



SAFE SCHOOLS NEWSLETTER



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DoDEA News From the Field: Better Bus Behavior

Bus behavior referrals and suspensions at Hohenfels Elementary School in the Bavaria District have dropped dramatically this year. Why? The results of their Safe School Survey taken in 2001 indicated that "bullying on the bus"

Continued on page 2

Guidance for Students Exposed to SARS

The Centers for Disease Control (CDC) has published a one-page document on managing students who you think may have been exposed to the SARS virus. The CDC and the World Health Organization are continuing to investigate the multi-country outbreak of unexplained atypical pneumonia referred to as severe acute respiratory syndrome (SARS).

To date, all reported patients with SARS in the United States have been exposed either through previous foreign travel to countries with community transmission of SARS or close contact (e.g., household members or healthcare workers) with SARS patients.

Casual contact with a SARS patient at schools, other institutions, or public gatherings (e.g., attending the same class or public gathering) has not resulted in reported trans-



mission in the United States. However, management of students exposed (i.e., through foreign travel or close contact) to SARS patients is a concern. As this newsletter was being prepared for publication the professional medical reports regarding SARS continued to change daily.

As of May 5, 2003, the World Health Organization advised travelers not to visit China, where thousands of SARS cases had been reported, but ceased cautioning visitors about visiting Toronto, Canada, where hundreds of SARS cases were reported.

DoDDS-Pacific administrators need to be particularly vigilant. For a list of six interim recommendations concerning the management of exposed students, visit www.cdc.gov/ncidod/sars/exposurestudents.htm.

INSIDE THIS ISSUE

News & Updates

DoDEA News from the Field: Better Bus Behavior..	1
Guidance for Students Exposed to SARS	1
Taking Stock of Your "Grab & Go" Kit	3
Suggested "Grab & Go" Kit Contents.	3

Safe School Planning

Use Surveys to Measure Your Success.....	4
--	---

Education Issues

Character Education Lesson Plans.....	5
---------------------------------------	---

Prevention Programs

Character Counts After All.....	7
---------------------------------	---

Guest Article

Character Education.....	8
--------------------------	---



Better Bus Behavior . . . continued from Page 1

was one of the school administration's major concerns. As a result of the Safe School Survey findings, the administration decided to focus on ways to improve bus behavior and cut down on bullying. A program titled Better Bus Behavior (BBB) was initiated. Its basic premise was to reinforce positive behavior on buses. An administrator rewarded all students on buses that reported zero discipline problems for an entire month with a piece of candy. Although the reward was small, the crucial element of recognizing and rewarding the students' good behavior had an immediate impact as the number of referrals decreased. A second component of the BBB Program was to maintain consistent and regular communication between the school, the bus office, and home.

The bus office in Hohenfels conducts all investigations and issues warnings. As students received warnings, the Assistant Principal counseled students and informed parents. They established parental support by enlisting the parent's help in working with their children and reinforcing the administration's message at home before a suspension was necessary. This procedure was followed consistently with every bus incident. Acknowledging students' good behavior and communicating with parents helped. This program became more powerful as the bus office, school and parents began to work as a team.



Thirdly, the administration "dangled the possibility" of a free item that began with a "B," if each individual child had no problems on the bus for the entire year. The principal rewarded every problem-free student with a bike, book, balloon, ball or other "B" item at the end of the year assembly. This program was a hit.

The BBB program continues to be effective in decreasing the number of warnings of suspensions and helps make the buses safer. Over the last year the number of suspensions of bus privileges has decreased 79 percent. In addition to using candy on a monthly basis to recognize good bus behavior, the program has expanded drawings for items that begin with a "B" to once each semester. During the January 2003 bus assembly a student received a bike. In June more items and another bike will be given away.

The administration is continually evaluating the BBB program and looking for ways to improve. They have been successful at getting some items from the community (e.g., free burgers, bags of fries, etc.) The administration also appreciated the money earmarked for Safe Schools that they received last year. They purchased some "B" items as well as updated their 2nd Step Program on bullies and added some other resources about bullies to the school's Information Center.

Special thanks to authors Ron Lathrop, Assistant Principal, and Susan Martz-Cothran, Principal, Hohenfels Elementary School, Bavaria School District, Germany.

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Taking Stock of Your “Grab and Go” Kit

If a crisis hit your school tomorrow, would you be adequately prepared to face the emergency at hand? Ample emergency and first aid supplies should be readily accessible. An essential part of your emergency supplies is your Grab and Go Kit.

Ideally, your Grab and Go Kit includes all of the information and supplies the principal would need to manage a critical incident from an alternative location or crisis command center. The principal, or another designated person should be able to pick up the Grab and Go Kit as they evacuate the school office. Your Kit should include key phone numbers, student rosters, and your Incident Response Plan. These items will help guide you through the appropriate actions to mitigate harm to your students and the school.

Use the time between now and the beginning of the upcoming school year to check your Grab & Go Kit contents and to re-stock emergency supplies.

Using the list to the right as a guide, you can prepare a complete Grab and Go Kit. Your Grab and Go Kit should be easily transportable and always stored in the same location – a place emergency response personnel and school staff will be able to quickly and easily access.

Suggested “Grab & Go Kit” Contents:

- Your school’s Incident Response Plan
- A copy of your emergency policies and procedures notebook
- A complete list of all phone numbers
- Site map, blue prints
- Information regarding main shut-off valves for utilities
- Adhesive labels for student name tags
- A means of accounting for all students
- Protocol for all students on medical plans
- Something to wear (a bright vest) that identifies you readily
- Writing supplies
- A first aid kit and handbook
- Sheets and blankets
- Candles and matches
- Pillows/disposable pillow covers
- Bottled water
- Flashlights/plenty of batteries
- A radio (battery operated)/plenty of batteries
- Cell phones/walkie-talkies
- Duct tape/scissors
- A rope and string
- Aluminum foil “survival” blankets
- A bullhorn





Safe School Planning

Use Surveys to Measure Your Success

This is a good time of year to assess your progress toward the Safe School Planning objectives you established for this school year. As you approach the conclusion of this year, take an opportunity to evaluate the results of the policy, program and physical security measures implemented since September 2002. A focused survey of students and staff will help you to determine the effectiveness of these measures and direct your planning efforts for the upcoming school year.

For example, during May 2002, the Kadena Middle School administration in Okinawa used a brief student survey to evaluate the anti-bullying program they implemented during SY2001-02. Administrators were pleased to learn that KMS had succeeded in changing student attitudes about tolerating bullying.

For principals seeking a way to quickly implement student and staff surveys, consider asking only a few questions from the sample surveys in the Safe Schools Handbook. Remember the survey samples in the Handbook are only intended as illustrative examples. It is necessary and advisable to select questions that are relevant for your students or school staff and to adjust the wording of the questions to make them suitable for your school. Also, consider using the Parent Survey in order to broaden your reach into the school community.

For example, DoDDS and DDESS schools that realize they do not have problems with gangs at school might limit their survey to a few questions about improvement in school climate. Here are some questions from the DoDEA Safe Schools

Handbook that provide quantifiable information on school climate, thefts, and "unsafe" locations.

- Do you think our school is clean and well maintained?
- During the past year, did anyone steal from you at school? (Ask school staff and students about thefts.)
- On a scale of 1 to 5 – 1 being very safe and 5 not being safe at all – rate how safe you feel in each of the following locations by circling the appropriate number. Adjust these locations to make them relevant for your school: parking lots; fields; stadium; building entrances; grounds; walkways; roads; hallways; classrooms; gym; library; offices; bathrooms; stairwells; cafeteria; and auditorium.
- On a scale of 1 to 5 – 1 being very safe and 5 not being safe at all – rate how safe you feel during each of the following time periods by circling the appropriate number. Time periods include: before classes begin; during the day (i.e. during classes, between classes, study halls, free time, and field trips); and after the school day has ended (i.e., club activities, meetings, athletic practices, play/music rehearsals, at school events).

If you used student or staff surveys at the beginning of this school year, you can compare answers to quantify your success. Remember, you do not need to have a survey instrument that has been validated against a control group because you are not comparing your school with others. Your survey is an internal exercise intended only to provide information for use by your school. Contact us for examples of surveys that have been used in other schools at: brian.mckeeon@dyncorp.com.





Character Education Lesson Plans

Elementary, middle and high school educators adjust character education materials to make them appropriate for their students. Here are examples of some lesson plans provided by the program Character Counts at: www.charactercounts.org/ideas/ideatoc.htm.

Elementary School: The Mean, Ugly Fish Game

Elementary school teachers can teach children the importance of caring with the following materials: a table, chairs or sofa where all of the students can gather. Begin by asking your students to define kindness and caring in their own words to help them understand the concept. Then, play the Mean, Ugly Fish Game to let students see how saying nice things to other people in their lives can improve someone's attitude.



To play the game, tell the children to pretend that the table and chairs where they are seated are a boat and you are a mean, ugly fish swimming in the water. Tell students, "I'm a mean, ugly fish and I don't like anybody!" Tell students to practice being kind and caring even to a mean, ugly fish like yourself by saying the kindest things they can think of to you. If children compliment you or demonstrate how they care, respond by becoming a more friendly fish. Smile, calm down, and say, "I am? Oh well, I'm sorry I snapped at you."

Then tell children they can say unkind things to you. Behave like a mean, ugly fish in response to the unkind comments. Remind children that people can be like a mean, ugly fish. Conclude by saying, "If you're caring and kind, people become much nicer. If you're mean, they can become mean too." Note that sometimes it takes quite a while to change the behavior of other people. Tell them, "Sometimes it takes a lot of caring and kindness to help someone become nicer."

Middle School: The Good Citizen Project

For this exercise, have your students interview adults who they consider to be good citizens. Then instruct your students to report back on their interview and describe the attributes of a good citizen.

The Good Citizen Project begins with a discussion of the meaning of good citizenship (e.g., working for the common good; donating time or services; protecting the physical environment or obeying laws.) In class, students will identify a community leader or good citizen. For homework, students will phone or visit that leader and ask them what characteristics they consider important to good citizenship.

Students interview each other during class to familiarize themselves with conducting interviews. The teacher might demonstrate appropriate interview etiquette by role-playing an interview with a student pretending to be a police officer, teacher or Youth Center worker. Examples of interview questions include:

- Why do you enjoy working with young people?
- What do you consider to be the qualities of a leader?

Continued on page 6





Education Issues

Lesson Plans . . . continued from page 5

- Do you think you are a good citizen? Why?
- How do you provide an example of good citizenship at work?
- How do you think young people can show good citizenship?
- What community service have you performed?

Students report to the class on their interview. The teacher summarizes lessons learned about citizenship and underscores new insights revealed by the interviews.



High School: Anger Management

Students learn that good character requires self-control, and that means controlling their anger. This lesson teaches students that they can control their response to frustrating situations.

Begin by acknowledging that everyone experiences frustration. Ask students to describe stressful situations. Then have students list the various types of typical emotional responses to those situations. Examples of responses might include: keeping anger in or seeking revenge.

Tell students that psychologists assert that anger is a response to fear. Explain that to control their anger, students will need their own personal anger response plan in the future to respond appropriately to stressful situations. Teach students that learning strategies to respond to provocations will empower them because they can better control the outcome of the situation.

Encourage students to write creatively about anger and their anger response plan. Suggest to students that they give themselves time to consider their response instead of retaliating immediately, as they will usually make better choices. Conclude by sharing the acronym "T.I.M.E." from Tom Letson's book *4 Downs to Anger Control*, which means:

Think! (About your anger);

Intercept! (Your angry thoughts);

Move! (Out of the distressing area); and

Exit! (The premises completely.)

**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 or
toll free at 1-(866) 711-6477.



Character Counts After All!

The time is ripe for reemphasizing basic character principles in schools and communities around the globe. Today, and everyday, it makes good sense to teach our young people right from wrong -- in the classroom, at home and in the schoolyard. The Character Counts Program shines through in helping teach students basic character values.

The Character Counts Program is an example of a prevention program that teaches about strong moral character to give students reasons to make healthy choices. According to the Character Counts' educational materials: "We want to be surrounded by good people, people we can trust to make decisions based on principle rather than expediency. After all, what are education, coaching and child rearing supposed to be about? Developing good people who can live healthy, happy lives of purpose — or just clever people who can pass a ball or a test?"

Formed in 1993, the Character Counts Program was created by a Coalition to help children and adults become aware of the "six pillars" of character, which they defined as trustworthiness, respect, responsibility, fairness, caring, and citizenship. According to the "six pillars" concept students are taught the following:

Trustworthiness includes: Be honest • Don't deceive, cheat or steal • Be reliable — do what you say you'll do • Have the courage to do the right thing • Build a good reputation • Be loyal — stand by your family, friends and country.

Respect includes: Treat others with respect; follow The Golden Rule • Be tolerant of differences • Use good manners, not bad language • Be considerate of the feelings of others • Don't threaten, hit or hurt anyone • Deal peacefully with anger, insults and disagreements.

Responsibility includes: Do what you are supposed to do • Persevere: keep on trying! • Always do your best • Use self-control • Be self-disciplined • Think before you act — consider the consequences • Be accountable for your choices.

Fairness includes: Play by the rules • Take turns and share • Be open-minded; listen to others • Don't take advantage of others • Don't blame others carelessly.

Caring includes: Be kind • Be compassionate and show you care • Express gratitude • Forgive others • Help people in need.

Citizenship includes: Do your share to make your school and community better • Cooperate • Stay informed; vote • Be a good neighbor • Obey laws and rules • Respect authority • Protect the environment.

Character Counts has conducted a multi-faceted assessment of character education in South Dakota from 1997-02. This five-year study included an extensive questionnaire covering demographics, attitudes, and behaviors and included 8,419 respondents. The results show that Character Counts helped cut crime and drug use sharply from 1998 to 2000. Students who said they had:

- Broken into another's property - decreased 50 percent;
- Consumed alcoholic beverages - decreased 31 percent;
- Taken illegal drugs - decreased 32 percent;
- Defaced or vandalized property - decreased 46 percent; and
- Used physical force against someone, who insulted them - decreased 33 percent.

Character Counts has age-appropriate materials geared toward teaching children and adults the concepts it champions. For more information on this program, go to: www.charactercounts.org.





Character Education as a Violence Prevention Strategy

Over the last decade, and particularly in response to perceived increases in youth violence, there has been a growing recognition that to be truly effective, schools must do more than teach the three Rs; they must also focus on children's social and emotional learning. Although often misunderstood, the term "character education" has been used to identify school programs and practices that 1) emphasize personal and social skills training, and 2) promote positive social values. More specifically, the purposes of character education are to promote positive social interactions among students and to foster such noble personal qualities as wisdom, courage, altruism, civility, and empathy for the plight of others. Since character education is primarily concerned with enhancing children's emotional and social functioning, the terms "emotional intelligence" and "EQ" for "emotional quotient" are also frequently used to describe this effort. (The leading site for EQ in schools is www.CASEL.org. EQ materials for teachers and parents can be found at: www.6Seconds.com).

The emotional intelligence movement in the United States received a boost in 1995 with the publication of Daniel Goleman's book *Emotional Intelligence: Why it can matter more than IQ*. In his book, Goleman persuasively argued that one's emotional quotient or EQ, the ability to understand and manage the emotions of self and others, was a better overall predictor of success in school, and in life, than traditional measures of cognitive ability. Borrowing from the groundbreaking work of Peter Salovey at Yale University, Goleman discussed five domains of emotional intelligence that underlie social

competence and serve as protective factors against the emergence of violent and aggressive behaviors at school.

The first and most basic, *self-awareness*, refers to the ability to recognize and identify feelings such as anger, disappointment, fear, and exhilaration. Closely related, but more advanced developmentally, is *awareness of others* including such skills as empathy or understanding others' feelings, and role-taking, understanding others' points of view. Both self-awareness and awareness of others are critical to positive interactions with peers, effective resolution of interpersonal conflicts, and ultimately preventing and reducing the likelihood of aggression and violence at school.

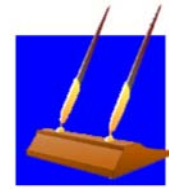
The third domain, *managing one's emotions*, refers to the ability to regulate and control potentially troublesome emotions such as frustration, resentment, guilt, and despair. One such emotion that has been the subject of numerous school-based intervention programs is anger. Anger management and regulation is an important skill in reducing potential violence at school.

The fourth domain, *motivating oneself*, has particular relevance for optimal functioning at school. Students who have the ability and skill to motivate themselves, both extrinsically and intrinsically, are likely to view school as a positive experience, are less likely to engage in problematic or antisocial behaviors, and generally perform at higher levels than their less motivated counterparts.

Finally, *negotiating/resolving conflicts* is a critical skill for reducing the probability of violent behavior at school. If disagreements, grievances, and other relatively minor conflicts can be resolved effectively, it is unlikely that these

Continued on page 9





Character Education . . . continued from page 8

events will lead to aggressive or violent confrontations. Negotiation and conflict resolution build upon a number of more fundamental interpersonal skills including empathy, cooperation, and problem solving.

These five domains of emotional intelligence form the nucleus of many of today's school-based character education programs. Proponents of character education believe these skills can be learned. According to Roger Weissberg, a leading researcher in the field of prevention, information-only programs are seldom effective in preventing violence, drug abuse, or other forms of destructive behavior among youth. In contrast, school-based programs that specifically target personal and social competencies such as self-control, stress management, problem solving, and peer resistance are shown by research to have a positive impact on students' decision making. Most effective are those programs that not only teach relevant skills, but provide meaningful opportunities to apply those skills.

Best Practices in Character Education

What is the role of schools in fostering students' emotional intelligence? There is now convincing evidence that, just as aggression is primarily a learned behavior, nonaggressive or more prosocial behaviors and attitudes can also be learned. Like other approaches to violence prevention in schools, what is required is a concerted, schoolwide effort to foster these skills. In short, efforts to enhance emotional literacy must become an integral part of the school's educational mission. Such an effort would necessarily involve a formal curriculum and daily lessons to develop and refine targeted skills. (See www.incredibleyears.com to read about a program for teaching emotional literacy to children two to eight years old.)

Moreover, teachers, staff, and other adults at school must model emotionally intelligent behavior. This would involve awareness of one's own and others' feelings; the ability to regulate and cope with emotional impulses such as anger, disappointment, and hurt; and the wherewithal to establish goals and use positive social skills in handling relationships with others.

