



DODEA

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Take It With You

Consider bringing the first aid kit with you for a drill just as you would for a real emergency. Crisis management teams often plan to bring the first aid kit during an actual emergency, yet they leave it behind during drills.

Emergency incidents and drills both have the potential for unforeseen circumstances requiring medical care: falls resulting in cuts and sprains; dust and smoke irritation to the eyes; and aggravation of existing medical conditions. For more information about assembling a first aid kit visit www.fema.gov/plan/prepare/firstaid.shtm. ■

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Discovery Van Makes a Pit Stop

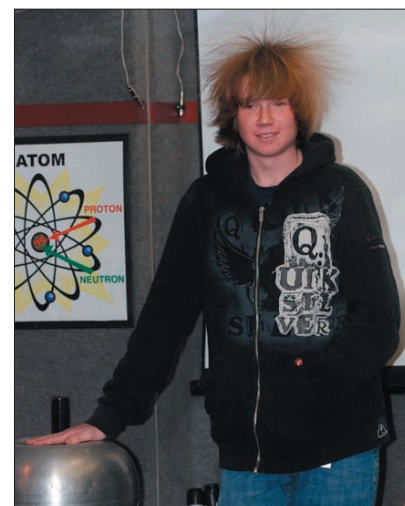
Events that generate enthusiasm for learning also improve security by contributing to a positive school climate. Brewster Middle School, at Camp Lejeune, recently enhanced learning with a visit from the National Science Center Discovery Van. During a 45-minute interactive presentation inside the 18 wheel tractor-trailer, Brewster students left their classrooms to learn about concepts such as resonance, frequency, and optics.

As Brewster Assistant Principal Gene Flanagan put it, “Any time we have educational programs like the science exhibit, it helps all the kids.” Flanagan notes that “Assemblies, presentations and service learning projects are all constructive, productive, high-interest activities that we use to enhance learning as well as get kids to work together and learn together in a positive way.”

The focus of the program is overtly educational. “The programs are designed to show young people that studying science and math is fun as well as essential to their future,” notes Waymon Stewart, program manager for the National Science Center.

The U.S. Army makes the “Mobile Discovery Center” available to let students experiment with innovative technologies such as night-vision devices and electronic glass breakers. These technologies provide an opportunity to teach mathematics, computers, and the physical sciences. Stewart also notes that the presenters address the importance of healthy living, staying off drugs, and personal safety when handling equipment.

For more information about the National Science Center, visit <http://nscdiscovery.org>. While the mobile discovery van is only available within CONUS, many of the program resources are available online. ■



A student at Brewster Middle School learns about static electricity inside of the Discovery Van.

Promoting Alternatives to Violent Television

Although numerous studies have discussed the harmful effects on children from excessive violent television viewing, there are several actions that educators and parents can take to mitigate these effects. Recent studies have highlighted some of the harmful effects of watching violent television.

In November 2007, the American Academy of Pediatrics (AAP) published an article in the medical journal *Pediatrics* reporting on a five-year study conducted by the University of Washington that measured the amount of daily violent television viewed by young students. Researchers concluded that each hour per day of violent television doubled the risk of attention problems among elementary school students, and tripled their aggression.

A study by the AAP showed that children who watched more than two hours per day of television had reduced social skills. Other negative effects cited by the AAP included aggressive behavior, obesity, poor body concept and self image, and substance abuse. However, the AAP study noted that a decrease in viewing violent television resulted in a reduction of negative effects.

Parents and educators can work together to promote alternatives to viewing violent television. Educators can incorporate media education into the existing literature or social studies curriculum. Media education can teach students how to interpret the messages they encounter on television. Finally, parents can encourage alternatives to watching television by reading, playing outside, and conversing with their children.

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The AAP study is available on-line at <http://pediatrics.aappublications.org/cgi/content/abstract/120/4/762>. The AAP policy statement, which includes recommendations for promoting alternative activities to watching television, is available at <http://aappolicy.aappublications.org/cgi/content/abstract/pediatrics;107/2/423>. ■

Student Ambassadors Propose Teen Advisory Committees

Three student leaders within DoDEA recently attended the U.S. European Command's Quality of Life Conference held in Garmisch, Germany. This annual event explores ways to improve the quality of life for soldiers and families stationed within the European theater. While Student Advisory Committees have long been a part of the culture of DoDEA, this year marks the first time teenagers were invited to contribute their opinions at the conference.



Teen advisory committees increase student involvement, ownership, and responsibility.

Mary-Lynn Piper, a senior at Bitburg High School; Victoria Rivera, a senior at Rota High School; and Taylor Hinson, a sophomore at Kaiserslautern High School, served as delegates to the conference. Participants explored numerous ideas. One of the recommendations selected for consideration by authorities at U.S. European Command included a youth-inspired idea: each installation could benefit from a teen advisory committee.

Both Piper and Rivera agreed that the teen advisory committees could help installations develop activities that would increase involvement of teenagers, encourage healthy choices, and prepare them for roles of greater responsibility. The inclusion of these students gives teens increased ownership and responsibility to encourage positive behaviors. ■

Dressing for Access Control Success – Identification Badges

Badges offer a tool to help administrators manage access to their school to protect students, parents and staff. There are several approaches to identification badge systems but they share one objective: ensure that every visitor in the school is authorized to be there.

Visitor Badges

Visitor badges come in a variety of forms and sizes. Providing badges with bright colors, and requiring prominent placement on the upper body, enable others in the school to rapidly determine whether someone whom they do not recognize is authorized to be in the school. Some schools use disposable paper badges for visitors that change color over time so that the badge cannot be reused later. Other schools print visitor badges from a computer. Still other schools require visitors to leave an identification card or valuable (i.e., car keys) when they sign-in. This procedure helps provide a means of tracking visitors by ensuring they remember to return to the office to sign out and turn in their visitor badge.



Permanent Badges

Permanent badges provide a means for rapid visual recognition of those who need to be in the school on a daily basis. Some administrators use distinguishing characteristics to help personnel determine whether an individual belongs in their school. Unique features that can be incorporated into site-specific badges include: a color background behind the individual's picture, a school mascot, or a color lanyard.

It can be logistically challenging to coordinate a standardized identification badge system for employees. Effective systems account for budgetary constraints, geographical distances, and even local traditions. Within DDESS, Anti-terrorism Officer Henry Gregorich has developed an innovative solution that works for the unique circumstances of the participating schools.

The badging system is currently being implemented at all 17 DDESS communities. “Provided all goes correctly,” said Gregorich in a recent interview, “we will have badged 5,500 people from April 1 to May 24.”

“I tried to keep it very simple,” explains Gregorich. The software can be loaded on a standard office computer and the badges can be printed on an adjacent printer.

The badging software is network compatible, and Gregorich looks forward to a time when schools across the system can share badging information. For now, each school maintains its own database of employees and visitors to the school and creates only site-specific badges. The software stores a photo and the printer can produce a laminated badge in about 47 seconds. The photo and visitor information, including date and time of visit is permanently stored in the system.

Although it is logistically and conceptually challenging to create an effective identification system, Gregorich said it was worth the effort to ensure secure access control. “Instituting a program like this has taken an incredible amount of time,” notes Gregorich. “But it’s worth it if it guarantees the security of our schools.”

For a summary of identification badge technology, see page 3-68 of DoDEA’s Safe Schools Handbook. For additional information on options for badges, contact DoDEA’s Safe Schools Program at safeschools@csc.com. ■

Awareness of Online Grooming Techniques Can Help Protect Students

Educators and parents are often cautioned about the risk of online predators, but little is ever said about how predators build trust with their victims. The process is called “grooming.” In recent years, this term has been used to refer to actions deliberately undertaken to befriend children with the intent to harm them. Perpetrators establish an emotional connection with a child to lower the child’s inhibitions.

To help protect students, adults can educate themselves about the communication methods students use online. Students today are using chat rooms, social networking Web sites, and instant messaging programs to stay connected with friends and family. Unfortunately, it is not uncommon for sexual predators to use these same services to establish communication with children and teenagers.

According to Netsmartz411, which is sponsored by the National Center for Missing and Exploited Children, grooming often involves deception of some sort. Adults trying to groom children may lie about their age, even after forming an established relationship. Groomers may also claim to have similar interests and pretend to be knowledgeable about pop culture, modern trends, and the child’s hobbies. The groomer will often try to relate to the child as if nobody else can understand their personal situation as well as the groomer does. Groomers may use explicit conversations to test boundaries and raise the threshold of emotional intimacy as an online relationship develops.

If the ultimate goal of a groomer is to meet with a child in-person, they will often use certain methods to build a child’s trust. Offenders will entice a child into a face-to-face meeting by:

- ▶ Exploiting a child’s natural curiosity about certain topics, such as sex.
- ▶ Lowering the child’s inhibitions by gradually introducing explicit images and child pornography.
- ▶ Using his or her adult status to influence and control a child’s behavior.
- ▶ Offering attention and affection.
- ▶ Relating to emotions and affirming the child’s feelings.
- ▶ Flattering and complimenting the child excessively.

Netsmartz411 provides the following warning signs for adults. A child may be a victim of online grooming if he or she:

- ▶ Obsesses about computer access and becomes angry when he or she cannot get on the computer.
- ▶ Minimizes the screen, or turns off the computer when adults are nearby.
- ▶ Receives gifts from strangers.
- ▶ Receives or makes many phone calls to unrecognized numbers.
- ▶ Becomes withdrawn from family and friends.



Understanding Internet culture can help educators and parents/sponsors recognize the warning signs of online grooming. The National Center for Missing and Exploited Children recommends that adults who suspect a child is being groomed by someone online, contact their CyberTipline at www.cybertipline.com. For more information about online grooming, visit Netsmartz411 at www.netsmartz411.org. ■

SAMHSA Offers Insight into Bullying Behavior

Ever wonder why bullies intimidate other students? Surprising insight comes from the Substance Abuse and Mental Health Services Administration (SAMHSA) in the Health and Human Services Administration. Understanding the characteristics of bullies can help educators better identify bullies and correct the behavior.

A SAMHSA guide, developed to help educators reduce bullying, notes that the common perception that bullies are overcompensating for personal insecurities is not always correct. The guide, titled *Bullying is Not A Fact of Life*, states, “It has often been thought that bullies are anxious or unsure of themselves underneath a tough surface.” According to SAMHSA, however, research indicates that bullies’ self-image is about average or relatively positive. The SAMHSA guide identifies the following characteristics in bullies:

- ◆ They view violence more favorably than most other students.
- ◆ They are often aggressive toward adults — both parents and teachers.
- ◆ They are often “hot-tempered,” impulsive, and not very tolerant of obstacles and delays (frustrations).
- ◆ They find it difficult to follow rules.
- ◆ They are good at talking their way out of difficult situations.
- ◆ They do not empathize with bullied students.
- ◆ Boys in this group are stronger than their peers and victims.
- ◆ They have a marked need to dominate and suppress other students, usually by means of force.
- ◆ They need to “get their own way.”



Understanding these characteristics can help adults determine if a misbehaving student qualifies as a bully. SAMHSA is careful to define bullying as behavior that involves the following three components: 1) negative or malicious behavior, 2) repeated over time, and 3) involving a power imbalance between the bully and victim.

The power imbalance aspect to bullying often thwarts attempts to address interpersonal conflict. Victims who fear bullies, and already submit to their will on the playground, continue to compromise quickly in conflict resolution sessions and mask the true details of the situation. SAMHSA advises educators to deal separately with both the bully and the victim.

Although bullying consists of behavior that occurs over time, adults rarely observe all of the bullying that takes place. Therefore, it is appropriate for educators to investigate an incident on their first observation of behavior that appears to be bullying.

The SAMHSA guide *Bullying is Not A Fact of Life* is available at <http://mentalhealth.samhsa.gov/publications/allpubs/SVP-0052/>. In addition to the guide, SAMHSA offers a course on preventing bullying behavior titled, “The ABC’s of Bullying” at <http://pathwayscourses.samhsa.gov/courses.htm>. The course has been recommended by several national educational organizations and includes a bully prevention guide, telephone hotline, Web site, and video. SAMHSA also offers tips for educators, counselors, administrators, and parents on how to reduce bullying at <http://mentalhealth.samhsa.gov/15plus/aboutbullying.asp>. ■

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Breathing Lessons 101

Anyone who has ever tried to calm an unruly classroom, or settle a dispute between students, knows how difficult it can be to defuse a tense situation. Sometimes students, and even some adults, do not really understand how to calm themselves. There are, however, some simple techniques that educators can teach students in the classroom.

Many prevention programs offer such techniques for helping students relax. Educators need not be implementing a specific program to benefit from stress management or relaxation techniques. For example, the Conscious Discipline Program developed by Becky Bailey, Ph.D., includes four deep breathing activities which even young students can learn and use in any tense situation.

Dr. Bailey developed the following active-calming techniques for use by groups or individuals. They are presented in Dr. Bailey's child-friendly language so that teachers can easily share these techniques with students.



S.T.A.R.

Smile; Take a deep breath And Relax. Encourage belly breathing where the tummy goes out, while the air goes in; and in, when the air goes out. Also, help children learn to exhale more slowly than they inhale.

Balloon

Place your hands on top of your head and interlace your fingers. Breathe in through your nose as you raise your arms, inflating an imaginary balloon. Release the air in the balloon by pursing your lips, exhaling slowly, lowering your arms and making a "pbpbpbpbpb" sound.



Drain

Extend your arms out, pretending they are faucets. Tighten arm, shoulder, and face muscles. Exhale slowly making a "ssshhh" sound and release all your muscles, draining out the stress.

Pretzel

Standing up, cross your ankles. Now cross your right wrist over left, turn your hands so your thumbs are facing the floor, put palms together and interlace fingers. Bend your elbows out and gently turn your hands down and toward your body until they rest on the center of your chest. Put your tongue on the roof of your mouth. Relax and breathe."



Because relaxation is a learned behavior, it is important to find opportunities to practice self-calming techniques. Life provides plenty of opportunities to become anxious or "stressed-out," but students (and adults) must actively learn to be mindful of moments they can use to calm themselves.

Many teachers have found that making flashcards out of the above relaxation cues is helpful for classroom management. To learn more about Conscious Discipline or about active calming, go to www.consciousdiscipline.com. For additional resources on dealing with stress visit the American Psychological Association at <http://apahelpcenter.org/articles/article.php?id=71>. ■

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