



DoDEA

SAFE Schools

NEWSLETTER



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Access Control During the Holidays

December is a challenging time to maintain access control. Visitor traffic increases due to the additional volunteers, holiday presentations, and parties. Administrators can use the suggestions below to maintain access control:

- ▶ Ensure that anyone working near the door is aware of all sign-in and escort procedures.
- ▶ Remind the community of visitor procedures.
- ▶ Prepare extra visitor passes.

Consistently enforcing sign-in procedures tightens access control. Reminding staff about procedures strengthens security awareness. ■

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West Point Schools Collaborate on Safe Schools Planning

Even though West Point has two separate schools for the elementary and middle grades, principals Shawne Cryderman and David Rudy take a collaborative approach to security. "We call it collegiality across the parking lot," said Rudy.

This shared commitment to Safe School Planning has resulted in enhanced communication, more effective drills, and increased responsiveness. The Safe School Planning Committee at West Point meets at least monthly and consists of both Rudy and Cryderman, Psychologist Valerie Cotter, an assistant principal, guidance counselors, teachers, a parent, and a school board member.



At West Point Middle School, Principal David Rudy discusses the safe school plan with local military police.

"Our basic philosophy is preparedness," said Rudy. "We have embraced the spirit of the DoDEA Safe School plan." Because the schools share a parking lot and access road, Cryderman and Rudy also practice their emergency drills together. Using radios, e-mail, and a unified system of signals which change regularly, personnel from both schools share accountability and oversight of the combined population of 800 students during drills. "We use planning and practice to ensure that our teachers are comfortable with their responsibilities during a drill," said Rudy. "We don't want people trying to guess what they should be doing."

As a culture of teamwork has evolved, it has permeated all areas of school security. They work closely with military police, local law enforcement agencies, and the FBI so that staff know what to expect from emergency responders during protective actions. "We both spent many years overseas, so it was natural to bring that level of commitment to security to West Point," said Cryderman. ■

Homeland Security Secretary Chertoff Advocates Readiness in School Security

Department of Homeland Security (DHS) Secretary Michael Chertoff recently urged school administrators to review their emergency management plans to be certain their schools are ready to respond effectively in the event of a crisis. Chertoff joined Secretary of Education Margaret Spellings and Commerce Secretary Carlos Gutierrez in a visit to schools in Fairfax County, Virginia to issue a call to action.



Chertoff asked school administrators to recognize the key role they play in emergency preparedness: “We live in a world **where both overseas and domestically** we have to be concerned about the possibility of people carrying out acts of violence in our schools, whether driven by terrorist motivations or some kind of personal, psychiatric disabilities.”

Using statistics to emphasize the need for vigilance, Chertoff noted, “During the 16-year period from January 1990 to September 2006 there were 949 incidents

of deliberate attacks on educational systems worldwide.” He added that these incidents resulted in 813 known deaths and 2,257 injuries.

Chertoff recommended schools plan to respond to all types of hazards. He suggested administrators begin by reviewing and practicing their protective actions such as shelter-in-place, lockdown, and evacuation.

“Schools ought to approach the issue of preparing for emergencies, whether natural or man-made . . . by understanding what the plan is, making sure the plan is communicated and exercised, by having in place the tools and the capabilities needed if in fact something does happen . . . and very importantly, by communicating to parents about what it is you’re doing and what’s expected of them.”

School safety is also a personal issue for Chertoff. He noted that since his family moved to Virginia in 2001, they have experienced a variety of threats, including “9/11, the anthrax scares, and the school sniper.”

Chertoff said that during each incident, people would ask him about the safety of his children. He explained that he was able to concentrate on his mission because he had confidence that the schools could provide security for his children. Chertoff said, “The ability to rely on schools to have communicated that plan and to be prepared was, frankly, what allowed me to do my job in view of these emergencies, as opposed to spending time worrying about my kids.”

To make this happen, Chertoff said, “Ultimately it boils down to individual and community preparedness.” He encouraged educators to work with government and law enforcement officials to ensure their schools build a “culture of preparedness.”

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DoDEA’s Crisis Management Guide offers guidelines for response planning at www.dodea.edu/instruction/crisis/resources/docs/DoDEA_Crisis_Manag_Guide_07.pdf. The DHS Web site provides additional tips at www.ready.gov. A list of emergency preparedness resources for schools is available at www.dhs.gov/schoolpreparedness. ■

Using Tool 9: Physical Security Review

The purpose of the Physical Security Review (Tool 9) in DoDEA's *Safe Schools Handbook* is to help administrators consider ways to enhance physical security at their schools. Although all schools use the same tool, the measures selected will vary depending on the vulnerabilities identified.

In Phase I of the Safe School Planning Process, the Safe School Committee identifies vulnerabilities. During Phase II, the committee establishes security objectives which address the identified vulnerabilities. In Phase III, "Evaluate and Identify Measures," educators can use the Physical Security Review to evaluate existing measures and identify new measures that help meet their specific security objectives.



During Phase III, it is acceptable to discuss measures that do not initially seem affordable or practical. A good decision process distinguishes between generating ideas and selecting options. In this phase, it is important to consider available measures. Later, in Phase IV, the Safe School Committee will select specific measures to include in the plan.

Use the following suggestions to quickly identify measures that address vulnerabilities identified in Phase I:

- ◆ **Prepare** – Review the Inventory of Policy, Program, and Physical Security Considerations in Chapter 3, Section 4 of DoDEA's *Safe Schools Handbook*. This list of physical security measures used in U.S. public schools will "warm up" the creativity of the team as they consider new security measures.
- ◆ **Delegate** – Ask an appropriate team member (i.e., lead teacher or physical education instructor) to conduct the Physical Security Review. Include students. Students can walk through the school with the adult leader and help survey the physical facility. Consider using three teams of student leaders, each with their own adult advisor. Assign groups responsibility for separate areas (i.e., open areas and outbuildings; main building entrances and cafeteria; and halls, stairwells and high value rooms).
- ◆ **Prioritize** – Use the rating system in the upper left corner of the Tool 9 worksheets to assign priority to the physical security categories. The incident category rating system will help administrators concentrate time and resources on those categories that warrant the most attention. Look for measures that directly address objectives formulated in Phase II.
- ◆ **Spiral In** – Use the outline provided at the start of Tool 9 to examine physical security "from the outside in." Start with open areas, then examine outbuildings, the main building, hallways, stairwells, rest rooms, cafeteria and high value rooms (i.e., media center or computer laboratory). This technique ensures that all areas receive adequate consideration.

Adhering to the sequence of the Five Phase Process ensures that the decisions made by the Safe School Committee are comprehensive and logical. For additional ideas, or assistance completing the Physical Security Review, consult Tool 9 in DoDEA's *Safe Schools Handbook* or contact safeschools@csc.com. For official guidance and specific ideas on areas such as key control, see DoDEA Regulation 4700.2, "Internal Physical Security" available at www.dodea.edu/foia/iod/pdf/4700_2.pdf. ■

Video Games and Violence: The Importance of Parental Oversight

A new study by researchers at the Massachusetts General Hospital (MGH) Center for Mental Health and Media, published in the July issue of the journal *Adolescent Health*, found that the use of video games among teens is nearly universal. In fact, only six percent of teenagers had not played any video games in the previous six months. Many of these games are violent.

This concerns many parents and educators who argue that violent video games can impede social development and hinder academic achievement. Although video games are prevalent in the lives of today's students, schools can promote non-violent behavior by providing parents with resources that educate them about violent video games.

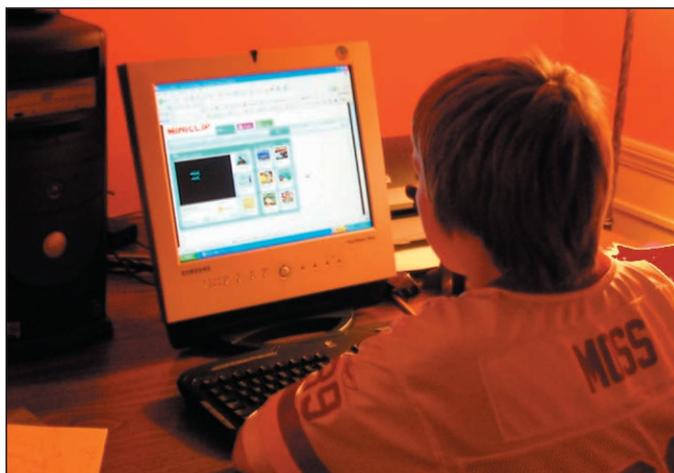
A growing body of evidence reinforces the idea that violent video games make students indifferent to the victims of violence. In his book *On Combat*, Lieutenant Colonel Dave Grossman notes that the military and law enforcement establishments use simulations based on video games to teach marksmanship and desensitize people to the effects of violence. Psychologist David Walsh, Ph.D., from the National Institute on Media and the Family, published *Video Game Violence and Public Policy* in which he summarizes many studies that find video games promote violence in young people. Walsh wrote that the repetitive nature of video games makes learning certain actions a "behavioral rehearsal for violent activities."

Walsh also reported on a study by psychologists Craig A. Anderson and Brad J. Bushman, *Effects of Violent Games on Aggressive Behavior*, which analyzed the patterns of numerous studies linking violence to video games. According to Anderson and Bushman, exposure to violent games increases aggressive thoughts, emotions, and actions while decreasing pro-social behavior.

Studies have linked video games to reduced academic performance and impaired social development. Compared with those few teenagers who do not play video games, adolescents who played video games spent 30 percent less time reading and 34 percent less time doing homework, according to the MGH study. Walsh found that in a study of 8th and 9th graders, "Students who played more violent video games were also more likely to get into frequent arguments with teachers, and to be involved in physical fights."

Walsh concludes that, "Video and computer games will continue to be an exciting and growing part of children's media diets" and that parents have the power to influence the kinds of video games their children play. Grossman suggests that parents should reduce the exposure children have to violent content in movies, TV, and video games. For example, he recommends that parents not let young children play violent video games.

There are Internet sites to review video-game content and help parents determine what is appropriate. For example, the Web site www.common sense media.org offers resources for helping students "use media wisely and well." Walsh's report, *Video Game Violence and Public Policy*, is available on-line at <http://culturalpolicy.uchicago.edu/conf2001/papers/walsh.html>. For additional resources that educators and parents can use to help avert violent behavior in their schools, please contact the Safe Schools Team at safeschools@csc.com. ■



Researchers say that violent video games can desensitize students to violence.

Surgeon General Urges Educators to Help Prevent Underage Drinking

In 2007, the U.S. Surgeon General challenged educators to help discourage underage drinking. The Surgeon General's report, titled *A Call To Action to Prevent and Reduce Underage Drinking: A Guide to Action for Educators*, suggested specific actions educators could take to decrease alcohol abuse. "Too many Americans consider underage drinking a rite of passage to adulthood," said Acting Surgeon General Kenneth Moritsugu when announcing the report. He added, "Research shows that young people who start drinking before the age of 15 are five times more likely to have alcohol-related problems later in life."

The Call to Action noted that approximately 10 percent of students begin drinking by age 12 and that number doubles by age 13. By the time students enter high school, 50 percent acknowledge that they have experimented with alcohol. The 2005 *National Survey on Drug Use and Health* (NSDUH) estimated that 11 million underage youth used alcohol. The NSDUH report also found that seven million youth were binge drinkers, defined as consuming five or more drinks on a particular occasion. Many more students consume alcohol than smoke cigarettes or marijuana (see graph below).

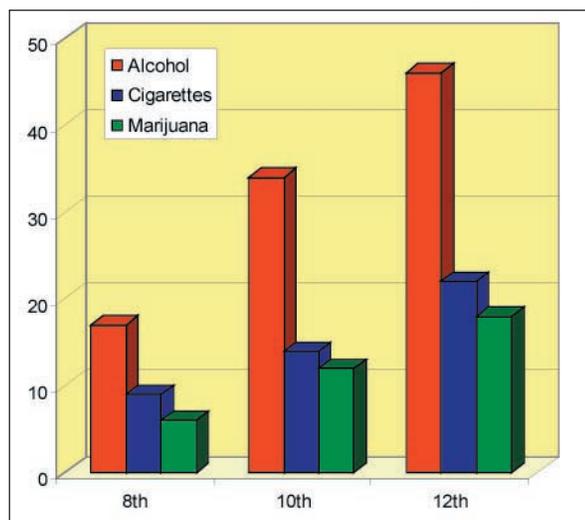
Underage drinkers are more likely to become dependent on alcohol. According to the Surgeon General, adults who first used alcohol before age 15 were five times more likely to abuse alcohol than individuals who delayed drinking until they turned 21. Underage drinkers also risk harming themselves or others. Hundreds of underage drinkers injure themselves through falls, burns, or by drowning each year. Approximately 5,000 other students under the age of 21 die annually as a result of underage drinking. This number includes:

- ◆ Motor vehicle crashes: 1,900
- ◆ Homicides: 1,600
- ◆ Suicide: 300

Moritsugu offers the following advice to school officials:

- ◆ Encourage student involvement in school, a factor that reduces underage alcohol use.
- ◆ Help students explore talents and follow their passions in academics, music, sports or community service.
- ◆ Provide accurate information about the consequences of alcohol use.
- ◆ Offer developmentally appropriate knowledge, skills and motivation to resist peer pressure and other pressures to drink.
- ◆ Establish and consistently enforce strict policies on alcohol use on school property and at school events.

Past Month Substance Abuse by Grade



2006 *Monitoring the Future*
Survey Results on Drug Use

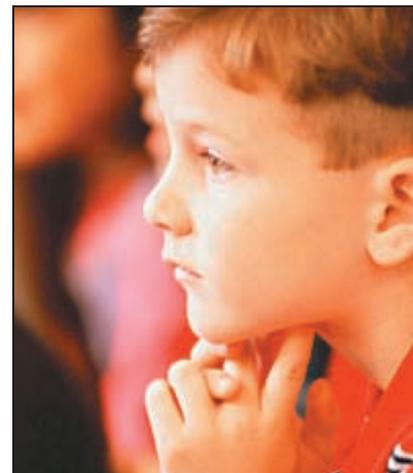
Adolescents need to test limits and take risks. Unfortunately, when students experiment with alcohol they often hurt themselves or others. Coaching youth to "push the limits" by excelling in athletics, drama and leadership activities can channel students' natural tendencies into academic and extracurricular accomplishments. Educators can discourage underage drinking while helping students develop habits that will cultivate lifelong success. Additional information about the report is available at www.surgeongeneral.gov/topics/underagedrinking/about.html. The Surgeon General's guide for educators is available at www.surgeongeneral.gov/topics/underagedrinking/EducatorGuide.pdf. ■

Inside Anger Management Prevention Programs

School anger management programs are designed to help children deal with feelings of anger and rage. Anger is a normal human emotion. Individuals who manage it appropriately use anger to fight injustice, stand up for themselves, and help others. On the other hand, when not handled appropriately, anger can lead to hatred, aggression, and violence.

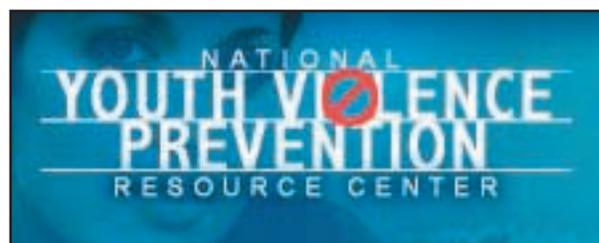
For this reason, programs of all sorts, no matter which age range they address, usually try to teach skills that enhance children’s ability to arrive at non-violent solutions to their anger. According to the American Psychological Association, these usually include some combination of the following:

- ▶ Problem solving
- ▶ Stress management
- ▶ Assertiveness
- ▶ Anger control
- ▶ Impulse control



What should educators expect from an anger management program?

Outcomes vary by program, population, and implementation procedure, but effective programs, when they are faithfully implemented, should result in better self-regulatory skills. However, the key component of any anger management program is adult involvement. As with any learned behavior, students will better use anger management skills if they are given plenty of opportunities to practice the techniques and discuss their experiences. In the end, even the most effective programs rely on the intervention of a caring and motivated educator for implementation.



What types of programs and resources are currently available?

The National Youth Violence Prevention Resource Center offers a helpful fact sheet for teaching teens to manage anger and stress. The material on this Web site is designed to be useful for the general population. Breathing, relaxation, and “change of scene” are among the issues explored in a two-page handout that can be adapted for classroom use, available on-line at www.safeyouth.org.

The New York University Child Study Center offers resources for administrators interested in using anger management techniques for hate prevention in a school setting. While emphasizing the importance of breathing and relaxation, the information at www.aboutourkids.org stresses the importance of teaching students about how anger can result in prejudice, stereotyping of social groups, and acts of retaliation.

“Get Your Angries Out” is a kid-friendly Web site developed by renowned psychologist, Dr. Lynne Namka. This colorful site uses simple language to offer children alternatives to violence when angry situations arise. There are downloadable resources, which teachers can use in the classroom, in addition to numerous articles that address specific techniques, such as exercises kids can do when they feel angry at www.angriesout.com. For additional resources on anger management, please contact the Safe Schools Team at safeschools@csc.com. ■

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