

# **Safe Schools Guide**

*Selected Strategies and Resources*

## **Crisis Management Guide**

### **Volume II-Second Edition**

### **2006**



**Sandy Garrett**  
**State Superintendent of Public Instruction**  
**Oklahoma State Department of Education**

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October 2006

Dear Administrator:

This *Safe Schools Guide*, originally produced in January 2000, has been revised and updated. Volume I consists of school laws regarding safe and drug-free schools and a special section for Safe School Committees. It also contains helpful checklist and resources for a safe school climate and the new *School Bullying Prevention Act*.

Volume II contains most of the original *Administrator's Guide to Managing Crisis* which has been updated with additional information from the U.S. Department of Education and the National Association of School Psychologists. This information will assist schools in assembling crisis teams, preparing for possible critical incidents, including biological and chemical terrorism, and bomb threats. Information regarding recovery strategies and suggestions for classroom teachers, parents, and crisis counseling teams is also included.

The *Safe Schools Guide* has been compiled by State Department of Education staff from our Safe and Drug-Free Schools and Guidance and Counseling staff with additional information from various Oklahoma school districts.

If you have questions about the guide, please contact Dr. J.C. Smith, Coordinator of Counseling at (405) 521-3549, or Gayle Jones, Safe and Drug-Free Schools Director, Health, Safety and Physical Education Section at (405) 521-2107. We hope this guide is useful to you, your Safe Schools Committee, and your Crisis Teams as they help keep Oklahoma Schools safe.

Sincerely,

Sandy Garrett  
State Superintendent

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# Planning for a Crisis

This part of the guide is designed to assist school administrators in planning, identifying, and training people to manage a crisis whether at the district or school site level.

# Introduction

Each day, Oklahoma schools are responsible for the safety and well-being of over half a million students. This volume of the *Safe Schools Guide* is intended as a tool to assist local school districts and school sites in developing or refining their crisis management team and plan. Schools should organize a crisis management team and develop a plan of action to support students and staff who experience trauma. The goal of the crisis management plan is to reduce the risk of additional traumatic shock and to return students and staff to precrisis functioning levels as soon as possible.

Violence, death, accidents, and natural disasters can have a profound impact on students, families, and the school community. The more violent the event or the closer it is to the school setting, the more disruptive it will be to the students, staff, and the educational process. The consequences of disaster, violence, or death on the emotional stability of students and staff must be recognized. Failing to address the consequences will send a negative message about the human needs brought forth by such an event.

This revised guide, an expanded and updated version of the *Administrator's Guide to Managing Crisis*, is intended to assist local school districts and sites in addressing various forms of crises. While designed to be easy to use, this volume also provides some of the most current information on crises schools might face, suggestions on how to deal effectively with these situations, and resources for administrator reference.

School personnel must be prepared to respond to the needs of students and fellow staff in an organized manner to make decisions that are appropriate and timely. To do this effectively, many procedures and issues must be decided long before a crisis occurs.

In addition, crisis management is an important element for the Safe Schools Committee to consider before making recommendations. The most important consideration in planning for and maintaining safe schools is the health, safety, and welfare of the students and staff of a school. A comprehensive safe school plan emphasizes prevention. Volume I of this guide presents several steps and resources to assist in providing a safe school climate. Volume II, as follows, focuses specifically on crisis management.

# School Emergency Management Plans Law

House Bill 1512 (Title 70 O.S. 2003 supp. § 681-682) was passed and signed into law by Governor Henry on May 29, 2003. This law relates to emergency management and makes the following requirements of schools:

“School districts are authorized to plan, design, and construct new school buildings and make additions to existing school buildings that afford protection for the anticipated school body, faculty, and visitors against tornadoes and severe weather . . .

Each school, administration building, and institution of higher learning shall have written plans and procedures in place for protecting students, faculty, administrators, and visitors from natural and man-made disasters\* and emergencies. Plans shall be placed on file at each school district and each local emergency management organization within the district.

Each school district and institution of higher learning shall make annual reports to the local school board or Board of Regents detailing the status of emergency preparedness and identified safety needs for each school or institution.

Each school district of the state is authorized to participate in such federal assistance programs as may be available or may become available to assist in providing tornado and severe weather protection.”

\*“Man-made disaster” means a disaster caused by acts of man including, but not limited to, an act of war, terrorism, chemical spill or release, or power shortages that require assistance from outside the local “political subdivision” (any county, city, town or municipal corporation of the state represented by an elected governing body).

# Planning For a Crisis

## Introduction

A crisis can occur at anytime whether or not schools have any mechanisms in place to manage such situations. A crisis can affect a single person, a single building, an entire school district, or community. Having a crisis management team and plan is essential. A well-developed plan and team can help those involved.

Establishing a Crisis Management Plan prepares the school district for potential problems and establishes a coordinated response designed to minimize the stress and disruption of the event. A crisis management plan includes:

- Determining the level of crisis and response.
- Creating a crisis management team.
- Defining and assigning team membership responsibilities.
- Establishing an action plan with specific steps to follow in a crisis.
- Evaluation of plan.

## Level of Crisis and Response

For the purposes of planning and intervention, crises can be classified as either minor or major. The level of crisis will determine the response required by the crisis management team. Generally, a minor crisis is handled by the school crisis management team, or a portion thereof, and a major crisis requires the school team and a district-level team.

## Minor Crisis and Response

### Identifying a Minor Crisis

- A minor crisis is a situation or event in which a person's life is not immediately in danger, but the person is at-risk.
- The crisis may affect only one or a small number of individuals.
- A minor crisis will probably not attract any media attention.

Although a minor crisis may involve only a few people, the situation requires intervention and support for the affected individuals. The school team or a subteam can usually handle a minor crisis that will not require any assistance from outside the school. Referrals to outside sources will be made through the normal channels either by the principal or the school counselor.

The following events and/or situations are examples of minor crises:

- Terminal illness of a student or staff member
- Mention of suicide by a student or staff member
- Divorce or family crisis
- Death of a student's parent or family member
- Abuse or neglect that places a student at risk
- Military deployment of parents or guardians during war

## Major Crisis and Response

### Identifying a Major Crisis

- A major crisis is an unexpected or violent event which affects the functioning of a large number of students, staff, and community members.
- The timeliness of the response needed will be urgent.
- The outcomes of the crisis may be life-threatening, traumatic, severe, and long-lasting.
- A major crisis will probably attract media attention.

Resources at the building level may not be sufficient to handle a major crisis and assistance may be needed from the district team or from others outside the school community. An effective crisis management plan will include access to a district-level team or officials and community resources which might be needed in managing a major crisis.

The following events may be classified as major crises:

- Violent or unexpected death of a student, staff member, or parent
- Accident with major injuries or multiple deaths
- Suicide of a student or staff member
- School violence with death or major injuries
- Terrorist act or gang violence
- Man-made disaster (industrial explosion, chemical leak, fire)
- Natural disaster (tornado, earthquake, flood)

# **Crisis Management Teams**

# Crisis Management Teams

A Crisis Management Team (CMT) can be an extremely effective tool for handling a major or minor crisis. An established and organized CMT within a school can provide the necessary network to take action and implement the crisis management plan when needed.

## Selecting CMT Members

Effective CMT members often have many of the skills listed below. When selecting CMT members, consider the skills listed as well as the person's area of expertise and ability to respond to difficult situations. These people will determine how others in your school will react. Listed below are skills to seek out when developing your team.

## Skills Checklist

**CMT member skills include being:**

- Able to handle a crisis situation in a calm manner.
- Confident and able to convey a positive, caring attitude.
- Accepting and sensitive to the diversity of the population.
- An ally and advocate for children and youth.
- Willing to conform to the standards and norms of the school site being served.
- Flexible.
- Able to think clearly while under stress.
- Willing to work cooperatively on a team.
- Part of an identified personal support network.

## District CMT

School districts should establish a team at each school site and a district level team for assistance with a major crisis. *The district CMT should consist of the following:*

- Superintendent or assistant superintendent
- Director of student services
- School psychologist
- School nurse
- Director of public relations/communications
- Trained personnel within the community

Some school districts may not employ all of the personnel suggested here to serve on the district team. In these cases, community resources such as ministers, police officers, physicians, and parents may be recruited to serve in the vacant role(s).

Smaller school districts should also establish working relationships with other districts in their area. The collaboration should develop a plan to share personnel and develop a resource list of community agencies to provide assistance in the event of a crisis.

The district CMT is responsible for the following:

- Developing policies and procedures that will ensure appropriate and timely response
- Providing intervention and aftercare services for all students and staff affected
- Providing direct support to a school site during a major crisis
- Monitoring and evaluating the effectiveness of site crisis teams
- Ensuring ongoing professional training for district and site teams

## School Site CMT

The school site CMT serves as the foundation for all levels of crisis response. It is an organized group of committed, trained individuals who function within the school on a daily basis. The site team members are trained staff and readily available. The members know the students and staff in the building.

Each school site should have a crisis management team and plan. The size and composition of the school site team will vary from school to school but usually should have at least five to eight members. Team members may include the principal (team leader), assistant principal, counselor, teachers, school security, and support staff.

At the elementary level, a teacher from each grade level might be selected to serve on the crisis team. At the middle or secondary level, teachers located in strategic areas of the campus might be selected as team members. One or more parents or guardians may be selected to serve as liaisons.

Important qualities to consider in the selection of team members are the ability to think clearly under stress; familiarity with the uniqueness of the school, its students and the community; and a position that will allow them to be quickly available in an emergency, and to serve until the crisis is over.

Depending on the circumstances, it may not always be necessary to activate the entire CMT at a school site. For example, divorce or domestic violence in a student's family may affect only one student. Although one student in the school is involved, the student may feel the situation is a devastating crisis.

An organized effort should be made by school personnel, who have direct contact with the student, to provide an atmosphere of emotional support. A teacher, counselor, or other member can be quickly activated to work with school personnel who have direct interaction with the student on a daily basis. Such a subteam could include principals, cafeteria staff, bus drivers, or parent volunteers who know the student.

**(As you select your crisis management teams, complete page 32,  
Crisis Management District Team Members.  
See Duty Personnel Assignment Checklist, page 34.)**

Whether it is a death in the student's family, a divorce, or the death of a pet, all students in the school should feel that others are concerned about them. Students should know that it makes a difference to someone in the school if they are happy or sad, healthy or ill. Respect, trust, cohesiveness, and caring are essential factors that comprise the school's climate and determine its quality. The CMT or subteam can provide the support and a caring atmosphere for the students and staff at the building site.

# **Team Membership and Responsibilities**

# Team Membership and Responsibilities

## Team Leader

The Team Leader for crisis management at the site level should be the school principal. The assistant principal or a designee serves as the alternate in the principal's absence. The Team Leader must be knowledgeable about the objectives, methods, and limitations of crisis intervention in the schools. Responsibilities include the following:

- Coordinate all crisis intervention activities at the building site level.
- Provide leadership for developing a crisis management plan, reviewing the plan with staff at least annually, and appointing staff to the site team.
- Ensure that site team members receive appropriate training.
- Establish a method of communicating with the crisis team and faculty during non-school hours.
- Meet with the crisis team and school staff to implement the crisis management plan.
- Evaluate the crisis intervention and support services and write a detailed report.

## Media Liaison

The media liaison, usually the principal or the assistant principal, is responsible for establishing site procedures for responding to broadcast and print journalists and for coordinating activities with the district media spokesperson during a crisis. Working with the superintendent's office, the media liaison and the district spokesperson (or staff member who performs such tasks) will determine who will respond to media requests. The district media spokesperson should coordinate all media requests during a major crisis. The responsibilities include the following:

- Develop and review school policies with staff members for responding to media inquiries during a crisis.
- Identify a suitable on-campus location for an emergency media center.
- Obtain the appropriate information to be released and prepare statements.
- Establish a working relationship with other agencies (police, fire, hospital).
- Update the superintendent on the crisis and any contacts with the media.
- Prepare statements for staff, letters to parents, and other communication.

## Counseling Coordinator

The Counseling Coordinator should be in charge of providing direct counseling and support services for students, staff, and parents. The school psychologist or school counselor usually serves in this capacity and should be an individual who has a clear understanding of the objectives, methods, and limitations of crisis intervention. The Counseling Coordinator has several planning and crisis intervention responsibilities:

- Maintain a current list of outside referral sources (county mental health, hospice, crisis centers, medical services).
- Identify offices and space to be used for counseling and support services.
- Educate staff to identify students at risk and develop procedures for referral.
- Develop a procedure for self-referral.
- Develop a crisis intervention referral form and make it available to the staff.
- Maintain a list of all students that have been referred, parents who have been contacted, the status of each student, and the need for follow-up.
- Visit classrooms to share information regarding the crisis and be available for individual student needs. It is recommended another team member accompany the counselor.

## Classroom Teachers

Classroom teachers play a vital role in assisting the school community manage crisis and trauma. Teachers are responsible for the students in their classrooms, in addition to understanding and coping with students' reactions. Teachers assume the following responsibilities:

- Foster a caring atmosphere and serve as models for the students.
- Provide students with facts and information appropriate to their level of understanding.
- Allow students time to talk; listen to what they are saying.
- Assist students to understand, cope, and gain a sense of control over the situation.
- Identify students at risk and make referrals.

## Security/Police Liaison

This individual will be a security or police officer assigned to the school. If the school site does not employ security personnel, the principal should include local law enforcement in developing and implementing prevention and intervention plans. The Security Liaison's responsibilities include assisting in developing a plan designed to ensure student safety before, during, and after a crisis. Responsibilities and issues include but are not limited to the following:

- Traffic management
- Procedures to deal with gang activities, hostage situations, building intruders, bomb threats, and weapons in school
- Classroom and building evacuation procedures
- Procedures to follow in order to reunite students with their families following a crisis
- Provision of additional security
- Assist school administrator in coordinating activities with local agencies such as Office of Emergency Management, Red Cross, police, and fire departments

### NOTE:

- Oklahoma Office of Emergency Management (405) 521-2481
- American Red Cross of Oklahoma (405) 228-9500
- Oklahoma Department of Public Safety, Safety Education (405) 425-2420

# **Review and Prepare Crisis Plan**

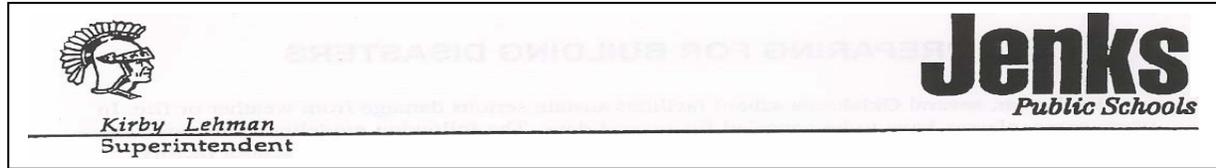
# Review and Prepare Crisis Plan

After assigning team membership responsibilities, each school site's CMT should meet prior to the beginning of each semester to review the school's current crisis plan. In addition, the district team should meet annually with each school site team to review and update the existing crisis plan.

To assist in these reviews, use the "Managing a Crisis" section that details the necessary steps for effective crisis management. It is important to ensure that necessary equipment and supplies are available at each site.

After review of the school crisis plan, a letter may be sent notifying parents that a plan is in place and including instructions in the event of a crisis (e.g., central pickup place, number to call). See the example on the following page.

During the meeting, team members' responsibilities should be defined. At the conclusion of the team meeting, all staff working in the office and answering the office phone should review this guide and the checklist on Building Disaster and Bomb Threats.

*Sample letter*

Dear Parents, Guardians, and Members of the Jenks Community,

The Jenks School District shares your concern for the safety and well-being of our students and staff. It is imperative that a joint effort be maintained by the school, the families, and the community to foster open lines of communication which will enhance the overall positive climate within the Jenks community. The power of teamwork is of paramount importance in ensuring the success and safety of our students. The strength of the team lies in the fact that we all share the responsibility for educating future generations. Tragedies at other American schools heighten our awareness and focus our attention on the issues of safety and security while we continue to provide a quality learning environment. We, as a school district, appreciate and respect the concerns of our parents and patrons and would like to take this opportunity to reiterate the following current and on-going safety practices:

- Provide campus police presence with the proper safety tools such as ongoing law enforcement training, hand-held metal detectors, and baggage x-ray machines.
- A minimum of once each semester, convene all site Safe Schools Committees to discuss site specific needs or concerns.
- Convene site Crisis Teams for the purpose of identifying students who are in need or assistance and provide or make recommendations for appropriate support.
- Review emergency procedures including the securing of school buildings at each site.
- Utilize digital surveillance systems to increase monitoring of students whereabouts in and around school buildings and parking areas.
- Identification badges worn by secondary students and all staff members.
- Require people entering the buildings to register with the office and for office personnel to be aware of people as they enter buildings.
- Attendance at Safe Schools training program by district administrators with feedback to other administrators and staff members.
- Review related Board policies.
- Continue to train and develop the members of the School Emergency Response Team (SERT), a group of school personnel who are highly trained in emergency mitigation, response, containment, evacuation, and recovery.
- Adoption of Board goal to continue to develop and implement a comprehensive program of character education.
- Continued practice of appropriate disciplinary action taken regarding threats and/or weapons.
- Expand the training in conflict resolution for students.
- Use of SAFE-CALL system, developed by the State Department of Education, for students, staff, or parents to report uncomfortable situations, anonymously to 1-877-723.3225, extension OK 1.

We will continue to work with parents/guardians and the rest of the Jenks community to evaluate and refine our safe school practices. Together we will continue to provide the safest possible environment for our children and staff members.

Kirby A. Lehman  
Superintendent

C: Jenks Staff members  
Board of Education

Courtesy of Jenks Public Schools, Jenks, Oklahoma

# Preparing for Building Disasters

Each year, several Oklahoma school facilities sustain serious damage from weather or fire. In many cases, classes have to be canceled for several days. The following guidelines will assist the crisis management team in preparing for and responding to severe damage to the school facility.

1. Compile and maintain a detailed property list, supported by photos and videotapes. Update your list each time the district acquires new equipment. Keep one copy in the district office and submit a second to your insurance carrier for safekeeping.
2. Examine and update the district's insurance coverage on a regular basis, checking coverage limits and deductible amounts, replacement values versus projected costs. Itemize any fixture or equipment that is not covered by insurance.
3. Plan ahead concerning alternate class sites should the disaster make the school facility unusable for an extended period of time. Contact area churches, libraries, community centers, and the owners of vacant buildings about availability. It is best to identify more than one resource.
4. Keep an updated list of day and night telephone numbers for key district personnel, public safety agencies, local utility companies, news media, and others you may need to call in the event of a disaster. Keep copies at home and in the offices of Crisis Management Team members.
5. Work with your insurance carrier and district support personnel to periodically survey facilities for loss potential. Check site drainage and flooding patterns (which can change over time), examine structural integrity, and conduct frequent fire and inclement weather drills to ensure that all students and employees can reach safety in time. Conduct fire drills as required. In addition, be sure that more than one person at every site knows the location of utility cut-off valves and switches.

# Responding to a Building Disaster

1. In response to a disaster, the first call is always to public safety agencies (police, fire, civil defense) to ensure protection and rescue of property and people. If a fire is suspicious, work with local fire officials and the State Fire Marshal's Office to speed the investigation and preserve evidence to increase the chances of a successful prosecution.
2. Contact your insurance carrier next. Your adjuster will quickly issue a brief statement of loss to help begin cleanup and property preservation. Photograph and/or videotape all damages. Using the prepared list of property, verify losses and damages and establish cost/value data.
3. Begin repairs as soon as possible, especially if broken windows, roof damage, standing water, or other factors may cause additional damage. Most insurance carriers reimburse personnel overtime or outside labor for such purposes. Prompt action can reduce eventual damage totals. In most communities, citizen volunteers will help repair the damage.
4. Make a prompt determination of structural integrity, hazards, and the extent of damage as these factors predict when school can resume. If alternate class space will be necessary, immediately contact community resources you have already identified. Consult with the local board of education, and notify parents and students.
5. Contact the Oklahoma State Department of Education Accreditation Division, at (405) 521-3333, if classes will be disrupted for an extended period of time. Call the Capital Improvement Section, at (405) 521-3812, for assistance concerning school building disasters.

# Sample Response Procedure: Emergency Lockdown

Please become very familiar with all aspects of this procedure so you can respond to an emergency without having to refer to this sheet.

- Should you be the first person to know of an emergency situation that requires lockdown, notify the police department immediately by dialing 911. Stay on the line to give the police information. If you need to get to a safe place, keep the line open by dropping the phone on the floor.
- The principal will contact the district office to inform them of the situation.
- If you are on the line with 911, have another person notify the district office of what is happening.
- Lock your classroom door.
- Close all the blinds.
- Turn off all the lights.
- Direct students to assume the “tuck and cover” position (crouch down against walls away from windows) in a “safety area” out of sight from windows and doors. Students should remain absolutely silent during this time.
- Tell students that if they are with another teacher during lockdown (in the library or with a resource teacher), they are to remain with that teacher and move to a designated safe spot.
- Students in the hallways, bathrooms, or commons when a lockdown is announced are to return to their classrooms immediately. Teachers must check roll to make sure their students are either in the classroom or with another teacher.
- Principals, assistant principals, and custodians will immediately begin locking all outside doors and monitor for late arrivals.
- Do not tie up outside phone lines.
- If students are outside the building when a lockdown is announced, outside intercom horns will sound and selected staff will call them into the gym. Staff should hurry students, without panicking, and lead them to the nearest door and then to the gym.

# Lockdown Information Sheet For Individual Classroom

**Teachers and staff:** In the event a lockdown is ordered, please complete the following information sheet and place it immediately outside your secured area for collection.

Classroom number \_\_\_\_\_

Number of individuals in the room \_\_\_\_\_

- Students only
- Students/others

Names of individuals in classroom NOT scheduled to be there:

---



---



---

Injuries (if any) or medical situations requiring attention:

- No
- Yes \_\_\_\_\_  
 \_\_\_\_\_  
 \_\_\_\_\_

Physical damage to classroom:

- No
- Yes \_\_\_\_\_  
 \_\_\_\_\_  
 \_\_\_\_\_

Signature: \_\_\_\_\_

Time: \_\_\_\_\_

On the back of this sheet, please write the names of all the individuals in the room.

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# Bomb Threats

## Bomb Threats/Telephone Threats

The building principal must evaluate the seriousness of bomb threats or other disruptive types of demonstrations using input from all sources; then, the principal acts in such a manner that reflects the best safety interests of those under his/her charge. Bomb and other threats may be originated in writing, in person, over the telephone, or related through a second source.

### **Basic Documentation - The individual taking the call should:**

- Keep the caller on the line as long as possible.
- Notify the principal.
- Write down all the information obtained in the exact words. Use the record sheet immediately following these instruction pages; place copies of the bomb threat sheet at the switchboard and other appropriate phone locations.
- Find out what time the bomb is due to go off.
- Document the time message is received.
- Note the date and day of week.
- Write the exact wording of message.
- Note the estimation of sex, age, and cultural background of person making call.
- Make note of background noises, and tone of voice.

### **The building administrator or designee shall contact the following:**

1. Police (911 or your local police department number).
2. Superintendent and the following:
  - Managing Director, Facilities of Services (have phone number available);
  - Director of Community Relations (have phone number available); and
  - Environmental Health and Safety Office (have phone number available).
3. Consider the safety of students and staff as the prime factor. If advised, direct students and staff to safe areas of the campus. Nothing is to be touched or altered; do not open desks or lockers. Allow police and fire department authorities to conduct the search.

### **Do not reenter building until authorized:**

- Alert staff of situation and implement building search procedures.
- School activities should be continued as normally as possible in designated safe areas.
- The recommendation to close school will be made only after consultation between the Central Office, security, and building administrator.
- Submit written reports as appropriate to the superintendent following the incident.

## Checklist

- Listen carefully to the caller to gain as much information as possible. Notify the School Resource Officer.
- If the School Resource Officer is not in the building, call 911 immediately.
- Ask teachers to survey their instruction area and nearby restrooms.
- Evacuate the building. **DO NOT USE THE PUBLIC ADDRESS (PA) SYSTEM OR TURN LIGHTS ON OR OFF.**
- Notify superintendent’s office.
- Follow policy directions regarding return to the building.
- If necessary, contact transportation to arrange for early dismissal.
- Perform follow-up activities.

### Confidential building search procedures for use by staff only:

The principal and/or assistant principal will:

- A. Call police department.
- B. Call superintendent’s office.
- C. Call maintenance department.
- D. Notify school staff by prearranged signal.

**The Signal: (a sample) “PLEASE BE CERTAIN TO SEND TRANSCRIPTS TO THE OFFICE TODAY.”**

### A fire drill will be called about 15 minutes before threatened time, if known.

- Following the signal, the staff will conduct a thorough search of assigned areas as outlined below. **If anything is found, it should not be touched in any way.** Get a staff member to “watch it,” while a staff member reports it personally to the principal. Following the search, each staff member responsible for searching areas (all teachers and others) must send a note to the office reading, for example, “Brown - Clear.”
- Responsibilities for search effort:  
All search efforts should be conducted quietly and quickly without alarming or informing pupils. Each teacher will search his/her own area, in addition to the following search responsibilities:

Custodial closets.....	Lead Custodian
Girl’s toilet.....	Principal, assistant or designee
Boy’s toilet.....	Principal, assistant or designee
Mechanical room.....	Lead Custodian I
Library, office and audiovisual room.....	Librarian
Food service area, dining room.....	Cafeteria Manager
Principal’s office and other areas.....	Office personnel
Outdoor storage.....	Lead Custodian

# Bomb Threat Report Form

Make numerous copies and keep them at main telephone for immediate use by operator/secretary.

### Questions to Ask

- When is bomb going to explode?
- Where is it right now?
- What does it look like?
- What kind of bomb is it?
- What will cause it to explode?
- Did you place the bomb?
- Why?
- What is your address?
- What is your name?

### Exact wording of threat:

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### Threat Language Used:

- |   |   |
|---|---|
| <input type="checkbox"/> Well-spoken (educated) | <input type="checkbox"/> Incoherent                   |
| <input type="checkbox"/> Foul language          | <input type="checkbox"/> Taped message                |
| <input type="checkbox"/> Irrational             | <input type="checkbox"/> Message read by threat maker |

Time: \_\_\_\_\_ Date: \_\_\_\_\_

Gender of caller: \_\_\_\_\_

Culture: \_\_\_\_\_

Age: \_\_\_\_\_

Length of call: \_\_\_\_\_

Number at which call was received: \_\_\_\_\_

Number from which the call was placed (Caller ID): \_\_\_\_\_

If the voice is familiar, who did it sound like? \_\_\_\_\_

Remarks: \_\_\_\_\_

---

### Background Sounds

- |                                    |  |   |  |
|------------------------------------|--|---|--|
| <input type="checkbox"/> Street    | <input type="checkbox"/> Local         | <input type="checkbox"/> Music            | <input type="checkbox"/> Water         |
| <input type="checkbox"/> PA System | <input type="checkbox"/> Booth         | <input type="checkbox"/> House Noises     | <input type="checkbox"/> Car Horns     |
| <input type="checkbox"/> Voice     | <input type="checkbox"/> Animal Noises | <input type="checkbox"/> Office Machinery | <input type="checkbox"/> Train         |
| <input type="checkbox"/> Motor     | <input type="checkbox"/> Static        | <input type="checkbox"/> Long Distance    | <input type="checkbox"/> Shopping Mall |
- Other: \_\_\_\_\_

### Caller's Voice

- |                                    |                                 |                                   |  |   |
|------------------------------------|---------------------------------|-----------------------------------|--|---|
| <input type="checkbox"/> Calm      | <input type="checkbox"/> Quiet  | <input type="checkbox"/> Laughter | <input type="checkbox"/> Slurred         | <input type="checkbox"/> Nasal          |
| <input type="checkbox"/> Angry     | <input type="checkbox"/> Soft   | <input type="checkbox"/> Normal   | <input type="checkbox"/> Whispered       | <input type="checkbox"/> Stutter        |
| <input type="checkbox"/> Slow      | <input type="checkbox"/> Loud   | <input type="checkbox"/> Distinct | <input type="checkbox"/> Cracking Voice  | <input type="checkbox"/> Raspy          |
| <input type="checkbox"/> Disguised | <input type="checkbox"/> Accent | <input type="checkbox"/> Familiar | <input type="checkbox"/> Clearing Throat | <input type="checkbox"/> Deep Breathing |
| <input type="checkbox"/> Crying    | <input type="checkbox"/> Ragged | Other _____                       |  |   |

# Crisis Involving Shootings/Woundings/Attacks

## Checklist

After verifying crisis:

- Call 911, or police and ambulance.
- Implement first aid procedures until rescue services arrive.
- Use emergency signal to alert students and staff to stay in classrooms, secure the door, and stay on the floor.
- Establish a command post with several telephones available.
- Notify superintendent's office.
- Keep a written log of events.

## When immediate danger no longer exists:

- Prepare a written memo for staff and other inquiries, including media.
- Implement necessary follow-up activities.
- Call an emergency staff meeting.

## Specifics

- Notify the police, and other necessary emergency staff.
- Determine if the perpetrator is still on premises.
- Determine the number of victims and identify witnesses.
- Give the emergency signal to students and staff. Remember to provide a follow-up announcement in order to keep everyone informed. Prepare a general facts statement.
- Establish a command post to support the Crisis Management Team and to direct the press and concerned members of the community to the Media Liaison.
- Implement necessary first aid procedures utilizing the identified faculty and staff members appropriately trained. Direct rescue personnel to injured and give required assistance. Designate staff member to go to the hospital to act as liaison.
- Contact superintendent's office.
- Identify place where a log of events is to be kept. Record all significant events, actions taken, and individuals that are involved.
- Keep staff informed through a memo or emergency staff meeting. Parents may be informed through a letter sent home with students.
- Follow-up management should be well delegated. Crisis counseling of students and staff may be needed, and security concerns should be considered. All staff will assist in restoring building to normal state. Reopen school as soon as possible.
- Call emergency staff meeting to review events and discuss future needs.

# Sample School Terrorism Action Plan

The following action plan is based on recommendations from the Federal Emergency Management Agency (FEMA), Office of National Preparedness. Responses to terrorist acts depend on two key variables—the nature of the act itself and the amount of warning time involved. This action plan provides options for school districts to use in sudden emergencies, as well as those with some lead time. It outlines preemptive measures that could be taken to prepare for terrorist attacks and offers recommendations for future action.

## Defense Against Various Types of Terrorist Attacks

According to FEMA, weapons of mass destruction likely to be employed by terrorists fall into four basic categories: chemical, biological, nuclear, and conventional. Each of the following sections addresses what can be done to protect students and employees should such attacks occur while school is in session.

### Chemical Agents

Defense against chemical agents is generally limited for civilian populations. The non-military use of gas masks is impractical because such devices are not easy to use effectively and require training and regular practice. When time is short, the best immediate defense against a chemical attack would be to quickly call all children and adults into buildings and attempt to limit air from being drawn inside. This is accomplished, albeit imperfectly, by shutting off all heating/ventilation/air conditioning (HVAC) systems and closing all windows and doors.

While buildings do offer filtration against such elements, the possibility of some portion of those inside becoming ill remains a definite reality. Basements should not be used when seeking protection against chemical agents because they may cause vapors to become trapped. Spaces at ground level are preferable.

The question of whether or not to allow parents to pick up their children during a chemical attack is a difficult one. Opening and closing doors would allow for penetration of airborne substances. The consulting services of a physician will be maintained to assist decision making in such a situation.

Evacuation of the campuses after a chemical attack is another possibility. Such a move would require a central administrative decision (see *Decision Making and Communication in Event of Attack*, page 20) and reliable information on the point of release. It would also require a high degree of confidence that no more attacks were imminent.

Such decisions would certainly have to be made quickly, taking into account the wind speed and direction. If, for example, it were known that a chemical agent was released three miles away and the winds were moving in the direction of the school at three miles per hour, we would have one hour to successfully escape. This would have to be accomplished on foot, moving as rapidly as possible in a direction away from the source of release.

### Biological Weapons

Defense against biological attacks (e.g., anthrax, smallpox) is difficult. Awareness that such attacks have been launched is usually not possible for days or weeks. The first signs may emerge as primary care doctors and emergency room personnel notice a higher than usual incidence of various types of symptoms. Should such an attack be discovered while it is still in progress, schools should immediately shut down all HVAC systems.

Buildings should be secured by having windows and doors closed as quickly as possible. In this case, immediate evacuation offers little or no advantage. Once pathogens have been released, their invisible damage is already occurring. It would be most logical to stay inside campus buildings and allow parents to pick up their children at their own discretion. Guidance from a previously identified physician or pediatrician would also be essential.

After a biological attack has occurred, school would have to be suspended until health service officials give clearance. Some biological agents such as smallpox are highly contagious. Anthrax cannot be spread from person to person. Its danger is from inhalation of airborne spores. Decisions should be based on information from community emergency management personnel about the particular agent released. A previously identified medical consultant should be relied upon for advice.

## **Nuclear Weapons**

Defense against nuclear weapons is extremely limited. Survival depends on the distance from the point of detonation. If such a device were to explode within a four- to five-mile radius of the campus, protection is not possible. Even at a greater distance, radiation exposure poses a threat. If time permits and if “earthquake valves” have been installed, move the campus population to specifically identified basement or lower level rooms. If this is not possible, the interior hallways of buildings are the best option.

Ensure that classroom doors opening into hallways are closed to minimize the danger of flying glass. Everyone should kneel in the classic “duck and cover” position to limit the amount of body area exposed to flying debris. All building systems should be shut down to avoid gas explosion. Flooding from water line breaks poses a less significant threat. If the attack has occurred far enough away so that only fallout is the threat, students should be kept indoors and parents allowed to pick them up at their discretion.

## **Conventional Weapons**

The danger from the blast effect of conventional weapons such as bombs and other forms of explosives presents similar challenges, although with a higher rate of survival. The same procedures outlined for nuclear weapons should be followed.

Seek shelter in predetermined basement rooms or in hallways. If the school is the target, off-campus evacuation should be conducted. Arrangements should be made with community institutions, such as churches and community centers. School athletic playing fields might also be appropriate evacuation points under certain circumstances. Again, allow parents to pick up their children from school as their judgment dictates.

## **Decision Making and Communication in Event of an Attack**

The first step in prudent decisions during an emergency is securing reliable information. Be able to separate rumor from reality. Contacts with your community’s police and fire departments should be regularly maintained to ensure school officials are included in the communication loop when determining the precise nature of the crisis. These same people will be useful to summon help to the campus in the event of a localized attack.

Once the nature of a threat has been determined and all outside sources have been consulted, an appropriate course of action will be determined according to response plans identified and trained through the Emergency Management Guide Planning Process.

At this point, the administrator will instruct all personnel about the course of action. PA systems may be the best method to relay these directions. All school personnel will then move to a place of safety according to their training in the school's emergency management process.

### **Evacuating, Securing and Seeking Shelter in Specific Campus Structures**

Evacuation during a chemical, biological, or nuclear threat is frequently ill advised. If the release of such agents is at a distance, wind speed can increase and move substances rapidly in the direction of the evacuees. Exposure is always possible for people walking out in the open. Further, moving hundreds of people in an orderly fashion on foot must be considered, as should the possibility of subsequent attacks while an evacuation is in progress. Then the problem of where to go adds another challenge.

Before any evacuation can be contemplated, the school should have previously identified several institutions (with large basements and interior rooms) in disparate sections of the area within walking distance. Communicating location to parents is another challenge, because you will not know which site you will evacuate until the nature of the crisis is determined. During your planning, target multiple locations and a communication liaison to address all evacuation sites in the event of an emergency.

In summary, the principal means of securing campus buildings is to immediately close all doors and windows. Shut off HVAC systems and window units. Assign personnel to supervise these closings and to assist people moving to prescribed locations. If an evacuation is ordered, its achievement should be outlined in the emergency management planning process.

Bioterrorism facts are available from the CDC Public Response Service at (888) 246-2675. For Spanish call (888) 246-2857.

Courtesy of Ellis Turner, Sidwell Friends Schools, Washington, D.C., and Kentucky Center for School Safety, Eastern Kentucky University, Richmond, Kentucky

# Sample Response Procedure: Chemical and Biological Agents

1. NEVER open any letter or package until you have inspected it thoroughly. Be aware of the following possible warning signs:
  - No return address
  - Out-of-state postmarks
  - Letters containing loose-feeling, “powdery” substances
2. If a suspicious or threatening letter is received, stay in the area with the letter. It should be placed in a sealed plastic bag, hazardous materials bag, or trash can liner.
3. Contact your supervisor, who will call the fire department and describe the exact nature of the situation.
4. Anyone in the immediate vicinity of the letter must remain in that area. Steps should be taken to admit no additional people to the area. The building will be secured and doors locked.
5. Seal off the area. Depending on the advice of the fire department, occupants in the building may be evacuated and/or quarantined.
6. The custodial/maintenance staff will shut off the HVAC system.
7. The building supervisor or principal should contact the central office.

# Pandemic Flu Information

To assist schools in their crisis planning, management and recovery, the Office of the President of the United States and the Office of Homeland Security issued a 2006 report to include planning for a pandemic flu in each school's crisis plans. This report can be found at: <http://www.whitehouse.gov/homeland/pandemic-influenza-implementation.html>

More information can be found at the following sites:

[www.pandemicflu.gov](http://www.pandemicflu.gov)

[www.ready.gov](http://www.ready.gov)

Federal government information sites for disaster planning

[www.cdc.gov/flu/protect/preventing.htm](http://www.cdc.gov/flu/protect/preventing.htm)

The Center for Disease Control and Prevention offers an information page on the flu.

[www.cdc.gov/ncidod/dhqp/pdf/Infdis/RespiratoryPoster.pdf](http://www.cdc.gov/ncidod/dhqp/pdf/Infdis/RespiratoryPoster.pdf)

The Center for Disease Control provides a poster to help parents identify the flu.

[www.cdc.gov/germstopper/materials.htm](http://www.cdc.gov/germstopper/materials.htm)

The CDC Web site has suggestions on how schools can reduce the spread of germs.

[www.ed.gov/admins/lead/safety/emergencyplan/crisisplanning.pdf](http://www.ed.gov/admins/lead/safety/emergencyplan/crisisplanning.pdf)

This document provides some ideas on how to put together an effective working group for pandemic planning in schools.

[http://www.ed.gov/adminis/lead/safety/training/partnerships/promote\\_pg8.html#select](http://www.ed.gov/adminis/lead/safety/training/partnerships/promote_pg8.html#select)

This document from the USDE highlights strategies for creating a planning team and tips for keeping the team running efficiently.

[www.fema.gov](http://www.fema.gov)

The Federal Emergency Management Agency provides a free manual for families and communities for disaster preparedness entitled, "Are You Ready?"

[www.healthinschools.org/sh/avianflu.asp](http://www.healthinschools.org/sh/avianflu.asp)

The Center for Health and Health Care in Schools offers a fact sheet on Avian flu.

[www.healthinschools.org/sh/influenza.asp](http://www.healthinschools.org/sh/influenza.asp)

Information is available on the flu from The Center for Health/Health Care in Schools.

# Pandemic Flu.Gov - Checklist for Schools

One-stop access to U.S. Government avian and pandemic flu information. Managed by the Department of Health and Human Services.

## 1. Planning and Coordination:

Tasks	Not Started	In Progress	Completed
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Identify the authority responsible for declaring a public health emergency at the state and local levels and for officially activating the district's pandemic influenza response plan.</li> </ul>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Identify for all stakeholders the legal authorities responsible for executing the community operational plan, especially those authorities responsible for case identification, isolation, quarantine, movement restriction, healthcare services, emergency care, and mutual aid.</li> </ul>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>As part of the district's crisis management plan, address pandemic influenza preparedness, involving all relevant stakeholders in the district (e.g., lead emergency response agency, district administrators, local public health representatives, school health and mental health professionals, teachers, food services director, and parent representatives). This committee is accountable for articulating strategic priorities and overseeing the development of the district's operational pandemic plan.</li> </ul>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Work with local and/or state health departments and other community partners to establish organizational structures, such as the Incident Command System, to manage the execution of the district's pandemic flu plan. An Incident Command System, or ICS, is a standardized organization structure that establishes a line of authority and common terminology and procedures to be followed in response to an incident. Ensure compatibility between the districts established ICS and the local/state health departments and state education department's ICS.</li> </ul>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Delineate accountability and responsibility as well as resources for key stakeholders engaged in planning and executing specific components of the operational plan. Assure that the plan includes timelines, deliverables, and performance measures.</li> </ul>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Work with your local and/or state health department and state education agencies to coordinate with their pandemic plans. Assure that pandemic planning is coordinated with the community's pandemic plan as well as the state department of education's plan.</li> </ul>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>

<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Test the linkages between the district's Incident Command System and the local/state health department's and state education department's Incident Command System.</li> </ul>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Contribute to the local health department's operational plan for surge capacity of healthcare and other services to meet the needs of the community (e.g., schools designated as contingency hospitals, schools feeding vulnerable populations, community utilizing LEA's healthcare and mental health staff). In an affected community, at least two pandemic disease waves (about 6-8 weeks each) are likely over several months.</li> </ul>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Incorporate into the pandemic influenza plan the requirements of students with special needs (e.g., low income students who rely on the school food service for daily meals), those in special facilities (e.g., juvenile justice facilities) as well as those who do not speak English as their first language.</li> </ul>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Participate in exercises of the community's pandemic plan.</li> </ul>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Work with the local health department to address provision of psychosocial support services for the staff, students and their families during and after a pandemic.</li> </ul>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Consider developing in concert with the local health department a surveillance system that would alert the local health department to a substantial increase in absenteeism among students.</li> </ul>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Implement an exercise/drill to test your pandemic plan and revise it periodically</li> </ul>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Share what you have learned from developing your preparedness and response plan with other LEAs as well as private schools within the community to improve community response efforts.</li> </ul>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>

**2. Continuity of Student Learning and Core Operations:**

Tasks	Not Started	In Progress	Completed
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Develop scenarios describing the potential impact of a pandemic on student learning (e.g., student and staff absences), school closings, and extracurricular activities based on having various levels of illness among students and staff.</li> </ul>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Develop alternative procedures to assure continuity of instruction (e.g., web-based distance instruction, telephone trees, mailed lessons and assignments, instruction via local radio or television stations) in the event of district school closures.</li> </ul>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>

- Develop a continuity of operations plan for essential central office functions including payroll and ongoing communication with students and parents.

<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
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**3. Infection Control Policies and Procedures:**

Tasks	Not Started	In Progress	Completed
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Work with the local health department to implement effective infection prevention policies and procedures that help limit the spread of influenza at schools in the district (e.g. promotion of hand hygiene, cough/sneeze etiquette). Make good hygiene a habit now in order to help protect children from many infectious diseases such as flu.</li> </ul>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Provide sufficient and accessible infection prevention supplies (e.g., soap, alcohol-based/waterless hand hygiene products, tissues and receptacles for their disposal).</li> </ul>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Establish policies and procedures for students and staff sick leave absences unique to a pandemic influenza (e.g., non-punitive, liberal leave).</li> </ul>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Establish sick leave policies for staff and students suspected to be ill or who become ill at school. Staff and students with known or suspected pandemic influenza should not remain at school and should return only after their symptoms resolve and they are physically ready to return to school.</li> </ul>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Establish policies for transporting ill students.</li> </ul>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Assure that the LEA pandemic plan for school-based health facilities conforms to those recommended for health care settings (Refer to <a href="http://www.hhs.gov/pandemicflu/plan/sup4.html">www.hhs.gov/pandemicflu/plan/sup4.html</a>).</li> </ul>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>

**4. Communications Planning:**

Tasks	Not Started	In Progress	Completed
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Assess readiness to meet communication needs in preparation for an influenza pandemic, including regular review, testing, and updating of communication plans.</li> </ul>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Ensure language, culture and reading level appropriateness in communications by including community leaders representing different language and/or ethnic groups on the planning committee, asking for their participation both in document planning and the dissemination of public health messages within their communities.</li> </ul>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>

<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Develop and test platforms (e.g., hotlines, telephone trees, dedicated websites, and local radio or TV stations) for communicating pandemic status and actions to school district staff, students, and families.</li> </ul>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Develop and maintain up-to-date communications contacts of key public health and education stakeholders and use the network to provide regular updates as the influenza pandemic unfolds.</li> </ul>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Assure the provision of redundant communication systems/channels that allow for the expedited transmission and receipt of information.</li> </ul>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Advise district staff, students and families where to find up-to-date and reliable pandemic information from federal, state and local public health sources.</li> </ul>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Disseminate information about the LEA's pandemic influenza preparedness and response plan (e.g., continuity of instruction, community containment measures).</li> </ul>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Disseminate information from public health sources covering routine infection control (e.g., hand hygiene, cough/sneeze etiquette), pandemic influenza fundamentals (e.g., signs and symptoms of influenza, modes of transmission) as well as personal and family protection and response strategies (e.g., guidance for the at-home care of ill students and family members).</li> </ul>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Anticipate the potential fear and anxiety of staff, students, and families as a result of rumors and misinformation and plan communications accordingly.</li> </ul>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>

# Managing a Crisis

# Managing a Crisis

The school administrator or designee should implement the following procedures when the school has been made aware of a crisis situation.

First, tell the person providing information regarding a crisis situation to keep it confidential and not repeat it elsewhere in the school. Explain the school's need to verify the information and have any communication about the situation come from a designated person. If there is concern regarding the likelihood of compliance with this request, it may be useful to keep the reporting person in the office until appropriate steps can be taken.

Tell office staff members NOT to repeat or give out any information within or outside the school until specifically instructed to do so. Have them direct all inquiries to the communications designee until told otherwise. In schools where students help in the office, it may be helpful for only adults to answer the telephone during a crisis situation.

## Verify the crisis and level of crisis

1. Determine the facts surrounding the situation and verify a crisis exists. If the verified crisis involves a shooting, wounding, or attack, refer also to page 18. If the verified crisis involves serious damage to a school facility, refer to page 12, *Responding to a Building Disaster*.
2. Determine the level of crisis and response required:
  - a. **Minor Crisis and Response.** Only one or a few individuals will be affected. Life is not immediately in danger. The site team or members thereof can manage the situation.
  - b. **Major Crisis and Response.** A large number of students and staff will be affected. The psychological and emotional impact will be moderate to severe. Assistance will be needed from the district team and/or other schools in the district. Professionals may also be needed from outside the school district.

# Crisis Plan: Steps Implementation

1. Notify the following:
  - Superintendent (Superintendent will contact board members.)
  - School Site CMT
  - District CMT Leader or Coordinator (If a major crisis exists, District Team Coordinator will contact the District Team members.)
  - Faculty and staff — Assign staff to make appropriate contacts.
  - If a death or serious injury has occurred locate, gather, and inform family members and closest friends privately **prior** to general announcement.
2. Assemble the appropriate CMT to plan intervention activities, and review team member responsibilities and crisis management plan. It will be helpful to use an established code such as “CMT meeting in Room 100 in 10 minutes.”
  - a. Determine what information is to be shared (remember parental rights to confidentiality) with:
    - Students (*Sample Announcement for Classroom Visitation*, page 43)
    - Faculty and Staff
    - Parents and Community
    - Media (*Press Release Format*, page 44, should be completed by media liaison.)
  - b. Determine how the information is to be shared with specific individuals or groups:
    - Written bulletins and/or letters to faculty and/or parents
    - Phone calls
    - Classroom announcements/discussions led by the teachers
    - Classroom announcements/discussions led by crisis team members
    - Parent/Community meetings
3. Hold faculty meeting to review facts and discuss intervention plans (*Faculty/Staff Meeting Sample Agenda*, page 45). The attached tools should be distributed in the faculty meeting (*Classroom Management*, page 50; *Suggested Classroom Activities*, page 51; *Title IV Referral for Services*, page 52).
4. Make announcement. (If needed, Crisis Management Team members can visit assigned classrooms **prior** to any general announcement concerning the crisis.) Announcement should include locations of in-building support, for example, “counselors will be available in the school library for students and staff.” (*Sample Announcement for Classroom Visitation*, page 43.)

**Once the announcement has been made**, staff members should perform the following activities, when appropriate:

- a. Monitor grounds for students leaving the building without permission. Redirect them to support services. If unable to intercept, notify a family member and express the school's concern.
  - b. Notify parents of students closest to victim(s) and suggest they pick their child up after school.
  - c. Collect a deceased student's belongings from his/her locker and other sites.
  - d. Officially withdraw a deceased student from attendance rolls.
5. Provide opportunities for counseling and support services.
- a. Designate interview/counseling locations.
  - b. Establish a procedure for self-referral.
  - c. Make referral forms available (see page 52).
  - d. Identify at-risk students and staff (*Screening for High-Risk/At-Risk Individuals*, page 54).
  - e. Maintain a master list of referrals.
6. Debrief with faculty and Crisis Management Team at the end of the day.
- a. Review the intervention process and events of the day.
  - b. Review the status of the referred students and needed follow-up.
  - c. Prioritize needs.
  - d. Plan activities for the next day.
  - e. Provide mutual support.
  - f. Announce funeral arrangements and determine who will attend, if applicable.
7. Write a detailed summary report (*Crisis Management Report Suggested Guidelines*, page 55).
8. When appropriate, contact any victim's family at home (*Family Support Checklist*, page 56).



# Forms and Checklists

# Crisis Management District Team Members

	<b>Name</b>	<b>Work Phone</b>	<b>Home Phone</b>	<b>Pager/ Cellular</b>
Team Leader				
Team Leader Designee				
District Team Coordinator				
Media Liaison				
Counseling Coordinator				
Counselor				
Security/Police Liaison				
Fire Department Representative				
Teacher				
Teacher				
Office Staff				
Parent				
Parent				
Nurse/Medical Personnel				
Transportation Director				

# School Site Team

	<b>Name</b>	<b>Work Phone</b>	<b>Home Phone</b>	<b>Pager/ Cellular</b>
Team Leader/Principal				
Counselor				
Security Liason				
Teacher				
Nurse				
Other Staff Members				
Custodian				
Transportation Director				

# Duty Personnel Assignment Checklist

## Purpose

The Duty Personnel Assignment Checklist serves to identify areas of the school considered to be critical in monitoring school safety.

## Directions

Circle the answer that best represents the current status of duty personnel assignments at your school. Use this information as input into the school’s staff discussion of issues requiring implementation or improvement.

1. Duty personnel have been assigned in the following critical school areas:

a. Main entrance during all areas of operation.

Yes                      No

b. Cafeteria during all lunch periods.

Yes                      No

c. Bus pickup and drop-off points.

Yes                      No

	<b>Student Arrivals</b>		<b>Between Classes</b>		<b>Student Lunch</b>		<b>Departure</b>	
d. Stairways	Yes	No	Yes	No	Yes	No	Yes	No
e. Locker clusters	Yes	No	Yes	No	Yes	No	Yes	No
f. Restrooms	Yes	No	Yes	No	Yes	No	Yes	No
g. Courtyards/ Commons	Yes	No	Yes	No	Yes	No	Yes	No
h. Student Parking	Yes	No	Yes	No	Yes	No	Yes	No
i. Corridors	Yes	No	Yes	No	Yes	No	Yes	No

2. Monitoring duties are reviewed and/or reassigned every:

6 months      1 year      2 years      Other \_\_\_\_\_

3. Monitoring duties/expectations are reviewed with duty personnel every:

6 months      1 year      2 years      Other \_\_\_\_\_

4. Monitors are trained to deal with potential safety problems every:

6 months      1 year      2 years      Other \_\_\_\_\_

Courtesy of the National School Safety Center

# Emergency Preparedness Policy and Planning Checklist

## Purpose

The Emergency Preparedness Policy and Planning Checklist contains items critical to ensuring general safety and school safety during times of emergency.

## Directions

Check the line that best represents the current status of the school's emergency preparedness. Use this information as input into the school's discussion on prioritizing need for school improvement.

1. An emergency preparedness plan has been developed in cooperation with law enforcement and emergency agencies for the following emergencies:

	Yes	No	In Process
a. Fire	_____	_____	_____
b. Tornado	_____	_____	_____
c. Hurricane	_____	_____	_____
d. Bomb Threat/Explosion	_____	_____	_____
e. School Bus Accident	_____	_____	_____
f. Armed Individual	_____	_____	_____
g. Abduction	_____	_____	_____
h. Shooting on Campus	_____	_____	_____

2. Threats unique to the school (nuclear accident, hazardous chemical release, etc.) have been identified and emergency preparedness plans have been developed for each (please list):

	Yes	No	In Process
_____	_____	_____	_____
_____	_____	_____	_____
_____	_____	_____	_____

3. An emergency team has been organized to carry out emergency plans and, if necessary, coordinate postemergency activities with an external crisis intervention team.

	_____	_____	_____
--	-------	-------	-------

4. Substitutes have been designated for key members of the emergency team to ensure continued operation of emergency plans in the absence of any member of the team.

	_____	_____	_____
--	-------	-------	-------

Courtesy of the National School Safety Center

# Student Accident Report Form

Name \_\_\_\_\_ Address \_\_\_\_\_

Phone \_\_\_\_\_ School \_\_\_\_\_ Age \_\_\_\_\_ Grade \_\_\_\_\_

Accident occurred: Hour \_\_\_\_\_ Date \_\_\_\_\_

Place of accident: (✓) School building \_\_\_\_\_ School grounds \_\_\_\_\_ To or from school \_\_\_\_\_

Who was in charge when the accident occurred? \_\_\_\_\_

Immediate first aid action taken \_\_\_\_\_

Sent: (✓) Home \_\_\_\_\_ To physician (name) \_\_\_\_\_ To hospital \_\_\_\_\_

Who took this action? \_\_\_\_\_

Was the parent notified? Yes \_\_\_\_\_ No \_\_\_\_\_ By whom? \_\_\_\_\_

Nature of the injury: Part of body injured (BE SPECIFIC) \_\_\_\_\_

How did the accident happen? What was the student doing? \_\_\_\_\_

Number of days lost from school \_\_\_\_\_

Remarks and comments \_\_\_\_\_

Date of Report \_\_\_\_\_

Principal \_\_\_\_\_

**Note:** Use this form to report all accidents of students requiring medical attention or causing the absence of a pupil from school for one-half day or more.

**REMEMBER:** Report all accidents which happen to athletes either in practice sessions or at scheduled games.



# Crisis Management Kit Checklist

The following items are listed as basic for creating and maintaining a Crisis Management Kit for each site. This list includes specific items that may save time in implementing a school plan to manage emergencies. Additional items may be needed depending on individual needs of each school.

## Team

- \_\_\_\_\_ Crisis Management Site Team and Responsibilities list - who does what (pages 7 and 33).
- \_\_\_\_\_ Crisis Management District Team Members Form (page 32)
- \_\_\_\_\_ Faculty/staff roster with:
  - 1) Emergency home phone numbers
  - 2) First aid, CPR, and/or EMT training identified.
  - 3) Cell phone/pager numbers of staff.

## Map

- \_\_\_\_\_ School map, building layout, floor plans, or aerial maps with location of:
  - 1) Exits
  - 2) School phones or other telecommunications equipment
  - 3) First aid kits locations, closets, HVAC shutoff, and utilities shutoff
- \_\_\_\_\_ Current yearbook, class photos, student identification, or CD Rom photo databases
- \_\_\_\_\_ Map of evacuation route(s) to pre-assigned buildings and locations
- \_\_\_\_\_ Bus routes and rosters

## Phone Lists

### Community emergency numbers:

- \_\_\_\_\_ General emergency number
- \_\_\_\_\_ Ambulance
- \_\_\_\_\_ Poison Control Center
- \_\_\_\_\_ Local Hospital
- \_\_\_\_\_ Police Department/Sheriff/State Police/Highway Patrol
- \_\_\_\_\_ Fire Department
- \_\_\_\_\_ Local telephone directory and school directory
- \_\_\_\_\_ City/County Emergency Management Office
- \_\_\_\_\_ Student teachers, support staff home/cell phone numbers

### School Numbers:

- \_\_\_\_\_ Extension numbers for school security, school health nurse, guidance services and district office
- \_\_\_\_\_ Fax phone number(s) at school site and district offices

### Other Resource Numbers:

- \_\_\_\_\_ Home/business numbers of school volunteers, local clergy, and other resources previously identified
- \_\_\_\_\_ Student roster including phone numbers for parents and guardians
- \_\_\_\_\_ Master schedule

## Equipment

Crisis response equipment. Make a list and location of items such as:

- \_\_\_\_\_ Two-way radios or cell phones
- \_\_\_\_\_ Laptop computers
- \_\_\_\_\_ Fully charged bullhorn
- \_\_\_\_\_ Flashlights
- \_\_\_\_\_ Whistles
- \_\_\_\_\_ Hand radios

## Tools

- \_\_\_\_\_ Hammer, crowbar, pliers, screwdrivers
- \_\_\_\_\_ If possible, laptop computer, printer and access to a copier for immediate use
- \_\_\_\_\_ Spare flashlight batteries and bulbs

## Supplies

- \_\_\_\_\_ Sign-in sheets for Crisis Response Team Members
- \_\_\_\_\_ 10 legal pads or notebooks
- \_\_\_\_\_ 10 ballpoint pens
- \_\_\_\_\_ 10 felt-tip markers
- \_\_\_\_\_ 1,000 plain white peel-off stickers to be used to identify injured students and adults
- \_\_\_\_\_ First aid supplies
- \_\_\_\_\_ Masking tape
- \_\_\_\_\_ Blankets
- \_\_\_\_\_ Caution tape or police boundary tape
- \_\_\_\_\_ Bottled water
- \_\_\_\_\_ Placards labeled: PARENTS, COUNSELORS, MEDIA, CLERGY, VOLUNTEERS,  
KEEP OUT

Adapted from the Virginia Department of Education Resource Guide for Crisis Management in School

# Crisis Management Team Meeting

## As Soon As Possible Following a Crisis

- Review the facts of the crisis and discuss any rumors. Appoint someone to gather additional facts from the hospital, police, newspapers, Office of Emergency Management, or American Red Cross.
- Determine if any additional resources or outside assistance will be needed.
- Determine if a parent/community meeting is needed. A meeting with parents should be considered in the following circumstances:
  - When a tragedy occurs on school grounds
  - When the school could be held legally liable
  - When there is anxiety about the future health and safety of students
  - When a large number of students are traumatized to the extent that parents are concerned
- Review and assign responsibilities to each crisis management team member:
  - Designate rooms for group counseling and support.
  - Assign personnel to provide counseling, manage referrals, and conduct classroom visitation.
  - Designate crisis team members to visit the victim's classes as scheduled.
- Designate a command center. This location should be used for:
  - Meetings, media requests, receiving and sending messages.
  - Sign-in for outside personnel and issue of identification badges.
  - Identification of phone lines to be used for emergency communication only.
  - Identification of doors and hallways to be monitored.
  - Personnel assigned to monitor doors and hallways.

- Provide the crisis management team with available information and needed supplies:
  - Written statement of the facts and copies of newspaper article
  - Names of victims and their grade level; names and grade level of brothers or sisters attending school; prognosis for those injured
  - Referral forms; door sign-in sheet; tissues
  - Schedule for classroom visitations (include room numbers, name of teacher, time of visit)
- Provide team member list and map of school.
- Discuss procedures for contacting parents to pick up a student(s) and the location of reunion site.
- Discuss any changes needed in the regular school day schedule.
- Set a time for a short meeting to be held at the end of the school day for faculty and staff.
- Additional issues to be considered and discussed:

a. \_\_\_\_\_  
\_\_\_\_\_  
\_\_\_\_\_

b. \_\_\_\_\_  
\_\_\_\_\_  
\_\_\_\_\_

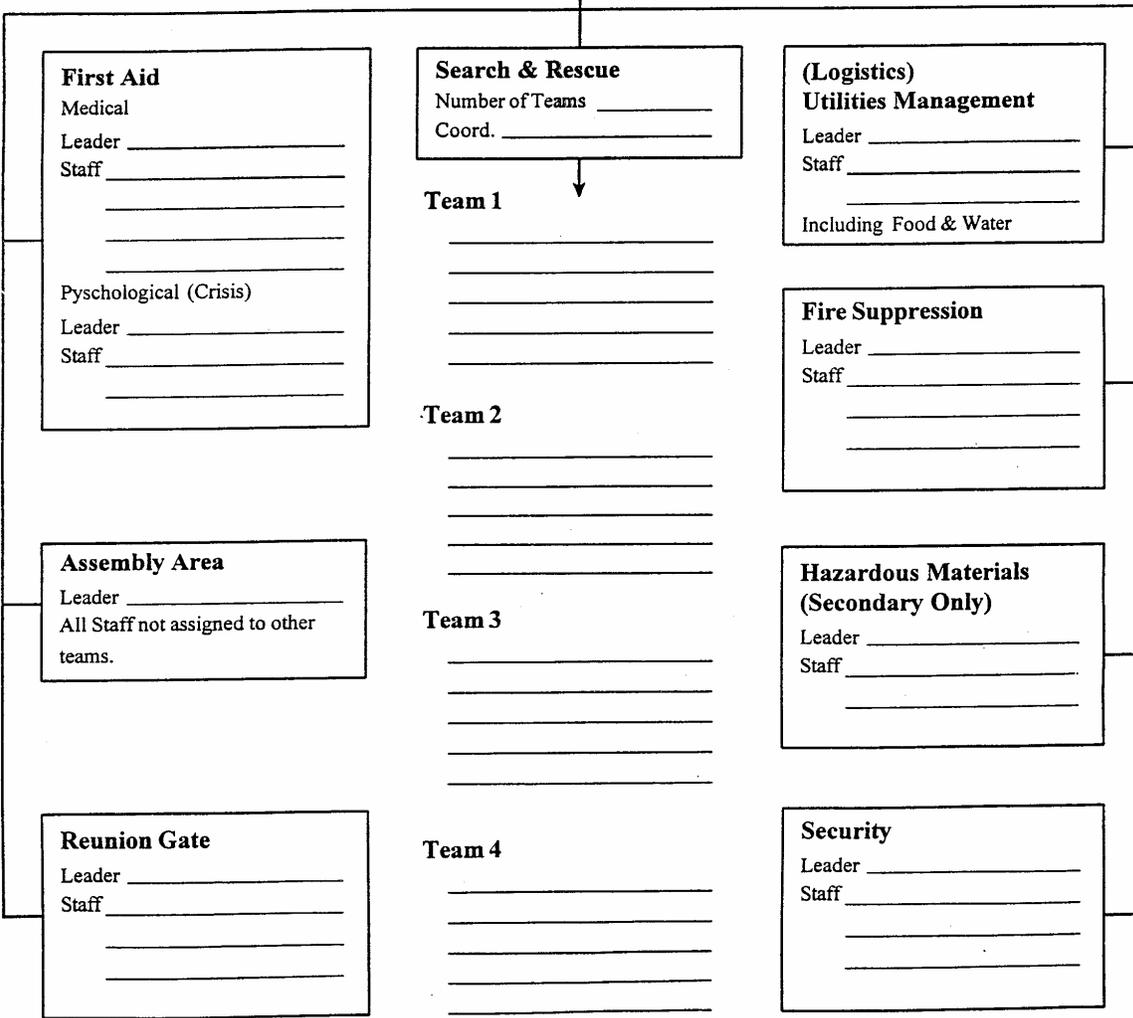
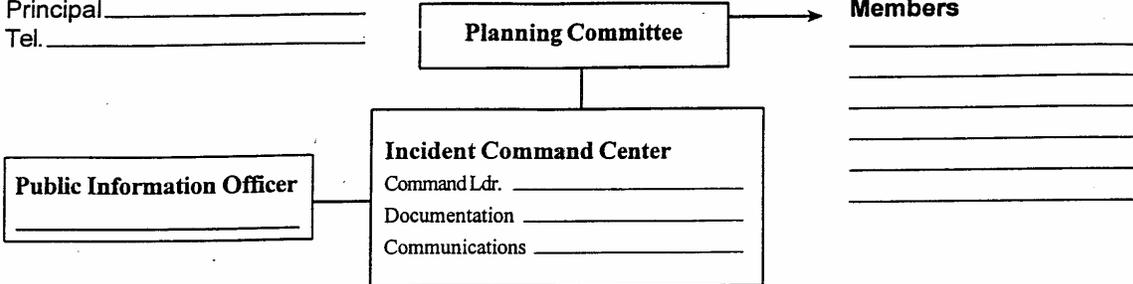
c. \_\_\_\_\_  
\_\_\_\_\_  
\_\_\_\_\_

d. \_\_\_\_\_  
\_\_\_\_\_  
\_\_\_\_\_

# School Emergency Operations Plan

School \_\_\_\_\_  
 Cluster \_\_\_\_\_  
 Principal \_\_\_\_\_  
 Tel. \_\_\_\_\_

Date \_\_\_\_\_



Source: Federal Emergency Management Agency

# Sample Announcement For Classroom Visitation

*(May be used by Crisis Counseling Teams during accidental death.)*

Students, I have the difficult task of talking to you today about yesterday's tragic accident. We are all deeply affected by this tragedy. We were not able to share any information with you before the end of school yesterday because all of the families of the students had not been notified.

At this time, let us join together in a moment of silence to remember the students/staff who died in yesterday's accident names \_\_\_\_\_, \_\_\_\_\_, \_\_\_\_\_ and those students/staff who were injured \_\_\_\_\_, \_\_\_\_\_, \_\_\_\_\_. (PAUSE).

You may have heard some rumors about the accident from others, but remember that all the facts are not yet known. As soon as the facts are known we will let you know.

We are asking you to pull together as a family, to respect each other's feelings, and to ask for help if needed. Your teachers will give you a chance to talk together in class, and counselors from our school and district are here to assist us today. We will keep you informed of the facts and we will let you know how the injured students are progressing as soon as the information becomes available to us.

# Press Release Format

Name of school district \_\_\_\_\_ County \_\_\_\_\_

Name of media liaison \_\_\_\_\_

At \_\_\_\_\_ on \_\_\_\_\_  
(time) (date)

Describe what happened

---

---

---

---

At this time we have: (a) No confirmation of the injuries or damage; or  
(b) Confirmed the following injuries or damage.

The prognosis for those involved is (good, fair, critical) \_\_\_\_\_

The school district is responding in the following ways: \_\_\_\_\_

---

---

Local community agencies (resources) are responding in the following ways: \_\_\_\_\_

---

---

We will keep you updated as we learn further information.

We ask the general public to avoid travel in this area unless it is necessary (if applicable).

If parents of children in the school need to contact us, please call

\_\_\_\_\_ (\_\_\_\_\_) \_\_\_\_\_  
Persons Name Telephone Number

# Faculty/Staff Meeting

## *Sample Agenda and Checklists*

- Explain the necessity of communicating the facts as they are known to dispel rumors.
- If classroom teachers will announce and/or discuss the tragedy in the classroom, provide a written statement of the facts, and a copy of a newspaper article if available.
- Provide suggestions for classroom activities such as art, writing letters, making get well cards, raising money, and making bows from ribbon.
- Review procedures for referring students or staff members for counseling. Provide each teacher with hall passes and copies of a form such as *Referral for Services* (page 52).
- Provide other appropriate materials such as *Classroom Management Handout for Teachers* (pages 50 and 51).
- Stress the importance of being sensitive to the needs of the students. Allow students time to discuss their feelings and to express grief.
- Assign substitutes for teachers who are part of the crisis management team.
- If the death is a result of suicide, homicide, or traumatic accident death, be aware of potentially suicidal students. Identify the victim's closest friends and provide support. Identify students or staff who may be at risk.
- Ensure that school staff assigned to answer the telephone know the facts concerning the crisis. When necessary, refer calls to a media spokesperson.
- Acknowledge the shock and grief felt by the school staff. The crisis management team is available to assist them in the classroom as needed.
- Review media procedures and identify the media spokesperson.
- Discuss any changes that may be required in the schedule for the school day.
- Set a time to meet at the end of the school day to review crisis intervention activities.
- Following a student's death, be sure no one calls home reporting the student absent, or mails letters or reports to the student's home. Retrieve personal items from the student's desk, locker, etc., and keep these in the office. Return these items to the student's parents at an appropriate time.
- If the family of the deceased approves, release information about funeral arrangements for faculty or students to attend. Determine criteria for students to be checked out of school to attend services.

# Helping Children Cope With Acts of Terrorism

Recent tragic acts of terrorism are unprecedented in the American experience. Children, like many people, may be confused or frightened by the news and will look to adults for information and guidance on how to react. Parents and school personnel can help children cope by establishing a sense of safety and security. Adults can continue to help children work through their emotions and perhaps even use the process as a learning experience.

## All adults should:

- **Model calm and control.** Children take their emotional cues from the significant adults in their lives. Avoid appearing anxious or frightened.
- **Limit children's viewing of television and media reports.**
- **Reassure children they are safe** and so are the other important adults in their lives. Explain that buildings were targeted for their symbolism and that schools, neighborhoods, and regular office buildings are not at risk.
- **Remind them that trustworthy people are in charge.** Explain that government emergency workers, police, firemen, doctors, and even the military are helping people who are hurt and are working to ensure no further tragedies occur.
- **Let children know that it is okay to feel upset.** Explain that all feelings are okay when a tragedy like this occurs. Let children talk about their feelings and help put them into perspective. Even anger is okay, but children may need help and patience from adults to assist them in expressing these feelings appropriately.
- **Observe children's emotional state.** Depending on their age, children may not express their concerns verbally. Changes in behavior, appetite, and sleep patterns can also indicate a child's level of grief, anxiety, or discomfort. Children will express their emotions differently. There is no right or wrong way to feel or to express grief.
- **Tell children the truth.** Do not try to pretend the event has not occurred or that it is not serious. Children are smart. They will be more worried if they think you are too afraid to tell them what is happening.
- **Stick to the facts.** Do not embellish or speculate about what has happened and what might happen. Do not dwell on the scale and scope of the tragedy, particularly with young children.
- **Keep your expectations developmentally appropriate.** Early elementary school children need brief, simple information that should be balanced with reassurances that the daily structures of their lives will not change. Upper elementary and early middle school children will be more vocal in asking questions about whether they are truly safe and what is being done at their school. They may need assistance separating reality from fantasy. Upper middle school and high school students will have strong and varying opinions about the causes of violence in schools and society. They will share concrete suggestions about how to make school safer and how to prevent tragedies in society. They will be more committed to doing something to help victims and affected communities. For all children, encourage them to verbalize their thoughts and feelings. Be a good listener!

## What Parents Can Do to Help Children Cope

- **Focus on your children over the next day or so. Tell them you love them and everything will be okay. Try to help them understand what has happened, keeping in mind their developmental level.**
- **Make time to talk with your children.** Remember if you do not talk to your children about this incident someone else will. Take some time and determine what you wish to say.
- **Stay close to your children.** Your physical presence will reassure them and give you the opportunity to monitor their reactions. Many children will want some actual physical contact. Give plenty of hugs. Let them sit close to you. Make sure to take extra time at bedtime to cuddle and to reassure them that they are loved and safe.
- **Limit the amount of time your child views events on television.** If they must watch, join them for a brief time, then turn off the television. Don't sit mesmerized watching the same events play out over and over. Remember, news alerts and reports will also be online, if your children are using the computer.
- **Maintain a normal routine.** To the extent possible stick to your family's normal routine—but don't be inflexible. Children may have a hard time concentrating on homework or falling asleep at night.
- **Spend extra time reading or playing quiet games with your children before bed.** These activities are calming, foster a sense of closeness and security, and reinforce a sense of normalcy. Spend more time tucking them in. Let them sleep with the light on if they ask.
- **Safeguard your children's physical health.** Stress can take a physical toll on children as well as adults. Make sure your children get appropriate sleep, exercise, and nutrition.
- **Consider praying or thinking helpful thoughts for the victims and their families.** It may be a good time to take your children to church or synagogue, write a poem, or draw a picture to help your child express feelings and think they are somehow supporting the victims and their families.
- **Find out what resources your school has in place to help children cope.** Most schools are likely to be open and often are a good place for children to regain a sense of normalcy. Being with their friends and teachers can help. Schools should also have a plan for making counseling available to children and adults who need it.

Reference:

<[www.nasponline.org](http://www.nasponline.org)>

## What Schools Can Do to Help Children Cope

- **Assure children that they are safe** and that schools are well prepared to take care of all children at all times.
- **Maintain structure and stability within the schools.** It would be best, however, not to have tests or major projects within the next few days.
- **Have a plan for the first few days back at school.** Include school psychologists, counselors, and crisis team members in planning the school's response.
- **Provide teachers and parents with information** about what to say and do for children in school and at home.
- **Have teachers provide information directly to their students, *not*** during the public address announcements.
- **Have school psychologists and counselors available** to talk to students and staff who may need extra support.
- **Be aware of students who may have recently experienced a personal tragedy** or have a personal connection to victims or their families. *Even a child who has been to the Pentagon or the former World Trade Center will feel a personal loss.* Provide these students extra support and leniency if necessary.
- **Know what community resources are available** for children who may need extra counseling. School **psychologists** can be very helpful in directing families to the right community resources.
- **Allow time for age appropriate classroom discussion and activities.** Do not expect teachers to provide all of the answers. They should ask questions and guide the discussions, but not dominate it. Other activities can include art and writing projects, play acting, and physical games.
- **Be careful not to stereotype people or countries that might be connected to the terrorists.** Children can easily generalize negative statements that develop prejudice.
- **Refer children who exhibit extreme anxiety, fear, or anger to mental health counselors** in school. Inform their parents.
- **Provide an outlet for students' desire to help.** Consider making get well cards or sending letters to the families and survivors of the tragedy, or writing thank-you letters to doctors, nurses, and other health care professionals as well as emergency rescue workers, firefighters, and police.
- **Monitor or restrict viewing** of the horrendous event as well as the aftermath.
- **If applicable, print these letters, coping suggestions, and resources in Spanish and other languages.**

Reference:  
[www.nasponline.org](http://www.nasponline.org)

For information on helping children and youth with a crisis such as terrorism, contact the National Association of School Psychologists (NASP) at 4340 East West Highway, Suite 402; Bethesda, MD 20814; phone: (301) 657-0270 or visit NASP's Web site at <[www.nasponline.org](http://www.nasponline.org)>. NASP represents 22,000 school psychologists and related professionals throughout the United States and abroad. NASP's mission is to promote educationally and psychologically healthy environments for all children and youth by implementing research-based, effective programs that prevent problems, enhance independence, and promote optimal learning. This is accomplished through state-of-the-art research and training, advocacy, ongoing program evaluation, and caring professional service.

## **Additional Resources**

American Red Cross (Central Oklahoma Chapter), (405) 228-9500

CDC Public Response Service, (888) 246-2675. For Spanish, (888) 246-2857.

Oklahoma Office of Emergency Management, (405) 521-2481

Reference:  
[www.nasponline.org](http://www.nasponline.org)

# Classroom Management

## Handout for Teachers

1. A significant change has taken place. There will be aspects of teacher and student life that may never be the same. Time to adjust and adapt to this reality will be needed. In fact, the worst thing to do is to ignore the crisis and act as if nothing happened.
2. Provide the facts to students at their level of understanding. Allow students time to deal with the situation. They may need time to tell and retell the details of the crisis in an effort to understand what has happened. (In the case of suicide, avoid giving out excess details in order to prevent glorifying the tragedy.)
3. Let students know it is all right for them to express their feelings. Share your feelings with them. If needed, seek assistance from the crisis management team.
4. The curriculum and the day may need to be modified. Avoid presentation of new materials. If work is given at all, it should be review of previously taught material.
5. Integrate activities into the curriculum which are designed to help students process and deal with the crisis situation. For example, students could write letters to the injured students or write about how to avoid a future crisis. Students may prefer to write stories or draw to express themselves through art. Class projects might include making bows from ribbon to tie in various locations to show support for an injured student or staff member. (See *Suggested Classroom Activities*, page 51.)
6. Recognize the importance of taking action. Teachers need to help students deal with the situation as a challenge rather than a threat. They also need to teach and assist with problem-solving skills. Taking action and gaining control is important to the successful resolution of a crisis.
7. Recognize signs of distress and make referrals when necessary. When symptoms of distress become severe and/or persist beyond a reasonable length of time, the teacher should refer the student to the principal, counselor, or crisis management team. (See *Referral For Services*, page 52.)

# Suggested Classroom Activities Following a Tragedy

- Discuss ways to cope with a tragedy.
- Begin or strengthen a school activity or organization such as SADD (Students Against Destructive Decisions).
- Write a letter to the rescue team.
- Discuss ways to provide mutual support.
- Read a book in class about a similar incident.
- Draw a picture of someone you saw doing something helpful.
- Tie bows from ribbon and give to others to wear.
- Plant a tree as a living memorial.
- Make get well cards.
- Draw a mural on butcher paper as a class project, such as a giant sympathy card or an expression of feelings and hope.
- Collect money or items needed by the victims and survivors.
- Write a letter of support to someone who was involved.
- Make a class book from pictures and stories.
- Discuss the sense of loss.
- Tell a story using puppets.
- Volunteer time to organizations collecting/distributing food or other items.
- Discuss ways students have helped others during similar incidents.
- Determine actions needed to prevent another tragedy.

# Title IV

## Referral for Services

Name of Student \_\_\_\_\_ Grade \_\_\_\_\_ Date \_\_\_\_\_

Referring faculty member's name \_\_\_\_\_

Please check one:

- I give my permission to show this form to the student.
- The student may know that I made this referral but cannot see the form or know its content.
- I wish to remain anonymous as the person referring.

Please describe in as much detail as you can the behaviors that concern you:

\_\_\_\_\_

\_\_\_\_\_

What is your relationship to the student?

\_\_\_\_\_

Have you made this student aware of your concerns?

\_\_\_\_\_

Additional comments (anything that would be helpful).

\_\_\_\_\_

\_\_\_\_\_

Please check the characteristics appropriate to this student. Use the reverse side for any additional information or concerns:

### GRADES:

- Achieving below potential
- Failing class
- Attitude affecting work
- Always behind in class
- Overreacts to less-than-perfect grade

### BEHAVIOR/SYMPTOMS:

- Defiant/requires disciplinary attention
- Irresponsible/loses everything
- Hyperactive/nervous
- Cries in class
- Argumentative/defensive
- Frequently teased or "made object of fun"
- Wears drug-related clothing/jewelry
- Withdrawn/loner

### ATTENDANCE:

- Frequently absent
- Frequently suspended
- Frequently tardy
- Frequently asks to see the nurse
- Cuts classes and/or has been truant from school
- Personality/emotional changes
- Sleeps in class
- Lethargic/blank stares
- Frequently asks to leave room
- Police/court involvement
- Frequently exchanges money w/others
- Poor hygiene/signs of neglect
- Sudden change in weight/appearance

- Change in friends
- Frequently/easily upset
- Older social group
- Makes inappropriate comments/jokes
- Denies problems despite evidence/lies

- Smells of alcohol and/or other drugs
- Bloodshot eyes/wears sunglasses indoors
- Inappropriately displays affection

**SPECIFIC CONCERNS:**

- |  |   |
|--|---|
| <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li><input type="checkbox"/> Talks about home problems</li> <li><input type="checkbox"/> Student or student's girlfriend is pregnant</li> <li><input type="checkbox"/> Has run away</li> <li><input type="checkbox"/> Talks freely about alcohol and/or other drug use</li> <li><input type="checkbox"/> Student talks about hurting him/herself*</li> <li><input type="checkbox"/> Student talks about hurting others*</li> <li><input type="checkbox"/> Friend or relative has died</li> <li><input type="checkbox"/> Student has been raped*</li> <li><input type="checkbox"/> Student has been abused*</li> <li><input type="checkbox"/> Alcohol or other drug problem in the family</li> </ul> | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li><input type="checkbox"/> Student has difficulty making friends</li> <li><input type="checkbox"/> Student lives with someone who is chronically/terminally ill</li> <li><input type="checkbox"/> Student is a teen parent</li> <li><input type="checkbox"/> Other students talk about this student's abuse of alcohol and other drugs</li> <li><input type="checkbox"/> Student talks constantly of parties</li> <li><input type="checkbox"/> Contacted by concerned person about student: _____</li> <li><input type="checkbox"/> Current/past hospitalization for drug or emotional problems</li> </ul> |
|--|---|

\*All cases of child abuse must be reported to the Department of Human Services (DHS). Cases involving suicide, threat of harm to others, or sexual assault must be reported to the parent and in some cases DHS or the police.

If a faculty member suspects that a student is impaired in school, this needs to be reported to an administrator.

PLEASE RETURN THIS FORM TO THE TITLE IV OFFICE.

This sheet will not be placed in the student's office folder.

# Screening For High-Risk/ At-Risk Individuals

Name of person completing form: \_\_\_\_\_ Date: \_\_\_\_\_

A. High-Risk: Individuals who were directly involved or exposed to the crisis event.

<b>Individual's Name(s)</b>	<b>Classroom(s)</b>
_____	_____
_____	_____
_____	_____
_____	_____

B. At-Risk: Individuals who are emotionally close or familiar with the victim(s); have experienced a recent trauma or loss; or currently involved in an individual or family crisis.

<b>Individual's Name(s)</b>	<b>Classroom(s)</b>
_____	_____
_____	_____
_____	_____
_____	_____

# Crisis Management Report

## *Suggested Guidelines*

TO: (Superintendent)  
FROM: (Name and title of the person reporting)  
DATE: (Date of the report)  
SUBJECT: (Crisis Intervention Report)

1. Write a short summary of the crisis event. Include the following:
  - Pertinent facts and events leading to the crisis.
  - Involvement of law enforcement, hospital, and other agencies, if applicable.
  - Prognosis of those injured; names of the deceased; and when/if family members were notified.
2. Describe the interventions taken by the school and the crisis management team. Provide details such as the following:
  - Implementation of the crisis intervention plan.
  - Communication of the facts and the control of rumors.
  - Procedures followed to identify at-risk students.
  - Counseling and support services provided to individuals and to group.
  - Classroom announcements, discussions, and activities.
  - Handouts provided to teachers, parents, students, and/or media.
  - Contacts with the media.
  - Meetings held for debriefing, planning, and follow-up.
3. List recommendations for the follow-up and who will be responsible.
4. Write a brief summary concerning how effective the intervention has been up to this point.
5. Provide suggestions for dealing with future crisis situations in the school.

# Family Support Checklist

1. Name of person who will contact family: \_\_\_\_\_  
Name of student/staff member who died: \_\_\_\_\_  
Name of family contact: \_\_\_\_\_  
Address: \_\_\_\_\_  
Telephone number(s): \_\_\_\_\_
2. Person responsible for follow-up information: \_\_\_\_\_  
Funeral home: \_\_\_\_\_ Visitation date/hours: \_\_\_\_\_  
Service/burial date: \_\_\_\_\_ Time: \_\_\_\_\_ Location: \_\_\_\_\_
3. Restrictions: \_\_\_\_\_  
Service/burial: yes \_\_\_\_\_ no \_\_\_\_\_  
Home visitations: yes \_\_\_\_\_ no \_\_\_\_\_  
Food/flowers/donations: yes \_\_\_\_\_ no \_\_\_\_\_  
Special requests: \_\_\_\_\_
4. Other family members in the school district: \_\_\_\_\_  
Names of siblings in schools: \_\_\_\_\_
5. Return personal belongings: yes \_\_\_\_\_ no \_\_\_\_\_  
Posthumous awards/certificates/diploma: yes \_\_\_\_\_ no \_\_\_\_\_

# Suggestions for Parent or Community Meetings

The following are some general suggestions and guidelines for meetings that a school or the district may hold for parents or the community, once a crisis has occurred:

1. Hold the meeting at a time that is convenient for the parents and in a location where they can feel relaxed and at ease.
2. If the media wishes to attend, refer them to the Public Information Department for instructions. If they are present, make sure that they do not become a distraction or inhibit the sharing of instruction, ideas, and feelings. Have written background information available for them, especially if sensitive issues are involved. Some parents might not feel as comfortable sharing feelings if the media is present. Thus, it might be a good idea to ask the group if they would prefer that the media not attend.
3. If appropriate, begin the meeting with an expression of sympathy for the students and their families that were negatively impacted by the crisis.
4. If needed, briefly review the details of the incident/crisis, the reactions of the students and staff, the district's/school's response, the current status of the students and staff, and any other information that they might not have.
5. Acknowledge and thank those, especially from outside the district, who helped during the crisis. It may be beneficial to have some of the "crisis" personnel or other experts attend the meeting to provide general information, answer questions, and facilitate the discussion of feelings, needs, complaints, etc. They can make prepared comments and/or act as resources. This will also give them an opportunity for feedback of the crisis intervention efforts.
6. Stress that the purpose of the meeting is NOT to debate incident/crisis. Instead, emphasize that everyone is there to provide information, express feelings, and help the participants better understand and respond to their children's reactions and emotions. In addition, having a meeting may help reduce negative feelings in the future and lessen their impact/trauma when they do occur.
7. If the group is large, it may be necessary to break into small discussion groups, with the resource persons and administrators acting as leaders/facilitators. The groups can address anything that they feel a need to discuss, but some suggested topics follow:
  - What are your major concerns at this time or for the future?
  - What problems are you or your children experiencing?
  - What are your (parents and children) major needs at this time and/or for the future?
  - What do you feel the district/school/staff did well?
  - How do you feel the district/school/staff could have improved services?
  - What recommendations or advice do you have for the district, school, and/or staff?

This information can be recorded if desired and processed by the group as a whole or by the discussion leaders afterward. Thank people for attending and participating. Urge them to communicate any further needs, problems, or concerns to the school administrator.

# **Focusing on the Individuals**

# Identifying Factors Associated with Grief

Some students may be more likely than other students to be self-destructive as a result of experiencing trauma. Schools can identify high-risk students and help prevent suicides by responding to their needs.

## Stages of Grief and Resolving Loss

The events leading up to an unexpected loss cannot be controlled, but many of the reactions can be predicted and therefore managed with empathy and dignity. Survivors and helpers can be effective caregivers by understanding the stages involved in working through the grieving process. Grief is the complex set of emotions experienced when an individual has a significant loss in his/her life. The following provides information on the four stages of the grieving process and suggestions for providing support.

### Stage One: Impact

The impact of the realization of a sudden and unexpected loss is often described as a “hammer blow.” When a young person or adult dies by some unpredictable means, we are not prepared for the news and the first emotional response is shock. Denial or disbelief may be present and in many cases there may be a postponement of reactions, over activity to delay responses, or withdrawal to isolate oneself. Another reaction is a sense of panic, a component of grief that is particularly contagious and easily spread among young people. A third feeling associated with this stage is numbness, which usually occurs within a brief time after the initial shock and panic subside. People often report a sensation of being unable to respond or relate to others at this stage.

The impact stage is measured in hours and is oriented to the present. Grieving individuals feel stuck in the moment and tend not to respond significantly to comments or questions regarding the past or future. Any strategies for intervention must take into account the immediacy of stage one. The rule of thumb is to “be there.” Allow students to talk about the event and let them know that it is all right to grieve.

As family or friends gather together, the grieving person’s conversation usually involves the telling and retelling of what happened. Retelling the story or recounting the details of death can recycle the intense feelings among members of the group, but it is a part of the grieving process. Questions and issues raised during stage one tend to be disbelief or framed by the word, “why?”

*“I can’t believe this has happened.”*

*“Why did this happen?”*

*“Why did this happen to him/her?”*

*“Why did this happen now?”*

It may be impossible to answer these questions now, but it is important to understand that these questions will continue to be at stake throughout the grieving process. Because of the intensity of feelings associated with shock, panic, and numbness, this is not an appropriate time for lecturing the grieving person.

## **Stage Two: Recoil and Turmoil**

Depression symptoms are fully developed at this stage as the grieving process continues. Another feeling likely to dominate during this time is anger, which can be expressed as hostility toward others or toward oneself. Some may lash out while others will withdraw and tend to isolate themselves from the group. The helper needs to acknowledge the anger and refrain from arguing with the grieving person.

Another significant expression of grief is the person's perceived sense of guilt. There is a tendency to review the circumstances that led up to the death and say, "If only I had . . ." The grieving person may seek to determine if the death could have been prevented or perhaps seek to establish blame.

The recoil and turmoil stage is measured in days and is oriented to the past. The feelings expressed have distinct historical frames of reference and are associated with regrets, like "Why didn't I do . . .?" The strategies for intervention may now include sharing thoughts and feelings in addition to just "being there." In addition, rituals are particularly important at this stage. It is important for all who are grieving to attend the funeral or memorial service. Grief is a shared experience in the community as well as a unique and personal set of feelings. "We all hurt" is very helpful for adolescents to hear since they tend to imagine their feelings in isolation from others.

## **Stage Three: Adjustment**

At this stage of grieving, time begins to change the intensity of the expression of feelings and lessen the frequency of tears. The feelings of anger, guilt, and sense of sadness remain, but now a new set of feelings having to do with acceptance begins to develop and take place alongside the earlier sadness.

The adjustment stage is measured in weeks. It is important to note that feelings of grief at this stage appear to be mixed. There is no steady, smooth progression into the next stage. Rather, there is a combination of the feelings associated with the past and the newer, emerging sense of acceptance. The grieving person may vacillate intermittently between times of relative composure and moments of recycled pain or loss.

Strategies for intervention consist of our beginning to offer assurances. Statements with some reference to the future possibilities for their lives may now be shared. Encouragement to do the next thing is helpful. Rituals in this stage of grieving might consist of raising money for a scholarship fund, planting a tree, or planning a special event or other memorials. Redirecting the psychological energy that depression requires into a creative cause is very helpful for young people and adults.

## **Stage Four: Reconstruction**

The person entering the fourth stage of grief is reconstructing life patterns that are not emotionally tied to the past. The renewal of emotional energy to perform tasks and participate in activities is beginning to be apparent at this stage. The work of grieving is so exhausting and energy-depleting that the resumption of normal life tasks and academic performance may have been postponed for weeks or months.

The reconstruction stage is measured in months and is oriented toward the future. The key emotional content of this stage is the sense of having relinquished the deceased. Letting go of both the relationship and the anticipations for what the relationship might have contained is central to this part of grieving. While there is no forgetting, there is a sense of closure. Moving on to the next chapter, the next task, the next place, and the next relationship begins to enter the grieving person's consciousness.

Strategies for intervention have to do with helping the grieving person say "Goodbye." Since most relationships are not all good or all bad, the grieving person may begin to express all the ways the deceased was perceived by them. Appreciation for the good times and regrets about not having enough quality time as well as remembrances of the idiosyncrasies of the deceased are all appropriate and should be supported.

# Suicide Prevention

## Identifying and Assessing High-Risk Students

There is no simple cause and effect explanation for suicide. The same crisis may have minimal impact on one child, while prompting another child to take his or her life. However, there are some factors that may be indicators of risk. Depending on the child's level of self-esteem, support system, degree of social skills, ability to cope with loss and failure, and capacity for problem solving, the following conditions may cause school-age children to be at increased risk for self-destruction.

- Emotional, physical, or sexual child abuse
- Hopelessness, hunger, or neglect
- Alcohol or other substance abuse experienced by the student or a family member
- Chronic illness
- Family crisis such as marital conflict
- Family history of suicide or suicidal attempts
- Depression (between 50-76 people of people who attempt suicide evidence the characteristics associated with depression)
- Traumatic loss (particularly the loss of a relative or close friend)
- Teenage pregnancy
- Involvement in criminal activity
- Humiliation witnessed by persons who provided ego support

These situations may result in feelings of hopelessness, worthlessness, futility, despair, anger, frustration, abandonment, rejection, and depression. Signals that students are having difficulty coping with stresses, which may also be suicide warning signs, can include:

Excessive irritability	Crying episodes
Aggressive outbursts	Inability to concentrate
Sleep disturbances	Discussion about death
Increase or decrease of appetite	Withdrawal from friends and family
Lack of energy	Giving away prized possessions
Runaway episodes	Isolation
Mood swings	Troubled writings/poems

These warning signs can be used to help identify students who might need additional support or should be referred for assistance. Early identification and assistance can be facilitated through the following procedures:

1. Provide training related to suicide risk factors for school personnel, parents, community agencies, and students.
2. Encourage teachers, counselors, nurses, campus administrators, and other school professionals to maintain frequent and regular contacts with families of high-risk youth.
3. Develop an atmosphere in which students feel comfortable sharing their concerns with school personnel and other appropriate adults. Develop a variety of support groups for students and their families and promote the use of support groups available through other community agencies.
4. Develop a strategy for ensuring that students who exhibit risk factors receive appropriate support and assistance. The strategy should ensure that each identified student has one professional or paraprofessional school staff person who assumes responsibility for maintaining regular contact with the student, the student's family, and other community agencies involved in providing services to the student.

# Warning Signs of Suicide

- Talking about suicide directly or indirectly
- Previous suicide attempts
- Preparations for death (preparing a will, giving away prized possessions, buying a gun, buying an excessive number of pills such as Tylenol or sleeping pills)
- Specific statements of guilt, feelings of hopelessness
- Excessive grief, lack of acceptance after bereavement of a crisis
- A history of substance abuse
- Loss of interest in usual activities
- Increased isolation from other people
- Exaggerated sense of failure
- Suicide by family members
- Taking unnecessary risks
- Disturbed sleeping or eating habits
- Neglect of appearance

Reference:  
<[www.sprc.org](http://www.sprc.org)>

# Ways to Help a Suicidal Person

- Do not leave the person alone
- Ask if he/she is thinking of suicide
- Listen; do not judge their feelings or words
- Be accepting of feelings; listen with patience, understanding, and calm concern
- Be nonjudgmental; do not debate the issues of suicide
- Offer empathy, not sympathy
- Do not offer empty words of reassurance
- Do not be sworn to secrecy; seek support
- Remove available methods of suicide when possible
- Encourage the person in crisis to seek professional help
- Take action; know where help is available
- Take every suicide threat, comment, or act seriously

## References:

<[www.sprc.org](http://www.sprc.org)>

Oklahoma State Department of Mental Health Resource Center

# Responding to a Suicide Threat

All suicide threats should be taken seriously. A suicide threat is generally a cry for help. Failure to provide help may lead to a suicide attempt. Schools can prevent youth suicides by intervening in a deliberate and sensitive manner when a suicide threat occurs. Successful intervention requires identification of suicidal students; assessment of the severity of the suicide risk; referral to appropriate professionals; and ongoing monitoring, support, treatment, and follow-up. The following procedures are suggested:

- When school personnel learn about suicide threats, their response should be calm, deliberate, and sensitive. The suicide intervention plan should be followed and the on-site crisis management team member should be notified immediately, such as the school counselor.
- The student making the threat should not be left alone. Care should be taken to remove the student from areas containing dangerous substances or implements. Any dangerous substances or implements in the student's possession should be removed, such as mirrors, shoestrings, medications, sharp objects.
- Upon learning of a suicide threat, the on-site crisis management team should immediately have a team member, such as the counselor, meet with the child and assess the extent of the risk of suicide.
- A crisis management team member, such as the school counselor, should develop a plan that includes the involvement of designated team members in assessing the student's needs and planning for the coordination of action with parents and community agencies.
- The crisis management plan should address precipitating factors that may have led to the suicide threat.
- The school district's directory of community services should be used to identify the most appropriate source of assistance for the student and the student's family. The student making the threat should be notified about community resources that may be able to provide assistance. Students should be provided with emergency hot-line numbers and similar resources, such as (800) 522-9054 (a statewide, free, 24-hour, staffed phone).
- The same day that the suicide threat is received, an on-site crisis management team member should meet with the parents of the student. All relevant information should be shared. Parents should be provided with referrals and encouraged to seek immediate assistance for the student. The parent conference and referrals should be documented (*Parental Notification of Emergency Conference*, page 73).
- A crisis team member should obtain informed consent from the parents to release information. A signed release of information will allow a crisis team member to follow-up with calls or visits to parents and to referral sources to ensure that appropriate actions have been taken related to referrals for professional assistance." Also, follow-up can help determine appropriate courses of action for school personnel and the on-site crisis intervention team.
- In cases in which parents refuse or neglect to seek help for their child, an on-site crisis management team member should immediately notify the Children's Protective Services Unit of the Department of Human Services, (800) 522-3511.

- The on-site crisis management team should control and limit the flow of information among school personnel, parents, and outside professionals involved in providing service to the student, according to HIPPA/FERPA regulations.
- The on-site crisis management team should continue working with the student until a treatment and monitoring plan has been implemented. When a student returns to school after absences related to a suicide threat, the on-site crisis management team should have a reentry plan designed to support the student. The crisis management team should help the student's teachers and other staff be aware of ways they can be of assistance to the student on a daily basis. Regular follow-up should be provided to monitor and facilitate the student's reintegration into the school community.
- If other students reported the threat or know of the threat, the on-site crisis management team should work with those students to dispel rumors, manage fear, and identify students who may need counseling or other assistance. Students should be helped to feel positive about reporting the suicide threat.
- If other students do not know about the suicide threat, efforts should be made to keep the matter confidential.

#### References:

<[www.sprc.org](http://www.sprc.org)>

Oklahoma State Department of Mental Health Resource Center

# The Surgeon General's Call to Action To Prevent Suicide

## At a Glance: Recommendations

### 1. Awareness

#### **Broaden the public's awareness of suicide and its risk factors:**

- Promote public awareness that suicide is a public health problem and, as such, many suicides are preventable. Use information technology to make facts about suicide and suicide prevention widely and appropriately available to the general public and health care providers.
- Expand awareness of and enhance access to resources for suicide prevention programs in communities.
- Develop and implement strategies to reduce the stigma associated with mental illness, substance abuse, and suicide and with seeking help for such problems.

### 2. Intervention

#### **Enhance services and programs, both population-based and clinical care:**

- Extend collaboration with and between public and private sectors to complete a National Strategy for Suicide Prevention.
- Improve ability of primary care providers to recognize and treat depression, substance abuse, and other major mental illnesses associated with suicide risk. Increase the referral to specialty care when appropriate.
- Eliminate barriers in public and private insurance programs for provision of quality mental health treatments and create incentives to treat patients with coexisting mental and substance abuse disorders.
- Institute training for all health, mental health, and human service professionals (such as clergy, teachers, correctional workers, and social workers) concerning suicide risk assessment and recognition, treatment, management, and aftercare interventions.
- Develop and implement effective training programs for family members of those at risk and for natural community helpers on how to recognize, respond to, and refer people showing signs of suicide risk. Natural community helpers are people such as educators, coaches, hairdressers, and faith leaders, among others.
- Develop and implement safe and effective programs in educational settings for youth that address adolescent distress, crisis intervention, and incorporate peer support for seeking help.

Reference:

<[www.surgeongeneral.gov](http://www.surgeongeneral.gov)>

- Enhance community care resources by increasing the use of schools and workplaces as access points for mental and physical health services and providing comprehensive support programs for persons who survive the suicide of someone close to them.
- Promote public/private collaboration with the media to assure that entertainment and news coverage represent balanced and informed portrayals of suicide and its prevention, mental illness, and mental health care.

### **3. Methodology**

#### **Advance the science of suicide prevention:**

- Enhance research to understand risk and protective factors, their interaction, and their effects on suicide and suicidal behaviors. Additionally, increase research on effective suicide prevention programs, clinical treatments for suicidal individuals, and culture-specific interventions.
- Develop additional scientific strategies for evaluating suicide prevention interventions and ensure that evaluation components are included in all suicide prevention programs.
- Establish mechanisms for federal, regional, and state interagency public health collaboration toward improving monitoring systems for suicide and suicidal behaviors and develop and promote standard terminology in these systems.
- Encourage the development and evaluation of new prevention technologies to reduce easy access to lethal means of suicide.

#### Reference:

<[www.surgeongeneral.gov](http://www.surgeongeneral.gov)>

# Resources For Suicide Prevention And Intervention

American Association of Suicidology  
<[www.suicidology.org](http://www.suicidology.org)>  
(202) 237-2280

American Foundation for Suicide Prevention  
<[www.afsp.org](http://www.afsp.org)>  
(888) 333-ASFP

Centers for Disease Control and Prevention  
National Center for Injury Prevention and Control  
<[www.cdc.gov/ncipc](http://www.cdc.gov/ncipc)>  
(404) 639-3286

Health Resources and Services Administration  
<[www.hrsa.gov](http://www.hrsa.gov)>  
(301) 443-2250

HeartLine  
<[www.heartlineoklahoma.org](http://www.heartlineoklahoma.org)>  
(405) 848-2273

National Institute of Mental Health (NIMH) Suicide Research Consortium  
<[www.nimh.nih.gov/research/suicide.cfm](http://www.nimh.nih.gov/research/suicide.cfm)>  
(301) 443-4513

National Mental Health Information Center  
<[www.mentalhealth.org](http://www.mentalhealth.org)>  
(800) 789-2647

National Strategy To Prevent Suicide  
<[www.mentalhealth.org/suicideprevention/strategy.asp](http://www.mentalhealth.org/suicideprevention/strategy.asp)>

Office of the Assistant Secretary for Health/Surgeon General  
<[www.surgeongeneral.gov](http://www.surgeongeneral.gov)>  
(202) 690-7694

Oklahoma State Department of Health Adolescent Health Service Program  
Youth Suicide State Plan  
<[www.health.state.ok.us/program/ahd/index.html](http://www.health.state.ok.us/program/ahd/index.html)>  
(405) 271-4471

Screening for Mental Health, Inc.  
<[www.mentalhealthscreening.org](http://www.mentalhealthscreening.org)>

Substance Abuse and Mental Health Services Administration  
<[www.samhsa.gov](http://www.samhsa.gov)>  
(800) 729-6686

# Resources for Suicide Prevention And Intervention (continued)

Suicide Prevention Action Network U.S.A., Inc.  
<[www.spanusa.org](http://www.spanusa.org)>  
(202) 449-3600

Suicide Prevention Resource Center  
<[www.sprc.org](http://www.sprc.org)>  
(877) GET-SPRC (438-7772)

Teenline  
(800) 522-TEEN (522-8336)  
(405) 522-3835

Youth Drama Play Script and Study Questions  
Show Time Movie Feature  
October 13, 2002  
<[www.bangbangyouredead.com](http://www.bangbangyouredead.com)>

Youth Suicide Toolkit for Schools  
Oklahoma State Department of Mental Health  
(405) 522-5952

# Legal Corner

*By Larry Lewis*

## ***School District Found to Owe Duty to Use Reasonable Means to Prevent Student Suicide Attempt.***

Eisel v. Board of Education of Montgomery County, 597 A 2d 447 (Md. 1991)

1. Duty sought to be imposed was communication to parents.
2. Public policy of preventing harm: prevention of youth suicide is an important public policy, and “local schools should be at the forefront of the prevention effort.”
3. Burden on the counselors: In imposing a duty of care not previously recognized by law, a court also looks to the burden placed upon the defendant to take steps that might prevent harm. The consequence of the risk is so great that even a relatively remote possibility of a suicide may be enough to establish duty.”

According to a survey by the Center for Disease Control revealed 27 percent of high school students had “thought seriously” about suicide in the preceding year, one in 12 said they had actually tried to commit suicide, and the suicide rates among teenagers between 15 and 19 years of age had quadrupled between 1950 and 1988.

Considering the growth of this tragic social problem in the light of the factors discussed above, we hold that school counselors have a duty to use reasonable means to attempt to prevent a suicide when they are on notice of a child or adolescent student’s intent.

### **Recommended Action:**

Liability can also be imposed for failure to properly train staff to deal with problems. Districts should consult their counselors to emphasize that failure to report a suicidal statement to parents may be used to impose district liability.

# The School Corner School Suicide Prevention Programs: Legal Issues

Susy R. Ruof and Joann M. Harris  
Weld County (Colorado) School District

## Is a district ever obligated to provide suicide prevention programs?

**Opinion:** *Employees and officials of school districts which have had completed suicides or suicide threats and/or recognize or should recognize that they have a problem have the responsibility under threat of liability to perform as would a reasonably prudent person under similar circumstances. This would require at a minimum that the district provide services and/or programs dealing with suicide prevention. In other words, identify, evaluate, and provide or cause others to provide to students who are in jeopardy.*

## Does a district have any legal obligation to identify, evaluate, and/or provide services to other high-risk children following a completed suicide?

**Opinion:** *Yes.*

## What changes are there in confidentiality requirements when the student is considered suicidal?

**Opinion:** *If the child's right to be in a safe situation conflicts with the parents' right to confidentiality, the child's right to be safeguarded takes precedence.*

## What should school psychologists tell other school staff about children who are likely to be dangerous to themselves?

**Opinion:** *School personnel, who have physical custody of a student, and the resulting responsibility to keep that student from harming himself/herself, need to know so that appropriate safeguards can be taken. Staff members must be cautioned to keep this information confidential.*

## Are we obligated to inform the parent if a child is threatening suicide?

**Opinion:** *Yes. If the parents refuse appropriate psychiatric treatment or if we feel the parents' response is damaging to the child, we report to social services and/or local police.*

## Do school psychologists (because of their specialized training) have a greater responsibility to take action on a child who is dangerous to himself/herself than do other school personnel?

**Opinion:** *Yes.*

(American Association of Suicidology, Newslink, Summer 1989.)

# Parental Notification of Emergency Conference

Date: \_\_\_\_\_

I, or we, \_\_\_\_\_, the parents of \_\_\_\_\_ were involved in a conference with school personnel at \_\_\_\_\_ (school).

We have been advised that our child appears to be in a state of emergency, \_\_\_\_\_ (type). We have been further advised that we should seek some psychological/psychiatric consultation immediately. We have been provided with a list of agencies and emergency numbers. We understand that the school district is not responsible for the provision of these services, but is alerting us to this emergency just as they would inform us of any health problem.

\_\_\_\_\_  
Parent or Legal Guardian

\_\_\_\_\_  
Parent or Legal Guardian

\_\_\_\_\_  
School Personnel Title

\_\_\_\_\_  
School Personnel Title

# Planning for Recovery

# Planning For Recovery

## Introduction

This section is devoted to the recovery and rebuilding process. To cover every possible situation would make this guide unusable, yet there are common steps through the process whether the circumstances are from a major disaster or a relatively minor emergency.

The first step in a recovery plan is to establish in policy that the school district intends to be “open for business” as soon as possible. This statement provides emotional and psychological assurances to the staff, students, and community in three ways.

- Continuity - There will be a school in the area after the crisis is over.
- Security - The availability of a familiar service, and in the case of employees and support businesses, assurance that payroll and economic support will continue.
- Commitment - The school is as committed to the rebuilding of the community as it is to the rebuilding the school facility.

## Short-Range Goals

It is important to establish short-range goals for recovery. Site administrators in coordination with district administrators should establish these goals. This will require various questions to be answered and may involve outside sources. Questions should include the following:

### 1. Facilities - How extensive is the damage?

- What parts of the building/campus can still be used?
- How have utilities been affected?
  - Electricity
  - Natural gas
  - Water
  - Sanitation
- Will emergency housing of displaced persons be required?
- Are sufficient buses available to:
  - Transport displaced persons
  - Transport students
- How quickly can we safely reopen the school?

### 2. Procedures for reopening the school.

- Staff meeting the day before reopening
  - Half-day or full-day sessions
  - Alternative sites
  - Portable classrooms
  - Conversion of library, cafeteria, or gymnasium
- Contact families affected by the event
  - Encourage parent and child involvement in “first” day of school
  - Encourage teachers and students to discuss the facts of the event
  - Encourage community involvement in the reopening process

### 3. Human Resources - Are sufficient teachers available?

- Is sufficient staff available?
- Where are the students now? (In many cases of large natural disasters, children are sent to relatives outside the disaster area.)
- Could parents outside the damaged area be used for substitute staff?

### 4. Community Resources - Could community buildings be used for school facilities?

- Does the community need the use of school buildings for services?

### 5. Area Resources - What services are available?

- County services available?
- Federal services available?

## Long-Term Recovery Goals

The school district must develop a strategy to deal with the long-term recovery process. Many school administrators discover a dramatic drop in student enrollment the year following a major disaster. This may come from families moving away because of the event or relocating to find new jobs. There are even cases of children not coming to school because the parent or the child has suffered emotional trauma that does not allow separation of family members.

A long-term recovery process should include steps to reduce or alleviate the trauma experienced by students, faculty, and family. Some primary considerations include the following:

#### 1. Determine the status of your students

- How will students get to and from school?
- Set up an outreach program to encourage families to return their children to school
- Decide how to handle student absences

#### 2. Determine the status of your educational programs

- Develop a plan for restoring educational programs and handling lost classroom time
- Establish alternative teaching methods for students unable to return immediately to classes
  - Correspondence classes
  - Videoconferencing
  - Group tutoring

After developing your plan and making these decisions, the school should contact the community in general and parents and students specifically to communicate return to school and counseling opportunities.

### 3. Determine how community agencies can contribute to the recovery process

- American Red Cross
- Fire Department
- Police Department
- Mental health/community services
- Social services

## Mitigation Planning is the Key to Funding

Another important factor in the long-term recovery process is mitigation. This involves the identification of environmental hazards and development of a plan to reduce the potential for future damage to the school facility. A State's mitigation plan governs how and what types of projects are selected for funding. School districts should work with district facilities and site administrators to develop a mitigation plan and urge the State Hazard Mitigation Officer to incorporate the school district plan into the State's mitigation plan. This accomplishes two critical steps toward potential mitigation funding:

1. Provides notice to the State that school districts expect to participate in the application process for Hazard Mitigation Grant Program (HMGP) funds.
2. Places pre-identified projects (eligible projects included in the State's mitigation plan) in a better position for funding. Both the law and the regulations require that the projects are part of an overall mitigation strategy for the disaster area.

The federal and state or local cost share ratios are generally 75 percent federal funds and 25 percent state or local funds for both the Infrastructure and HMGP.

## When Disaster Occurs

1. The insurance agent should review the damages and issue a brief statement of coverage within one week of the loss.
2. The local school district should verify the list of damaged property and update a replacement inventory as necessary.
3. Take photographs of damages if cleanup or repairs are necessary, before the survey team arrives.
4. Contact local tradesmen to assist in determination of loss and help make temporary repairs or other assistance as needed.
5. Contact alternative classroom facilities to determine availability and review for any work to be performed prior to occupancy.
6. Contact utility companies to assess damage to building services and repair as necessary.
7. The school administrator should contact the Capital Improvement Section, State Department of Education, as soon as possible.
8. A State Department of Education representative will visit the site and review the damages.

## Preparation for the Damage Survey Team from State Department of Education

1. The local educational agency (LEA) should prepare a detailed list of damages, by school site, including a brief description of the damage and estimated cost of repair or replacement of the buildings, books, supplies, and equipment.
2. The district should take photographs of damage if cleanup or repairs begin before survey team is to arrive.
3. If damaged material is removed before team arrives, have proof of loss available.
4. The district should determine the status of children in nonpublic schools affected by the major disaster.
5. The district should determine the availability of temporary facilities.
  - a. Local and public buildings
  - b. Leased or portable facilities
6. The district should determine the estimated amount of insurance proceeds they might expect to receive.
7. The district should determine the amount of funds from other sources (state, local, or other agencies).
8. The district should determine the need of temporary classrooms (policy on leasing and/or purchasing of portable classrooms.)

## Funding Opportunities: Assistance from Federal Emergency Management Agency (FEMA)

- **Damaged School Buildings**

Under Section 403, 306, and 407 of the Stafford Act of 1988 and following a Presidential disaster declaration, FEMA provides funding through its Public Assistance Program for repairing, restoring, or rebuilding damaged schools. Up to 15 percent of the funds used to repair a damaged facility can be used for mitigation, as long as the mitigation measures are incorporated during repairs, and if the measures are cost-effective or are required by code. These measures can be identified by FEMA, the State, or the local applicant.

Schools in earthquake hazard areas that must be rebuilt due to substantial damage from any disaster agent (e.g., flood, earthquake, and hurricane) must be reconstructed in accordance with the latest seismic safety design and construction provisions. FEMA may require the use of additions or alterations to local codes to achieve desirable levels of seismic safety.

- **Undamaged School Buildings**

Section 404 of the Stafford Act permits FEMA to provide funding for mitigation projects under the Hazard Mitigation Grant Program (HMGP) to undamaged, as well as damaged, schools in counties within the disaster declaration area.

**Examples of Projects include:**

- Acquisition and relocation of structures from hazard-prone areas
- Retrofitting, such as flood proofing and seismic upgrade, to protect structures from future damage
- Nonstructural earthquake hazard mitigation measures including replacement of dangerous pendant light fixtures, adding safety film to large windows anchoring heavy equipment, removing or anchoring cornices and parapets

**Information for Federal Disaster Review Team**

- Date major disaster damage occurred to LEA's facilities
- List of damages and inventories requested at area meeting
- Preventive work
- Off-site work
- Non-disaster caused damage
- Exclusions to insurance such as stadiums, etc.
- Latent damage within six months of application
- Funds from other sources for major disaster damage repair
- Insurance coverage, including flood insurance
- Salvage value of damaged equipment
- Need for temporary classrooms
- Policy on leasing and/or purchasing of portable classrooms
- Policy on use of overtime hours for school personnel in the event of an emergency
- Written agreement with State Department of Education for portable buildings
- Application form, number of copies, filing date, and where to send

# School Crisis Planning and Recovery Web Sites

A Biosecurity Checklist for Food Service Programs: Developing A Biosecurity Management Plan

<<http://schoolmeals.nal.usda.gov/Safety/biosecurity.pdf>>

A Quick Guide for School Staff

<[www.healthinschools.org/sh/emerg.asp](http://www.healthinschools.org/sh/emerg.asp)>

American Heart Association Emergency Plan for Schools

<[www.ahajournals.org](http://www.ahajournals.org)>

Alcohol, Tobacco and Firearms and the United States Department of Education  
Bomb Threat Response: An Interactive Planning For Schools

<[www.threatplan.org](http://www.threatplan.org)>

Being Prepared Before, During and After A Crisis

<[www.nea.org/crisis/b1home.html](http://www.nea.org/crisis/b1home.html)>

Bioterrorism Information from the Center for Disease Control

<[www.bt.cdc.gov](http://www.bt.cdc.gov)>

Communicating In A Crisis: Risk Communication Guidelines For Public Officials

<[www.riskcommunication.samhsa.gov/RiskComm.pdf](http://www.riskcommunication.samhsa.gov/RiskComm.pdf)>

Crisis Communications Toolkit

<[www.nea.org/crisis](http://www.nea.org/crisis)>

Department of Defense War on Terror

<[www.defendamerica.mil/wot.html](http://www.defendamerica.mil/wot.html)>

Disaster Help – President’s Disaster Management E-gov Initiative

<[www.disasterhelp.gov](http://www.disasterhelp.gov)>

FEMA Book – Are You Ready? A Guide for Families and Communities

<[www.fema.gov/areyouready](http://www.fema.gov/areyouready)>

FEMA Primer to Design Safe School Projects In Case of Terrorist Attacks

<[www.fema.gov/pdf/fima/fema428.pdf](http://www.fema.gov/pdf/fima/fema428.pdf)>

Homeland Security Advisory System Recommendations for Schools

<[www.redcross.org/services/disaster/beprepared/hsas/schools.pdf](http://www.redcross.org/services/disaster/beprepared/hsas/schools.pdf)>

National Clearinghouse for Educational Facilities

<[www.edfacilities.org/rl/disaster.cfm](http://www.edfacilities.org/rl/disaster.cfm)>

Pandemic Flu Federal Information Site  
<[www.pandemicflu.gov](http://www.pandemicflu.gov)>

National Resource Center for Child Traumatic Stress  
<[www.nctsnet.org](http://www.nctsnet.org)>

Recommended Emergency Supplies for Schools  
<[www.redcross.org/disaster/masters/supplies.html](http://www.redcross.org/disaster/masters/supplies.html)>

Resources on Emergency Evacuation and Disaster Preparedness for People with Disabilities  
<[www.access-board.gov/evac.htm](http://www.access-board.gov/evac.htm)>

Substance Abuse and Mental Health Information Center  
<[www.mentalhealth.org](http://www.mentalhealth.org)>

School Preparedness for School Terrorism and Heightened Security Issues  
<[www.schoolsecurity.org/terrorist\\_response.html](http://www.schoolsecurity.org/terrorist_response.html)>

School Safety in the 21<sup>st</sup> Century: Adapting to New Security Challenges Post 9/11  
<[www.schoolsecurity.org/terrorist\\_response.html](http://www.schoolsecurity.org/terrorist_response.html)>

United States Department of Homeland Security  
<[www.dhs.gov](http://www.dhs.gov)>

United States Department of Homeland Security: Readiness  
<[www.ready.gov](http://www.ready.gov)>

United States Department of Education's Practical Guide on Crisis Planning: A Guide for Schools and Communities  
<[www.ed.gov/emergencyplan](http://www.ed.gov/emergencyplan)>

# Resources for Schools and Communities

American Red Cross Classroom Curriculum Kits for Disaster  
<[www.redcross.org/pubs/dspubs/cde.html](http://www.redcross.org/pubs/dspubs/cde.html)>

Bright Horizons Emergency Preparedness Plan  
<[www.brighthorizons.com/talktochildren](http://www.brighthorizons.com/talktochildren)>

Bullying Prevention  
<[www.stopbullyingnow.hrsa.gov](http://www.stopbullyingnow.hrsa.gov)>

Center For Disease Control Bioterrorism Preparedness and Response  
<[www.bt.cdc.gov](http://www.bt.cdc.gov)>

Center for Prevention of School Violence  
<[www.ncsu.edu/cpsv.org](http://www.ncsu.edu/cpsv.org)>

Collaboration to Help Schools Prepare for Possible Terrorism  
<[www.phf.org](http://www.phf.org)>

Early Warning Signs Booklet  
<[www.helping.apa.org](http://www.helping.apa.org)>

Early Warning, Timely Response: A Guide to Safe Schools  
<[www.ed.gov/about/offices/list/osep/gtss.html](http://www.ed.gov/about/offices/list/osep/gtss.html)>

Emergency Planning For America's Schools  
<[www.ed.gov/emergencyplan](http://www.ed.gov/emergencyplan)>

Federal Emergency Management Agency  
<[www.fema.gov/areyouready](http://www.fema.gov/areyouready)>

15 + Take Time To Listen, Make Time To Talk About Bullying  
<[www.family.samhsa.gov/get/time.aspx](http://www.family.samhsa.gov/get/time.aspx)>

Growing Up Drug-Free: A Parents' Guide To Keeping Their Kids Drug-Free  
<[www.theantidrug.com](http://www.theantidrug.com)>

Guide for Preventing and Responding to School Violence  
(International Association of Chiefs of Police)  
<[www.iacp.org/pubinfo/pubs/pslc/svindex.htm](http://www.iacp.org/pubinfo/pubs/pslc/svindex.htm)>

I-Safe America: Internet Safety Curriculum  
<[www.isafe.org](http://www.isafe.org)>

Justice For Kids and Youth  
<[www.usdoj.gov/kidspage](http://www.usdoj.gov/kidspage)>

Linking Drug Abuse Prevention with Student Success  
<[www.drugstats.org](http://www.drugstats.org)>

National Crime Prevention Council

<[www.ncpc.org](http://www.ncpc.org)>

National Mental Health and Education Center

<[www.naspcenter.org](http://www.naspcenter.org)>

National Parent Teacher Association: Community Violence Prevention Kit

<[www.pta.org](http://www.pta.org)>

National Parent Teacher Association: Crisis Intervention

<[www.pta.org/parent\\_resources.html](http://www.pta.org/parent_resources.html)>

National Resource Center for Child Traumatic Stress

<[www.nctsnet.org](http://www.nctsnet.org)>

National School Safety Center Materials

<[www.nssc1.org](http://www.nssc1.org)>

National Suicide Prevention Lifeline

<[www.suicidepreventionlifeline.org](http://www.suicidepreventionlifeline.org)>

National Youth Violence Prevention Resource Center

<[www.safeyouth.org](http://www.safeyouth.org)>

Oklahoma Office of Homeland Security

<[www.youroklahoma.com/homelandsecurity](http://www.youroklahoma.com/homelandsecurity)>

Parent's Guide To Internet Safety

<[www.fbi.gov/kids/parents/parents.htm](http://www.fbi.gov/kids/parents/parents.htm)>

Practical Information on Crisis Planning: A Guide For Schools and Communities

<[www.ed.gov/emergencyplan](http://www.ed.gov/emergencyplan)>

Preventing Youth Hate Crime: Manual For Schools and Communities

<[www.ed.gov/pubs/HateCrime/start.html](http://www.ed.gov/pubs/HateCrime/start.html)>

Protecting Students From Harassment and Hate Crime: A Guide For Schools

<[www.ed.gov/offices/OCR/archives/Harassment/incidents1.html](http://www.ed.gov/offices/OCR/archives/Harassment/incidents1.html)>

Random Acts of Kindness Foundation

<[www.actsofkindness.org](http://www.actsofkindness.org)>

Revised Sexual Harassment Guide

(United States Department of Education Office of Civil Rights)

<[www.ed.gov/about/offices/list/ocr](http://www.ed.gov/about/offices/list/ocr)>

Safe Schools/Healthy Students Action Center

<[www.sshs.samhsa.gov](http://www.sshs.samhsa.gov)>

Safeguarding Our Children: An Action Guide

<[www.ed.gov/adminis/lead/safety/actguide/index.html](http://www.ed.gov/adminis/lead/safety/actguide/index.html)>

Safety In Numbers Handbook

<[www.nces.ed.gov/pubs2002/2002312.pdf](http://www.nces.ed.gov/pubs2002/2002312.pdf)>

School Safety Materials from National Resource Centers for Safe Schools

<[www.safetyzone.org](http://www.safetyzone.org)>

School Violence Prevention

<[www.mentalhealth.org/schoolviolence/default.asp](http://www.mentalhealth.org/schoolviolence/default.asp)>

Student Pledge Against Gun Violence

<[www.pledge.org](http://www.pledge.org)>

Suicide Prevention Resource Center

<[www.sprc.org](http://www.sprc.org)>

Teachers: The Anti-Drug

<[www.teachersguide.org](http://www.teachersguide.org)>

Teaching Tolerance

<[www.splcenter.org/center/tt/teach.jsp](http://www.splcenter.org/center/tt/teach.jsp)>

<[www.tolerance.org/teach](http://www.tolerance.org/teach)>

United States Department of Homeland Security

<[www.ready.gov](http://www.ready.gov)>

The Appropriate and Effective Use of Security Technologies in United States Schools

(United States Department of Education and United States Department of Justice)

<[www.ncjrs.org/school/home.html](http://www.ncjrs.org/school/home.html)>

The Final Report and Findings of the Safe School Initiative: Implications for the Prevention of School Attacks in the United States

<[www.ed.gov/admins/lead/safety/preventingattacksreport.doc](http://www.ed.gov/admins/lead/safety/preventingattacksreport.doc)>

The School Shooter: Federal Bureau of Investigation Indicators Guide

<[www.fbi.gov/kids/parents/parents.htm](http://www.fbi.gov/kids/parents/parents.htm)>

United States Department of Education, Safe and Drug-Free Schools Materials

<[www.ed.gov/about/offices/list/osdfs/index.html](http://www.ed.gov/about/offices/list/osdfs/index.html)>

United States Secret Service National Threat Assessment Center

Safe School Initiative

A Guide to Managing Threatening Situations

An Interim Report on Prevention of Targeted Violence in Schools

Deadly Lessons: School Shooters Tell Why

<[www.treas.gov/usss/ntac.shtml](http://www.treas.gov/usss/ntac.shtml)>

Web Wise Kids: Internet Safety Program for Schools

<[www.webwisekids.org](http://www.webwisekids.org)>

# Researched-Based Prevention Curriculum Resources

United States Department of Education Safe and Drug-Free Schools  
<[www.ed.gov/about/offices/list/osdfs/index.html](http://www.ed.gov/about/offices/list/osdfs/index.html)>

Center for Substance Abuse Prevention (CSAP)  
Substance Abuse and Mental Health Services Administration (SAMHSA)  
<<http://modelprograms.samhsa.gov>>

# State Department of Education Resources

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