to parents/sponsors to educate parents about the Safe School Plan. Take a few minutes at Back to School Night to reemphasize security. It is not necessary to provide specific details. Simply state that the school has a Comprehensive Safe School Plan to ensure children will be protected in any contingency. As part of that plan, drills will be conducted periodically. The week of the drill, a reminder can be sent via the parent newsletter or a letter to parents.
- ◆ **Brief students in advance.** Principals can use the public address system to talk staff and students through the procedures. Administrators in secondary schools often ask for students’ cooperation in making the drill a success. Elementary school principals sometimes use this opportunity to explain the reason for drills in age-appropriate terms.
- ◆ **Designate Observers.** Designate certain individuals as “observers” to watch how well the school performs. Observers take notes on strengths and areas for improvement. Letting observers check doors allows the crisis management team members to concentrate on implementing response procedures.
- ◆ **Include Emergency Responders.** Invite emergency responders from the surrounding community to observe the drill. Prior to the drill, brief responders on existing lockdown procedures so they know what to expect. Including local emergency responders yields three benefits: 1) the responders become more familiar with the school’s response plans, 2) the responders can describe how they will respond so school officials know what to expect, and 3) participation deepens rapport between responders and school officials which makes communication during a crisis more effective.
- ◆ **Use a checklist.** Standardize the actions that observers should check. This enables the school to compare the observations from this drill with future drills to measure improvement. Write a brief summary of the drill to ensure that members of the Crisis Management Team can benefit from the time and effort invested in the present drill. The summary should include observations on strengths, areas for improvement, and recommendations. A template for use in summarizing observations is available through the DoDEA technical assistance hotline: safeschools@csc.com.



For an observer’s checklist, see the *DoDEA Crisis Management Guide*, available at www.dodea.edu/instruction/crisis/resources/docs/DoDEA_Crisis_Manag_Guide_07.pdf. For additional lockdown tips contact safeschools@csc.com. ■

Promoting Cultural Awareness During the December Holidays

During December, schools traditionally accommodate a variety of celebrations and festivities. The holidays also present excellent opportunities to foster an appreciation of diversity and a deeper cultural understanding. By emphasizing cultural understanding in the classroom, students gain a richer sense of how groups benefit and learn from one another.

In fact, of all the months of the school year, December provides the richest array of teachable moments across a wide range of geographical and religious cultures. Thanks to the air of festivity during this month, students typically enjoy these lessons and remember them over a longer period of time.



The following multicultural and historical celebrations take place in December:

- ◆ St. Nicholas Day (Christian) – December 6
- ◆ Pearl Harbor Remembrance Day – December 7
- ◆ Eid al-Adha (Muslim) – December 8
- ◆ Fiesta of Our Lady of Guadalupe (Mexican) – December 12
- ◆ St. Lucia Day (Swedish) – December 13
- ◆ Hanukkah (Jewish) – Begins at Sundown December 21
- ◆ Winter Solstice (Northern Hemisphere) – December 21
- ◆ Christmas Day (Christian) – December 25
- ◆ Boxing Day (English, Irish, Australian, Canadian) – December 26
- ◆ Kwanzaa (African American) – December 26–January 1
- ◆ Omisoka (Japanese) – December 31

Some teachers use the above dates as a springboard to teaching history, geography, and astronomy (in the case of the solstice). Younger students appreciate the extensive range of picture books related to these holidays. Some teachers also incorporate music and art into lessons to enhance cultural awareness among students. Older students may be better able to appreciate the complex histories of these holidays and the core message of acceptance that can come from understanding the traditions and values of others.

For more information on integrating cultural awareness into the December calendar, visit www.educationworld.com/holidays/archives/december.shtml. Numerous resources to teach tolerance and foster hate prevention are available through the Safe Schools Program at safeschools@csc.com. ■

How to Report and Remove Inappropriate Online Content

The popularity of portable digital cameras and phones poses a new challenge for school administrators. Students may use these devices for cyberbullying or posting offensive videos or other inappropriate digital content online.

Educators can respond to this with a two-pronged approach. First, discuss the implications of posting offensive images online in lessons that teach leadership, character education, and empathy. Second, learn how to report offensive content (called “flagging”) and see that it is removed from the Web.

Every Site Has Procedures – Web sites such as Blogger, YouTube, MySpace, and Facebook do not screen all content before it is uploaded to the sites by users, so there have been an increasing number of situations where offensive material is posted online. All of these sites, however, will work with users to remove offensive content. Every Web site that allows users to post content also has procedures for reporting and removing inappropriate material. For example, Facebook provides a link beneath each image that allows users to confidentially report photos they find offensive. Facebook’s Code of Conduct assures users that, “Facebook will monitor these complaints and remove photos as necessary.”

While each site has rules in place to regulate behavior, they rely heavily on users to monitor and report unacceptable content. Teaching students to behave responsibly and exercise empathy helps students and educators make better choices online. In order to help students make better choices, suggest they ask themselves, “How would I feel if that was me being ridiculed?”

Raising a Red Flag – Most Web sites, including YouTube, Blogspot, and Craigslist, call these reporting procedures “flagging.” Any user can report offensive Web pages, pictures, or videos by clicking a link which marks that content with a proverbial “red flag.” Site administrators then review the content to see if it violates any of the site’s policies, commonly called “Terms of Use” or “Terms of Service,” and remove it if necessary.

Procedures for determining that content should be removed also vary by site. For example, a video will be removed from YouTube if site administrators consider the material inappropriate or defamatory (i.e., encouraging racism or hatred). For example, the Facebook Code of Conduct prohibits material that:

- ◆ Is obscene, pornographic, or sexually explicit.
- ◆ Depicts graphic or gratuitous violence.
- ◆ Makes threats of any kind or intimidates, harasses, or bullies others.
- ◆ Is derogatory, demeaning, malicious, defamatory, abusive, offensive, or hateful.

Sometimes, removal of content depends on the number of times a page is “flagged” and the type of violation. Blogger, for example, considers the severity of the violation and the number of complaints to determine what type of sanctions are appropriate.



For more information on cybersecurity programs for students, visit the DoDEA Office of Safety and Security Web site at www.dodea.edu/offices/safety/index.cfm. For additional questions, or a copy of the MySpace Administrator’s Guide, contact safeschools@csc.com. ■

Cutting: A Cry for Help

Sometimes, when students are suffering emotional distress, they resort to hurting themselves to alleviate those painful feelings. Often this takes the form of “cutting.” Raising awareness of this behavior helps educators and mental health professionals recognize the warning signs. Students who engage in self-harm can then be referred to the appropriate mental health resources.



Students who intentionally cut themselves report that they are not suicidal. Instead, they are often attempting to manage painful emotions by creating wounds on the inner thighs, arms, or upper torso. Self-injury can become compulsive because cutters experience both a release from their mental anguish and a burst of gratifying endorphins in response to the actual injury.

Sometimes students injure themselves sufficiently to require hospitalization. Although cutters typically hide their injuries with long sleeves and excuses, there is also a risk of “self-injury contagion” – groups of students may adopt the practice, reinforcing the behavior among their peers.

Experts have warned that school personnel need to create greater awareness of the problem of self-harm. Richard Lieberman, Ph.D, a school psychologist with the National Association of School Psychologists (NASP), addressed the issue in the March 2004 issue of *Principal Leadership* stating: “Not all mental health professionals are familiar with the phenomena.” Dr. Lieberman estimated that out of every 100,000 students in the United States, 750 to 1,800 were involved in cutting. Girls account for 70 to 80 percent of these students. Lieberman also observed that more students are experimenting with cutting: “Self mutilation, or cutting, appears to be increasing rapidly.”

Even a mild trauma can trigger self-injury including a recent loss, perceived rejection, family conflict, and academic pressure. According to a 2008 NASP report, the emotional cycle of self-injury consists of increasing tension, anger, or distress before the injury, followed by a sense of relief or release after self-injury. Later, guilt tends to build, the tension returns, and the pattern repeats.

Physical signs include unexplained scars or cuts, possession of sharp implements, inappropriate clothing for the weather (i.e., long sleeves in warm weather), or blood stained clothing. Emotional clues include the inability to cope with strong emotions, excessive anxiety, rage, or depression. Behavioral indicators include withdrawal, lack of self-esteem, or a sudden change of friends.

Prepared with a greater awareness of the issue, administrators and their crisis management teams can take a collaborative approach to response. NASP suggests that adults acknowledge familiarity with the behavior to reassure a student that he or she is not alone. For additional information on self-injury among youth, visit the NASP web site at www.nasponline.org or contact the Safe Schools program at safeschools@csc.com. ■

