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Unexpected Incident Yields Invaluable Lessons in Security

Even with the most detailed security plans in place, unanticipated events can occur at school. When these incidents are handled well, they present valuable opportunities for growth and learning. In turn, those lessons can be used to refine the school's existing security procedures.

Such an event happened at West Point Middle School last April when an unexpected visitor did not report to the main office after being buzzed into the building. By coincidence, military, state, and federal security agencies were conducting a full-scale exercise at West Point that day and a drill was scheduled for the school the following morning. Given the heightened level of security at West Point at that time, the chances that the unidentified visitor posed a credible threat were low. Nonetheless, Principal David Rudy did not hesitate to call for lockdown.



"We had a person in the building for whom we could not account, and so I followed our procedures," explained Rudy. "We need to remain true to our procedures because, heaven forbid, it could have been an actual intruder or abduction situation."

Because of proximity, this action necessitated a lockdown at the nearby elementary school. Military Police searched both schools. No intruder was found and students returned to their normal schedule within 43 minutes. Later in the day, Rudy learned that the unidentified person was actually a well-meaning parent who was dropping off a forgotten lunch box.

Thanks to this simple mistake, the school's Crisis Management Team (CMT) gained two insights into their security plan. They learned that parents and school staff need to be regularly reminded, especially late in the school year, about fundamental security procedures such as access control. The second insight came in the form of validation. By practicing emergency procedures until they are automatic, the school's CMT had developed the flexibility to respond immediately to, and learn from, an unusual security situation while minimizing academic disruption.

"The bottom line for me is that this is why we need to conduct these drills and take them seriously," said Rudy. "In the end, everyone felt validated by the fact that we knew what to do because of the practice drills we've held."

Inside This Issue

news & updates	
Unexpected Incident Yields Invaluable	
Lessons in Security1	
Sleep Well, Learn Better2	
Tackling Tough Security Questions 2	

Safe Schools Planning

Preparing Students for Crisis Management Drills
How One DODEA School Found the
"Teaching Moment" in Security 3

Education Issues

Defending Childhood4

Cybersecurity

	Social Media: How the Web Page Turned
	Into a Conversation
_	

Prevention Programs

•	1010111011110	
	Heat Injuries: Know the Signs	(
	E-mail Management: Delegate Points	
	of Contacts	6

News & Updates



Sleep Well, Learn Better

The notion that cognitive development and academic performance are affected by sleep, or the lack thereof, is an idea that has been around for some time. In 1904, writing about the then-new concept of adolescence, psychologist G. Stanley Hall warned parents and educators that "No one should be allowed to go to school at all without nine hours of sleep." Today, educators take a more broad-minded view of who should and should not attend school, but the basic wisdom still holds. In fact, a growing body of well designed clinical studies proves that children who get a good night's sleep have better memory, stronger emotional regulation skills, and higher performance on some cognitive tests.

According to the National Institutes of Health, schoolaged children need about 10 hours of sleep per night. Roughly half of that time involves Rapid Eye Movement (REM). Adults, by contrast, need less sleep and spend about a third of each night engaged in REM sleep. For



children, REM is crucial to encoding subconsciously gathered material into active knowledge. A recent study conducted in Germany found that children who had watched a pattern of electronic

lights before sleeping were better able to repeat the light patterns than a control group who watched the lights and were tested later without benefit of a full night's sleep. Interestingly, this phenomenon only appears to apply to children. Adults in the study did not benefit as profoundly from REM sleep, although other research has proven that lack of sleep in adults is associated

with memory lapses, mood swings, and a host of health disorders.

As the school year gets started, educators may wish to remind parents that setting and enforcing early bedtimes is proven to have a positive impact not only on behavior and attention, but also on children's ability to learn new material. The National Institutes of Neurologic Disorders and Stroke offers a brochure called Brain Basics: Understanding Sleep. This resource, available in both Spanish and English, describes how sleep affects the brain and offers tips for getting a good night's rest. To learn more, visit www.ninds.nih.gov/disorders/brain_basics/understanding_sleep.htm.

Tackling Tough Security Questions

At the start of each school year, Crisis Management Teams focus on selecting team members to replace those who have rotated off the teams, reviewing crisis management plans, and checking and replenishing supplies in grab and go kits. This is an ideal



time to raise awareness regarding crisis management procedures and tackle the tough planning questions.

Fortunately, DoDEA Crisis Management Teams do not need to tackle tough questions alone. School administrators always have their district and area safety and security professionals available as living resources. This fall, the Office of Safety and Security, in coordination with the Safe Schools Program, is arranging a conference call so Crisis Management Team members have the additional option of listening to a short school security briefing followed by a question and answer session. Detailed instructions on how to join the conversation will be distributed via e-mail.

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Safe Schools Planning

Preparing Students for Crisis Management Drills

Schools preparing to conduct crisis management drills during September and October might consider converting the potential interruption to class time into a learning opportunity for students. With just a small amount of planning, students can gain knowledge and confidence in preparedness that they can in turn share with their families at home. Conducting a brief orientation prior to the drills, helps students understand the purpose of the procedures and reduces any anxiety they may be feeling. Incorporating an instructor-led discussion into the orientation allows students the chance to contribute ideas and think through the many ways that security lessons learned at school can serve them well at home, when interacting in the community, and when travelling.

How to Get Started

In groups no larger than a typical class-size, explain that the school is committed to protecting students from any type of an event. Translate the procedures for protective actions, such as lockdown, evacuation, take cover, and shelter-in-place, into age-appropriate language. Refer to the classroom protective action flip charts for a description of the actions required in the classroom.

For younger students, carefully explaining procedures in advance allows them to feel a sense of control during the drill. They know what to expect and can help by doing their part. For older students, connecting the drill to the parent/sponsor's mission helps emphasize the importance of participating. Involving high school students in a discussion of how terrorism and national defense measures impact society can connect necessary protective action drills to academic topics teachers had already planned to cover during the semester.

For all students, educators should use the orientation session to emphasize security awareness by involving students in age appropriate discussion about personal actions they can take to enhance security. For younger students these questions could include, "What should you do if you find a suspicious package or bag near the school?" For older students the questions might include how they would respond if they noticed a person whom they did not recognize observing the school. Encourage students to ask their families about the emergency preparedness plan for their home.

For Additional Information

Resources available to help DoDEA educators describe crisis management drills to students include the district/ area safety and security officer, the student antiterrorism awareness video and accompanying Web site www.dodea.edu/Offices/Safety/antiterrorism.cfm, and DoDEA Crisis Management Guide www.dodea.edu/crisis/upload/DoDEA_Crisis_Management_Guide_07.pdf. For additional assistance, contact safeschools@csc.com.

How One DODEA School Found the "Teaching Moment" in Security



Some schools in DoDEA are already successfully using this approach. For example, at Ashurst Elementary School, on Quantico Marine Corps Base, counselor Lisa Byrd and nurse Dawn Hoffman conduct a miniature version of the faculty orientation. Nurse Hoffman explains that the school needs to be ready to protect students and grown-ups from any type of incident and the students can help by following the school's security procedures. She then explains the procedures and invites students to ask questions while counselor Hoffman watches the students for signs of apprehension or anxiety. Sometimes the questions and answers allow the nurse and counselor to

alleviate unfounded concerns. In other cases, student suggestions contributed valuable insights which, to the delight of the students, were incorporated into the procedures.

Education Issues



Defending Childhood

Educators and parents who suspect childhood is harder today than in previous generations can find reassurance in a new report from the U.S. Department of Justice. The report, entitled *Defending Childhood*, recommends a series of initiatives for educators, medical personnel, mental health professionals, and public officials to support parents in protecting children from all types of violence.

The Attorney General asked Sharon Cooper, M.D., a pediatrician and child psychologist at Fort Bragg, North Carolina to serve as one of the lead members of the task force. Dr. Cooper explained that this report broke new ground by describing a "childhood free from exposure to violence" as a civil right that



needs to be protected. Unfortunately, the task force found children were more likely than adults to suffer from all types of violence including physical violence, sexual violence, and psychological trauma. Specifically:

- 60 percent of children were exposed to violence in their home, school, or community.
- 40 percent of children were direct victims of two or more violent acts.
- Almost one in ten children witnessed the assault of one family member by another.

Children who experienced two or more forms of violence, referred to as "polyvictims," were more likely to perform poorly at school, experiment with drugs, and suffer from depression and anxiety. Two ways educators can help prevent child abuse are by galvanizing the public to identify and respond to children exposed to violent behavior, and ensuring all children exposed to physical or psychological violence are identified, screened, and assessed. See

the accompanying text box for a list of warning signs. The report also recommended ensuring students have access to "evidence-based, trauma-specific, suicide prevention, and treatment programs for children and youth at high risk."

The task force worked for two years to develop this report. They concluded with the following exhortation to all citizens to commit to helping children grow up free from trauma and the risk of violence:

This report is a call to action for every person in America to rise up to defend our children! We must dedicate ourselves to creating safe places and healthy relationships in which every one of our children can grow, succeed, and carry forward the blessings of liberty, fraternity, and equality.

For additional facts about violence in childhood, visit the U.S. Department of Justice (DoJ) at www.justice.gov/defendingchildhood/facts.html. The full report is available from the DoJ at www.justice.gov/defendingchildhood/task-force.html. While the authors did not conclude that childhood is harder, they acknowledged the challenges faced by children exposed to violent behavior or traumatic experience. The authors advocated replacing harm with hope: "We must give them hope that their future will be better and safer." www.justice.gov/defendingchildhood/facts.html.

Warning Signs of Child Abuse

Signs of physical abuse include:

- Frequent unexplained injuries, bruises, welts, or cuts.
- Watchful attitude as if the child is "on alert" and expecting something "bad" to happen.
- Injuries appearing in a pattern such as marks from a belt.
- Wearing inappropriate clothing to cover up injuries.

The Family Advocacy Program serves as the focal point for reports of child abuse from DoDEA. DoDEA Regulation 2050.9 requires employees to report signs of child abuse immediately (www.dodea.edu/Offices/Regulations/upload/2050 9.pdf).



Social Media: How the Web Page Turned Into a Conversation

Not long ago, the Web page was comparable to a page in a book or magazine — a static display that people read. Today it has evolved into an interactive platform that allows visitors to create, comment on, or interact with content. Of the top 15 most visited sites, at least three are social networks. The other top sites, while not specifically social networking sites, have nonetheless integrated interactive social components, such as a comments section, simple procedures for uploading photos and video, and forums for voting on everything from consumer products to popular Internet memes (themes that become popular on the Internet).

The Internet has gone from a quiet library to a boisterous "modern day agora" (marketplace of ideas), where everyone has a voice and the "online conversation" is constantly evolving. At a recent federal social media summit held in Washington, DC, experts gathered to discuss how to use that "online conversation" for emergency preparedness and response, social engagement, and philosophy.

The morning's keynote speaker, John Daley, Deputy Superintendent and Chief Technology Officer of the Boston Police Department, discussed how social media became an increasingly integral tool to achieving the department's mission by opening up new lines of two-way communication with the public. Most notably, Mr. Daley described the role of social media during the Boston Marathon bombings and subsequent investigation. Law enforcement officials turned to social media for intra-agency communication since conventional telecommunication services and agency websites were overloaded shortly after the attacks. In the subsequent hours and days, social media platforms emerged as the most effective means to quickly disseminate warnings and updates to the millions of the greater Boston area. After recognizing "the power of social media," Mr. Daley noted one of the department's challenges moving forward "was how not to squander this opportunity."

James Dear, project leader for the DoD-DHS Net-Centric Experimentation Lab, presented the results of an unclassified simulation exercise, which tested whether utilizing social media and "engaging the public in emergency response" during a crisis would impact emergency response times and tactical/operational decision-making and execution. Participants used a crowd sourcing technology called "Citizen's Emergency Response Portal System" to communicate with emergency management officials during simulated terrorist attacks on a university campus. "This was a bilateral discussion, not just information gathering," said Mr. Dear. The exercise was a success and outcomes showed that crisis managers were provided with situational awareness through social media technology that positively influenced decisions and reduced response times.

Summit speakers then convened a panel to discuss the "broad-cast versus conversational function of social media." The Web page is a powerful tool to broadcast information in outward directions, but the true potential lies in talking *and* listening to the audience. Once one can "interact with individuals as people and not just data points," agencies can engage the audience and begin to influence and control the social media dialogue.

The panel and real life/simulated examples presented at the summit suggest that in the future, social media technologies will



be a fully integrated component of crisis management plans and emergency response protocols. However, much is still unknown. As behavioral psychologist, Captain (Retired) Dylan Schmorrow, Ph.D., who previously served as deputy director of training and biosystems at the Office of the Secretary of Defense, pointed out: "We are still in the pre-civil war era of social media and do not know how we will be using social media in five to ten years."

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Prevention Programs

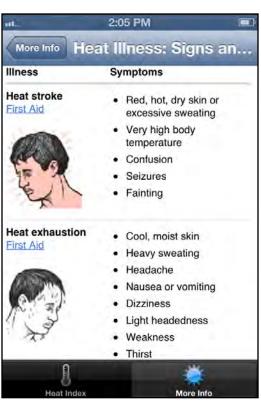
Heat Injuries: Know the Signs

With high temperatures often extending into autumn, it is important for students, parents/sponsors, and school staff to be aware of the dangers of heat. The National Weather Service reports that in 2012, over 150 people in the U.S. died from heat exposure. Heat related injury or death can be prevented by recognizing dangerous working conditions, taking proper precautions in high temperatures, and identifying the signs and symptoms of heat illnesses.

Anyone exposed to high temperatures can become ill with heat cramps, heat exhaustion, or heat stroke. Certain medications, such as antihistamines or stimulants for ADHD, may affect the body's ability to self-cool.

Assessing conditions for activities and exercises starts with the "heat index." The heat index is a single value that indicates how the body perceives the weather, by taking current air temperature and humidity into account. Exposure to a higher heat index indicates an increasing risk of heat illness and injury. Take appropriate precautions, and plan accordingly for plenty of water, rest, and shade.

To help individuals understand the heat index and make safe decisions, the Occupational Health & Safety Administration (OSHA) has developed the "Heat Safety Tool" application for Smart phones. The app calculates the current heat index and displays the associated risk level for the user. With just a tap on the screen, lists of protective measures, signs and symptoms of heat illness, and first-aid instructions become available in your palm. To download the app, visit OSHA's Web site at www.osha.gov/SLTC/heatillness/heat_index/heat_app.html. For information and guides on how to use the heat index go to www.osha.gov/SLTC/heatillness/heat_index/index.html.



Navigate the OSHA phone app for information on the signs and symptoms of heat illnesses and first aid measures.

E-mail Management: Delegate Points of Contact

The average worker now spends 28 percent of his or her work day reading and answering e-mail. For school administrators, a high volume of e-mails can present a time management challenge and increase the risk of missing a critical message. Administrators may wonder how to keep up with all the e-mails they receive while staying visible and accessible to students and staff throughout the day. One best practice involves distributing a contact sheet listing the types of concerns that can be legitimately directed to and addressed by other staff members. Such a list typically includes the following topic areas:

- After school activities
- Attendance
- Cafeteria
- Counseling

- Inclement weather
- Medication
- Transportation
- Tutoring

For each topic, delegate a point of contact and the best way to reach that person. Administrators can also use the contact sheet to reinforce school security by including information about school access control and parent/child reunification procedures in the event of a crisis. Many administrators also post this information on a section of the school Web site. For a sample template, contact safeschools@csc.com.