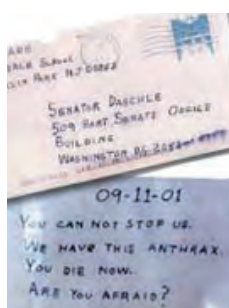




Mail Handling Security

The anniversary of the 2001 Anthrax attacks offers an opportunity to review mail handling procedures with staff. The U.S. Postal Service



Original Anthrax letter.

recommends the following techniques for dealing with a suspicious package:

- ▶ Don't open or move it!
- ▶ Isolate it immediately.
- ▶ Alert security officials.

Also, see DoDEA Regulation 4700.1 "Antiterrorism Program" available at: www.dodea.edu/regs/regs_num.htm. ■

2005 Miss Teen Raises Cyberbullying Awareness

As students become more dependent on the Internet and cell phones, some students are bullying on-line. Parents and educators report the increasing use of e-mail and social networking Web sites, like MySpace and Facebook, to intimidate or denigrate victims. Samantha Hahn, the 2005 National American Miss Teen, teamed up with the cyber security organization, i-SAFE, to warn students, educators, and parents about the dangers of cyberbullying. DoDEA has partnered with i-SAFE America to bring Internet safety to all DoDEA schools.

Some school administrators have observed that before the Internet, a student could escape bullying when he or she went home from school. Now, the Internet can expose students to persistent bullying in ways that parents and teachers might not notice. Ms. Hahn shares her personal experience as a victim of cyberbullying: "When the bullying moved onto the Internet, too, my safe-zone was destroyed. The bullies had now invaded my home."



Samantha Hahn discusses cyberbullying.

Administrators can counter on-line bullying by defining it and publicizing guidelines prohibiting the use of school computers for cyberbullying. Educators can also teach students appropriate on-line behavior. Cyberbullying typically involves:

- ▶ Sending cruel, vicious or threatening messages.
- ▶ Posting jokes, stories, or cartoons ridiculing others.
- ▶ Breaking into an e-mail account and sending embarrassing messages.
- ▶ Tricking someone into revealing sensitive information and forwarding that information to others.

For tips on teaching cyber security to students see <http://ilearn.isafe.org>. For free lesson plans, visit www.i-safe.org. DoDEA educators who file an implementation plan for their school can access i-SAFE through a special DoDEA portal at <https://auth.isafe.org/pdpvideo/dodea/php>. ■

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Father Shares “Dust Off” Warning

All adults should be aware of the danger of a special type of inhalant abuse – using Dust Off. The story of Ohio Police Officer Jeff Williams, dramatically illustrates this danger. Officer Williams thought his family was safe from drug abuse. He and his wife had talked to their children regularly about drugs, both were familiar with the signs of drug abuse, and the family pet, Thor, was a police drug dog. Nonetheless, here is a verbatim excerpt from Officer Williams’ story.

“On February 28, I bought a single jumbo can of Dust Off. I went home and set it down beside my computer.

On March first I left for work at 10 p.m. At 11 p.m. my wife went down and kissed Kyle good night. At 5:30 the next morning, Kathy went downstairs to wake Kyle up for school, before she left for work.

He was sitting up in bed with his legs crossed and his head leaning over. She called to him a few times to get up. He didn’t move. He would sometimes tease her like this and pretend he fell back asleep. He was never easy to get up. She went in and shook his arm. He fell over. He was pale white and had the straw from the Dust Off can coming out of his mouth. He had the new can of Dust Off in his hands.

Kyle was dead.

I am a police officer and my wife is a nurse and neither of us knew that kids were getting high using Dust Off. We later found out from the coroner, after the autopsy, that only the propellant from the



can of Dust Off was in his system – no other drugs.

I found out that using Dust Off is being done mostly by kids ages nine through 15. They even have a name for it – it’s

called “dusting,” a take-off from the Dust Off name. It gives them a slight high for about 10 seconds.

It makes them dizzy. It is a heavy gas; heavier than air. When you inhale it, it fills your lungs and keeps the good air with oxygen out.

That’s why you feel dizzy, buzzed. It decreases the oxygen to your brain and your heart. Victims usually die as they’re breathing it in. If not, death can occur within two seconds of finishing ‘the hit.’

That’s why the straw was still in Kyle’s mouth when he died, why his eyes were still open. The experts want to call this huffing. The kids don’t believe it’s huffing. As adults we tend to lump many things together, but it doesn’t fit here and that’s why it’s more accepted. There is no chemical reaction and no strong odor. It doesn’t follow the huffing signals.”

Although “it doesn’t follow the [typical] huffing signals,” discussed in the October 2006 newsletter, the mere possession of Dust Off warrants inquiry. Administrators can help discover Dust Off abuse by listening for students talking about “dusting” or noticing students storing cans of Dust Off. Officer Williams’ complete message is available at: www.breakthechain.org/exclusives/dustoff.html. Also, Falcon, the manufacturer of Dust Off, sponsors a web site to make parents aware of the danger of inhalant abuse at www.falconsafety.com/default.aspx?pageid=46. Finally, The National Inhalant Prevention Coalition offers prevention tips at www.inhalants.com. ■

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Assessing Risk

Assessing risk is the essence of the Risk Reduction Planning (RRP) process. Making informed decisions about school security is dependent on understanding the meaning of risk. Greater understanding of the term “risk” will help ensure that the “Improvement Actions” and/or “New Measures” that you select to address policy, program, and physical security problems will be appropriate when the components of risk are considered. The four components of risk are **probability, exposure, hazard** and **consequence**.

Think of risk as the probability that exposure to a hazard will lead to a negative consequence. To decide that a specific security measure makes sense (e.g., access control system, PONDS guards, conflict resolution program, etc.) implies that each of these four elements of risk has been weighed.

For example, if a hazard exists but there is absolutely no chance of exposure to the hazard, then there is zero probability of an occurrence. Similarly, if something you are exposed to isn’t hazardous, the chance of a negative consequence is nil and there is not a risk. Conversely, if a hazard and exposure present the probability of a negative consequence, then decide whether or not to accept the risk.



To fence or not to fence?

Let’s apply these concepts to the safe school planning process. Consider Tool 9, Physical Security Review, paragraph 2 that addresses Open Areas. Do you have a fence or other barrier surrounding the school property? If you do, you have enhanced the physical security of your school grounds. But if you do not have fencing, should you? To answer this question, examine what hazards are posed and analyze what consequences might occur to school property or personnel if they are exposed to a hazard. If there is likelihood (probability) that exposure to

a hazard will occur, then the difficult decision to consider is whether or not fencing should be installed. If fencing is not used as a security measure, would something else suffice?



Each year, administrators should review their Safe Schools Plan (SSP). The review should include both Risk Reduction Planning (RRP) and Incident Response Planning (IRP), as detailed in the DoDEA Safe Schools Handbook. Assessing risk is a fundamental aspect of decision making in the safe school planning process. ■

Preventing Suicide Contagion

In 1999 and 2000, five teenagers committed suicide in a Texas community. Four of the five attended the same small private school. Four died by hanging themselves, having read about that method in the extensive media coverage. These sad events fit the profile of copy-cat suicides, or suicide contagion.



Suicide contagion is the imitation of suicidal behavior, and normally follows a recent suicide or attempt. This phenomenon results in more suicides than would normally be expected. The Centers for Disease Control and Prevention (CDC) report that the rate of suicide for 15 to 24 year olds nearly tripled from 1950 to 1990. According to the CDC, suicides account for more than 12 percent of all deaths in this age bracket. The current rate is 13.4 suicides per 100,000 youth per year, with about two percent caused by suicide contagion.

Once a suicide has occurred, several things can be done to reduce the risk of suicide contagion. The most important is reducing sensational coverage of the tragedy. Sensational and/or glorifying coverage increases the risk of suicide contagion, as does reporting the method in detail. The American Society of Suicidology recommends that administrators:

- ▶ Announce the death to students in person, class by class (i.e., rather than over the PA system).
- ▶ Arrange for grief counselors to be available for students and staff.
- ▶ Avoid holding a large assembly to notify the school community.
- ▶ Remind students of the warning signs of suicide so they can encourage troubled peers to seek help.

In the aftermath of a suicide, school personnel should monitor at-risk students. The National Association of School Psychologists recommends making grief counselors available for students and staff. Receiving a psychological debriefing within 24 to 72 hours of an event can reduce the probability of Post Traumatic Stress Disorder. DoDEA administrators have an abundance of resources within their school district that they can access in the wake of a student suicide (i.e., school psychologists, additional counselors). Look for the following risk factors:

- | | |
|---|--|
| ✓ Loss of appetite. | ✓ Sudden decrease in academic achievement. |
| ✓ Feelings of guilt or hopelessness. | ✓ Loss of interest in normal activities. |
| ✓ Expressions of persistent sadness or emptiness. | ✓ Giving away prized possessions. |
| ✓ Recurrent talk of death or suicide. | ✓ Increased use of drugs and/or alcohol. |
| | ✓ Difficulty sleeping. |

Staff members noticing these risk factors in students should use their referral procedures to alert their school psychologist or counselor. It is important to be direct and non-judgmental with students, and not try to handle a potentially suicidal student without professional assistance. If worried that a student might make a suicide attempt, staff **SHOULD NOT LEAVE THAT STUDENT ALONE**. The student will need to see a person or agency specializing in suicide prevention. The first person contacted should be the school psychologist or counselor. If one isn't available, the family physician, a community mental health agency, or a suicide prevention center needs to be contacted right away. The student should never be left alone during this process.

More information on suicide prevention is available from the U.S. Surgeon General at www.surgeongeneral.gov/library/calltoaction/calltoaction.pdf, the American Psychiatric Association www.healthyminds.org, or the American Academy of Pediatrics www.aap.org/advocacy/childhealthmonth/preventeensuicide.htm. Middle or high school administrators who need another Jason Foundation suicide prevention kit can contact safeschools@csc.com. ■

Teaching Friendship Skills Can Decrease Bullying

Educators can help students avoid bullying by teaching bullies, victims and bystanders how to make friends. Dr. Michelle Elliot, the founder and director of the anti-bullying organization Kidscape in the U.K., recommends teaching friendship skills to improve the behavior of bullies as well as bullying victims. Dr. Elliot stated, “We think everyone knows how to make friends. But, a lot of people don’t. And I have found that some bullies end up bullying because they don’t know what to do.”

Dr. Elliot suggests that educators invite students to list characteristics of good friends and write them on the board. For example, a group of middle school students decided that good friends:

- ✓ Show an interest in what people do.
- ✓ Give compliments without going overboard.
- ✓ Smile.
- ✓ Laugh.
- ✓ Share.
- ✓ Listen.
- ✓ Invite other people to do something with them.
- ✓ Ask, rather than demand, to join in activities.



Dr. Elliot works with students individually to help them develop good friendship skills such as listening, making good eye contact, and improving personal appearance/hygiene. She also suggests children prepare questions to ask others when approaching another person (i.e., “How was the English test?”).

The ability to make friends helps bullies by providing them an alternative way to relate to students rather than through intimidation. Victims of bullying can be taught how to make friends who will help defend them from the bullies. Empowering bystanders with friendship skills enables them to include both bullies and victims in activities. For additional suggestions, as well as a kid-friendly lesson about making friends, visit Kidscape on-line at www.kidscape.org.uk/childrenteens/makingfriends/1makingfriends.shtml. ■



Classroom Management With Fish

Since many students and teachers like images of the ocean, some teachers use images of fish to help manage classroom behavior. The teacher or the student creates a fish representing each student. The fish is red on one side and blue on the other. Each fish has a student’s name on it. The fish are posted on the bulletin board in the form of a large fish – a school of fish. If the student misbehaves, the fish is turned over so it is a different color. If the student misbehaves again, the fish is removed and placed behind the school of fish. Two more infractions result in the student’s fish floating to the top and a phone call to the parent. ■

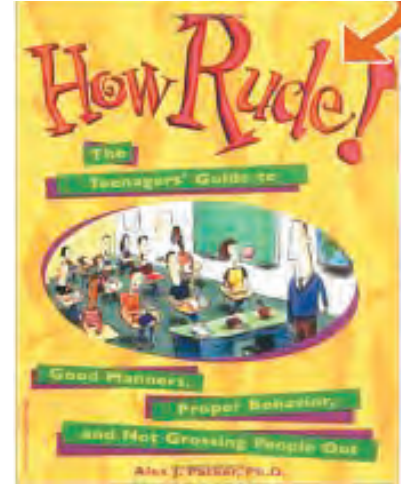
Manners Matter

When was the last time you heard a student say “excuse me” in the halls. Or say “thank you” when a paper was handed back? With families eating on the run, many kids come to school these days without even the basics of table manners under their belts.

Help is on the way. A new book by Alex Parker, Ph.D. called *How Rude! The Teenager’s Guide to Good Manners, Proper Behavior, and Not Grossing People Out* uses humor to teach teens the benefits of good manners. Educators will appreciate the sections that deal with simple ways to bring manners into the classroom.

Teaching manners is a worthwhile investment. The basic premise of good manners is respect. Who doesn’t want more of that? Even teens quickly understand that by treating others with kindness, they in turn get more respect from parents, teachers, and even peers.

The first step for educators interested in improving the manners of their students is to model good manners themselves. This means no sarcasm, no public humiliation, and saying “please” and “thank you.” Once you are engaging in this type of mannerly behavior, it is perfectly legitimate for you to insist that students return the favor.



If students are rude, it is appropriate to take them aside and politely remind them of your expectations. And speaking of expectations, Parker encourages educators to create public reminders of expected behavior and particularly manners. One recommendation is to post signs in the halls. Also, teachers should openly discuss manners before school events such as concerts or field trips. Often it is easier for people to get into the habit of using good manners by starting with special occasions.



When students do use their manners, they should be rewarded. You can use good old-fashioned praise, prizes, or a mention in the morning announcements. Meanwhile, students who use poor manners should not be ignored. Rudeness should never be tolerated, and while it is not okay to publicly humiliate a child, it is okay to politely remind them of how to behave.

It may seem like a lot to expect of the Golden Rule, but raising awareness of manners in your school will improve the behavior of some students. After all, despite having very little training in manners at home, most kids have a keenly innate sense of fairness. Even the most recalcitrant of students will quickly realize that if they want respect, they have to give respect and kindness to others.

In the end, teaching good manners is a win-win situation for teachers and students alike. And who knows, you might get an “excuse-me” next time someone barrels into you in the hallway. To learn more about bringing manners into the classroom visit: www.teacherplanet.com/resource/manners.php. ■