

This Issue: **SAFE SCHOOLS**

Keeping our schools safe is often a more challenging prospect than it used to be. When we consider that violent behavior includes not only physical violence, but also disrespect for race, culture, socioeconomic status, popularity, and academic achievement, the task may seem daunting. However, by laying the foundation early, before students are cruel to each other, before children find themselves alienated and isolated, and long before that isolation causes anger and hopelessness, we are able to create a positive atmosphere – an atmosphere that is based on respect for others and fairness to all.

Safe schools have a plan that inspires confidence in the teachers, between the students, and respect within the community. The plan leaves nothing to arbitrary judgments and works in the beginning through logical reasoning and eventually by habit.

In this issue you will learn the basic components of a safe school management plan at all levels and strategies for preventing violence in today's schools by developing strong positive relationships between

How Safe Is Your School?

- How many entrances do you have that are open to unannounced visitors?
- Are all areas, including bathrooms, play areas, behind the gym, adequately supervised?
- Can someone from the street look directly into the office?
- Does every staff member have a group of students that they have established a relationship with, such as an advisory group?
- In there a spectator fighting policy in place?
- In there a harassment policy in place and enforced?

Also In This Issue:

- What You Do In The First 10 Minutes
- School Safety Is A Team Effort

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School Safety Is A Team Effort

There are many people who work in schools and making a school safe requires everyone working together to accomplish certain goals.

Administration

Responsible for developing and informing staff, parents, and students of a schoolwide management plan that follows all legal guidelines; plan is posted throughout building; staff is supported by administration; recording devices (video cameras, tape recorders, Polaroids) are available when necessary.

Classrooms

Classroom plans need to be approved by administration, sent home to parents, explained to students, and presented on video, if possible; plans contain no more than five clearly defined and observable expectations, always including "Follow directions," parent communication is listed, and consequences are hierarchical, beginning with a verbal warning and culminating with an office referral; plans also include at least five positives, beginning with praise or verbal acknowledgement.

Personnel

All employees have background checks conducted; ID badges are worn; everyone has been trained to peacefully challenge any unknown person who does not have a pass; adequate supervision outside building during lunch, passing times, before and after school, and assemblies; lockdown procedure is in place; playground supervisors have a communication system; crisis team has been developed and trained.

Training

All personnel trained in de-escalation techniques and on emergency procedures; students know how to use communication system if the teacher becomes incapacitated; appropriate supervisors trained in IDEA, 504, and sexual harassment.

Inside the Building

Halls and other areas free of alcoves and other possible hiding places; closets, boiler rooms, balconies, etc. are locked when not in use; hallways are straight and unobstructed for easy viewing; cafeteria is open and visible; restrooms allow for easy unannounced entry; all areas well-lit.



WHAT YOU DO:

In The First
10 Minutes...

...Saves Lives

In The First
Hour...

...Saves Litigation

In The First Day...

...Reduces The
Length Of Time
It Takes To Heal